



bicycle *transportation* inspiration

Personal experiences from Denmark, Sweden, and The Netherlands



HEJ CYKLIST!

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Bicycle Transportation Inspiration

The reflections and insights in this publication are first-person accounts of the following students, who visited Denmark, Sweden, and The Netherlands to explore how cities can be improved to make cycling a more integral part of daily life.

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2015 Bicycle Transportation Field Seminar hosted by the University of Oregon





The Bicycle Transportation Planning Class

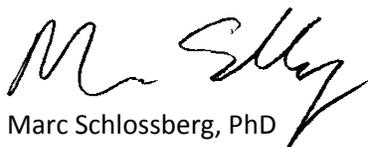
There is something inexplicably happy-making about being on a bike, feeling safe and comfortable doing so, and being joined in the endeavor by thousands of others at all times of day in all locations in a city every day of the year. It is a feeling one can only get through experience, and if you want to have that feeling of freedom on a bike, visiting cities in Denmark and the Netherlands are a great way to go.

The stories and images in this book are designed to share what it is like to go from a state of unknowing about how a city can actually function for people on bikes to a place of inspiration that such a reality is in fact possible. The following pages include a series of first person accounts from students who travelled abroad on a three-week study course focused on designing cities for people on bike. Their goal was to be inspired, be critical, and ultimately understand what lessons from abroad could be brought back to the U.S. context. This book is a result of those reflections.

We stayed in three cities (Copenhagen, Utrecht, and Amsterdam), met with local professionals across sectors, and visited numerous other cities during long day trips. But most of all, we rode our bikes and did so as normal people – to get to meetings, to do shopping, to meet one another at a café, to go to a museum or historic site or to explore new places randomly. Of course we also tried to notice how the systems worked, how people behave, what small and big design ideas worked or not, and how policy and culture impact transportation choices available to residents and tourists alike. But more than anything, we experienced what it is like to be able to go from anywhere to anywhere on a bike with comfort, safety, and convenience.

The 2015 course was the third time I've led the effort. The first iteration was an eight-day excursion to Amsterdam in 2011, one year after visiting Copenhagen and Amsterdam myself for the first time. I had heard about the high rates of people on bikes, but I was not prepared for what I saw in person and I knew that I had to do something to bring students to see it themselves. The courses in 2012 and 2015 were expanded to three weeks and three countries and still we all wanted more.

One of the explicit goals for this course was to translate lessons learned abroad into the U.S. context and this book is an effort along those lines. Each individual student will undoubtedly carry their own insights throughout their professional careers, but students wanted to produce something that could be shared more broadly so that the insights and inspirations they experienced abroad could inform policy and practice back home. I am inspired by this commitment to a greater good and I hope you are as well.



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Acknowledgement

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Thank you also to the National Institute for Transportation and Communities (NITC), which also provided some scholarship support to many students to assist with their participation.

There are also countless others in the cities we visited that shared their time and expertise with us, took us on biking or walking excursions to see things we would never pay attention to otherwise, endured our endless questions, and provided us with unexpected treats at just the right moments. But there are three people we'd like to acknowledge in particular:

- Eva Ekbrant and Henrik Jensen of Copenhagen – there is no way to properly describe their significance to our experience, but when a couple happily invites 20 students into their (Scandinavian sized) home to share a traditional home-prepared lunch covering about 7 hours then you have some idea how incredible Henrik and Eva are. They provided an instant comfortable space for students and an opportunity for us to ask any question about culture, politics, or transportation we could dream of. They also happened to help us organize most of our week in Copenhagen because of their own interests and connections to bicycle transportation. If part of a study abroad experience is to build understanding with people in a different culture, then Eva and Henrik were the perfect ambassadors!
- Ronald Tamse of Utrecht – Ronald was our “Henrik and Eva” of Utrecht, helping to set up our three days of meetings and excursions and accompanying us most of the time. Also an excellent ambassador, he graciously engaged with the barrage of additional questions students had about the Netherlands and about biking at just the moment when students were the most confused about how things worked, why, and whether there was any hope of transferring lessons back to the U.S.

And finally, a big thank you to Hank Phan, Emily Kettell, Jody Trendler, Bradley Tollison and Olivia Offutt- students on the program who volunteered many hours to compile the thoughts and insights of students into this publication!

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cycling cities

by the numbers



	city size (sq. mi.)	population (city)	density (pop./sq. mi.)	bike commuters
amsterdam	85	832,000	9,800	53%
copenhagen	33	550,000	16,500	45%
malmo	61	318,000	5,200	22%
odense	117	174,000	1,500	24%
utrecht	38	330,000	8,600	25%
austin	272	912,798	3,358	1.3%
boston	90	656,051	13,340	2.4%
denver	143	680,281	5,142	0.8%
detroit	155	663,862	4,044	2.5%
eugene	44	160,552	3,572	6.8%
madison	94	245,674	3,037	5.3%
new york	469	8,491,079	28,052	1.1%
pomona, ca	23	153,381	6,679	1.1%
portland, or	145	619,445	4,375	7.2%
richmond	63	217,853	3,625	1.9%

Sources:

City of Cyclists Presentation June 22, 2015 by Anna Huiid Garrett, Student Assistant, City of Copenhagen; City of Copenhagen Bicycle Account 2014; Copenhagen Wikipedia Page; Malmö Wikipedia Page; Utrecht data from European Urban Audit / Wikipedia Modal Share page; U.S. population and bicycle commuting estimates from the League of American Bicyclists 2014 American Community Survey "Where We Ride" data report; U.S. cities area and density figures from Wikipedia.

Historical Parallels

By Daniel Chibbaro



Caption: Copenhagen residents protest for a more livable city in the 1970s.

Photo from Anna Hviid Garrett's presentation

One of the most significant lessons that Denmark and the Netherlands were able to teach us was that all we saw or heard about are not exactly a phenomenon linked to Dutch and Danish culture, even if cycling has been a part of their respective cultures for awhile. The majority of the bicycle infrastructure, policies and modern culture have been demanded and incrementally implemented in the past 40 years. There are fascinating historical parallels with the U.S. when it comes to implementing automobile-centric infrastructure and then later turning their backs on it through protests. Both Copenhagen and Amsterdam went through this cycle, but a desire for cycling was not the central topic of protest: main concerns that led to protests decades ago were quality of life related, such as revitalizing depressed neighborhoods and traffic calming for safety. Those desires were achieved in part with a deliberate reduction in automobile facilities in favor of pedestrian and bicycle facilities, so the bicycling transportation system has proven itself to be a supporter and a factor of livable cities. It is exciting to think that we are beginning to have this “protest” momentum now for greater livability in many U.S. cities, and to consider where that can lead us when one examines the recent history of Copenhagen and Amsterdam.

Cycling's Role in the Environment

By Christina Lane



Having the capability to cycle anywhere and everywhere throughout a city brings about an intense feeling of freedom and connection to the people and places around them. There have been studies showing that only fifteen minutes a day in nature reduce stress levels, increasing liveliness. There are many factors contributing to the environment associated with increased bicycle infrastructure. One main factor is the amount of energy associated with both cycle versus car infrastructure and the production of bicycles versus the production of cars.

According to thisbigcity.net, bicycles use only one tenth of the energy required to manufacture an average sized automobile. Aside from that, it takes far less energy to implement cycling infrastructure over automobile infrastructure. There is also an immense amount of potential in reducing carbon emissions in big cities that produce their own microclimates that make areas warmer and more susceptible to diseases associated with increased pollution. Lastly, the reduction in noise pollution can be noticed drastically when you hear birds chirping within a city. Noise pollution have been associated with increased stress hormones, which affect overall health.



creating
humane
spaces.



Discussion from:
Olivia Offutt
Kirsten Jones
Holly Hixon
Hank Phan

On cycling and street level human interaction by Olivia Offutt



“Humane. 1: marked by compassion, sympathy, or consideration for humans or animals”

-Merriam-Webster Dictionary

Urban planners often grapple with the issue of how to get people to “feel ownership” of their community political processes and urban spaces. In this context, the planner feels that greater sense of ownership means that community members will be more politically engaged and will feel more incentivized to take better care of their public spaces. But Jeff Risom, Partner and Managing Director of Gehl Architects, believes that instead of creating a sense of ownership, planners ought to be concerned with creating a sense of *ourness*. He explains that while *ownership* is a word that implies a level of selfishness and division (my space versus your space), *ourness* is a word that implies community, compassion, and empathy. It implies humane space.

So how do we design for compassionate, humane living? Part of the answer is in breaking down the barriers that prevent us from interacting with each other in the public realm. In particular, taking away the car-- the shell of privately owned space that serves to remove us from the public realm, and by extension serves to disengage us from any unnecessary interactions with our fellow community

members. It is this very type of interaction, the unnecessary one, and especially with those of very different walks of life whom we would otherwise never meet, that helps to build the compassion and empathy necessary to create humane spaces.

Experiencing a city by foot or by bicycle exposes us, quite literally, to the public realm. When this public realm is a humane space, people feel comfortable in it and welcome the exposure. In a walking and cycling city, this exposure allows us to literally see others around us and to maybe even engage emotionally in their lives. In Copenhagen and Amsterdam, it is not uncommon to see little children smiling and waving at you from their seats in the Christiania wagon, or couples, young and old, holding hands between their bikes. A close look at the picture above shows a Copenhagen bride and groom in the center of a bicycle cavalcade--celebrating the happiest day of their life with everyone else walking and cycling on the street. These moments transport and engage us, however briefly, into someone else’s life, and it is in these moments, and in humane spaces, that we build *ourness* in a community.

creating humane spaces.

by Olivia Offutt

*I met **Preben Brandt** in a park off of Gothersgade in Copenhagen, where he and his team were handing out free (delicious looking) lunches to the homeless. Brandt is a psychiatrist and founder of homelessness research and social work organization projekt UDENFOR.*



“ It is a kind of **equalizing people** because nearly everybody has the money for a bicycle.

Many people are bicycling so **we meet each other on the road** when we are bicycling.

We have a kind of contact. Maybe not talking together but seeing each other.

And I also think **that is a good thing.** ”



Public Space
by Holly Hixon

The public space in Copenhagen was creatively engineered to plan and react to how humans interact there. When walking through the city, you see people everywhere socializing with each other in spaces that allow them to do so simply. Some examples of this which differ from culture in many cities in the United States are a lack of fences around tables and chairs outside restaurants, few restrictions on where you can drink alcohol outdoors, removing rocks from a spot where people frequently jump rather than restricting access, and perimeter style housing that includes a shared courtyard for all of the residents that live there. The planning done is meant to deliberately bring life into these spaces because it's this life that makes our cities livable, desirable, and pleasant for the individuals of the community. The distinction should be made that humans are the primary reason for our planning not a roadblock in it and we, as planners, should encourage people to bring life into our cities the way they choose and make it more simple and safe to do so.





A Place for People by Hank Phan

During my visit to Denmark and The Netherlands, I realized there were more to these countries than their cycling infrastructure. Cycling is simply engrained in normal practices, which was crafted by a culture that prioritizes the human connection. Similarly, off of the cycle tracks there exist public spaces designed for human senses and interactions.

Copenhagen for example programs every public space for people and their activities. This is all part of their core value of maintaining a human scale city for their residents. There is no wasted space because any uninhabited or empty area becomes a potential for public art, recreation, sports, play-

grounds, gardens, and parks. The city presents an inviting environment where I feel like I belong to its streets, alleys, sidewalks, and anywhere I could set my feet. I am inspired by not only the human scale of the entire city, but the priorities and values that are nestled within their culture.

We have created the places around us, but more often the spaces do not represent us. The perception of space and how we manipulate it can produce certain outcomes and the cities that I visited on this journey serve as innovative and socially just examples of cities created by people for the people that live in it.





Reclaiming Streets

Roads aren't built for cars; they are built for people

by Kirsten Jones

Roads were not built for cars; they were built before cars existed. Roads were built for people to use a multitude of ways; people walking, children playing games, and horse carriages carrying people. All facets of urban life were able to share the space. However, this has changed dramatically, so much so that it is common to feel unsafe on roads unless inside the safety of one's own automobile. This has led to an isolationist society, wherein people who used to be interacting on the streets while walking, riding, or playing, are now in sealed moving containers. Automotive traffic isolates us from one another and diminishes our human connections.

However, there are many things that can be done to reclaim the streets for the use of people. By reallocating space for pedestrians and bicyclists, people will start to feel safe and welcome on the streets. Efforts can be made by the city, as well as private businesses, to encourage alternative uses of the streets. Specifically, two major efforts must be taken to achieve such a goal. First, street furniture must be installed to send an invitation to people that the area is for them. Benches, tables, planters, and even playgrounds placed in and around streets provide purpose and meaning to occupying that space. It allows people to have informal interactions with their neighbors while engaging with their community.

The second effort that must be made simultaneously is the installation of traffic calming systems. These can take the form of speed bumps or other obstructions placed in the road, narrowing the lanes, or reducing lines of visibility. Such efforts encourage those in cars to drive more slowly, making it safer for those on the streets. Ad-

ditionally, it will encourage those in cars to observe the community through which they are driving, and possibly reevaluate if they would prefer to walk, themselves.

Efforts to increase the number of people spending time on the streets outside of personal automobiles will increase quality of life for the entire community. People will get to know their neighbors better, which will have immeasurable dividends for community engagement, patrolling, and safety. By taking action to reclaim the roads for people, as opposed to simply allowing cars to travel on them as fast as possible, everyone benefits.

Roads used to be a place for everyone. They still can be.





Hopeful in Europe

by Adam Beecham, Coordinator in the 2015 University of Oregon Study Abroad Bicycle Transportation Seminar

Since I can remember I've been riding a bicycle. The first 5 years of my life I lived an hour's drive north of the Twin Cities in the American Midwest state of Minnesota. This farmland was the edge of the radius my father found himself willing to commute to the city for work. After 5 years of commuting he grew weary of the traffic and the family moved a half hour closer to the town of Cedar, where the suburbs meet the countryside. My rural upbringing didn't leave me shy to explore by bicycle. On the 1st day in our new house I took off by myself on a blue and yellow huffy 'pro thunder free spirit' to make new friends down our gravel road.

The sense of freedom and adventure I found on my bicycle remains with me to this day, as I have lived most of my adult life abroad in places like China and Mexico and leading trips in the Andes, the Adriatic, the Alps or the Amazon. The past 5 years I've been living in the Netherlands leading cycling trips in Europe for active travelers and guiding educational trips for University students around the world.

So it was from the company CIS Abroad (Center for International Studies Abroad) that I was paired up with Marc Schlossberg's 'Designing better cities for people and bikes' class. I would be providing logistical support and local knowledge for the group of 19 students from around the United States and Mexico.

They'd be traveling to Denmark, Sweden and the Netherlands to learn from top city planners and how they came to build such dynamic and modern cities, as well as how cyclists, pedestrians, automobiles, and public transport could coexist in relative peace and harmony.

Over the past 5 years I've seen more and more Americans coming to Europe where they feel safe to explore by bike as bikes are not only a legitimate mode of transportation, but in many places they are the majority of users on the road. Needless to say I get around by bicycle and I've fallen in love with the European culture surrounding this mode of transport.

If I could pick only one thing to bring back to the USA it would be the infrastructure set up for the cyclist. I spend most of my free time biking through forests, along canals, past grazing cattle, or whizzing through medieval city centers. I commute to work in randomly formed pelotons, filled with everyday folks who choose cycling not necessarily because they love it, but because it's easy, safe, and inexpensive.

It was exciting for me to know that there are people out there like Marc and his students all wanting the same thing as me. To make our homeland more liveable, by designing smarter and safer cities not only for bikes, but for everyone. It was with great pleasure that I took on the task of helping provide a smooth and pleasant experience for all students and faculty involved in the program.



Bicycle Transportation

From Niche to Normalcy

by Dan Chibbaro, participant in the 2015 University of Oregon Study Abroad Bicycle Transportation Seminar

When I began graduate school for city planning, it was always my desire to find a way to Europe for a portion of my studies. I knew that I wanted to focus on pedestrian and bicycle planning and that countries like Denmark and the Netherlands provided some of the world's best case studies for that niche. I knew that I could read all of the peer reviewed articles about their cycling culture and infrastructure that I wanted and it still would not provide me with the depth that field work provides. That was why I was thrilled to apply for and take part in the University of Oregon's bicycle transportation field seminar and incorporate the lessons of Denmark and the Netherlands into my city planning graduate studies.

With the program now at its conclusion, I believe I have grown a lot as an observational learner and planner-in-training. I finished my first year of graduate school feeling prepared for whatever the field seminar had in store for me, especially given my few years experience as a city cyclist. The idea of riding next to cars or packing my groceries onto my bike was not a foreign concept to me. Nevertheless, living and riding in Denmark and the Netherlands still required many adjustments and plenty of mental and physical note taking on their cycling culture and infrastructure. I felt a lot of my experience go out the window as I needed to get used to riding different bikes and cycling under different rules between four cities and two countries. I needed to patiently learn the subtle intricacies of their greater bicycle networks in order to discover how the sum of all the parts leads to a high quality transportation system. By letting go a bit and accepting that I would not learn everything I

came here to learn immediately, I was able to better appreciate how the sum of everything we saw and heard adds up to comprehensible lessons for better bicycle transportation systems in the United States.

The lessons I have learned in Denmark and the Netherlands will undoubtedly guide me through my years of planning practice. Even though the United States lags so far behind in the infrastructure, policies and culture to facilitate such advanced cycling transportation, I believe in the work it will take for U.S. cities to become even a fraction of the cycling cities that Amsterdam and Copenhagen are today. I believe in it for all of the socioeconomic benefits active transportation holds for a country that still grapples with an obesity epidemic as well as an epidemic of dangerous, automobile centric streets that do not function at their true potential as safe, vibrant public spaces. I will do what I can to practice the lessons we have learned as soon as possible. Next semester I will have the opportunity to participate in a "Complete Street" redesign for a New Jersey community; the most important themes from Denmark and the Netherlands will hopefully influence our final design recommendations.

I will do what I can to position myself for a planning career heavily focused on bicycle planning and design. Regardless of the school and career outcomes I have ahead of me, I already have a renewed focus to remain a strong advocate for cycling transportation for all communities. Perhaps the most astounding lesson of Denmark and the Netherlands is the insignificance of their bicycle transportation system; it is simply a normal, convenient transportation mode among many available modes. United States bicycle transportation has a long road ahead of it to go from niche to normalcy, but I will work for it harder than ever now that I have seen the transportation system's ability to support and foster some of the most livable cities in the modern world.



Sam's Cycling Saga: The Netherlands and the Nordics

*by Sam Copelan, participant in the 2015 University of Oregon
Study Abroad Bicycle Transportation Seminar*

I signed up for this program as soon as I discovered that we would be bicycling around Europe while looking at urban planning. Ever since I did a year of high school in Finland, I have known that Europeans have great infrastructure, which helps them have a richer quality of life. Finland made a very positive impression on me, and I was left wondering what was possible for the United States to copy from Europe. Three years later, I finally found a program that would allow me to explore these possibilities. An added bonus is that the trip helps me get closer to completing courses in my two majors: International Relations and PPM (Planning, Public Policy, and Management).

What surprised me the most was looking at how many people actually use a bicycle instead of a car to complete their daily activities. I personally saw many people using a bicycle to go to work, pick up their children from school, shop at the store, and carry around their friends. Almost all of these activities in the United States are done with the car. Throughout the pro-

gram, I was very intrigued at learning how the physical infrastructure functioned to allow all of these daily activities to happen.

When I return to the United States, I am going to be more active in public meetings and willing to share my ideas. I believe that the US has a long ways to go before reaching any Dutch or Danish standards for bicycling, but I am hoping to find ways to speed up the process. Throughout the program, I observed that many of the ideas work in Europe because Europeans are very public-space oriented. Instead of hiding away in private yards, the Danes and Dutch enjoy spending time in the street or in the large public parks. This human-city interaction is lacking in American cities, and I want to find a way to incorporate this rich lifestyle into American culture. The Europeans are also more open to sharing the roads with other forms of transportation. Simply adding in European bicycling infrastructure wouldn't change the existing American culture of 'roads are for cars'. Or will it?



Learning to Bi[sy]d]cle

by Sydney Herbst, participant in the 2015 University of Oregon Study Abroad Bicycle Transportation Seminar

As a planning student with an environmental studies focus at the University of Oregon, I was of course interested in coming on a sustainable transportation study abroad trip. Transportation has never specifically been my focus, but what I've come to realize is that you can't have a sustainable city without a sustainable transportation system. Before coming on this adventure, I was not a cyclist whatsoever. I never rode my bike on campus because I always lived so close I thought walking was more convenient. Because of this, I never considered the obstacles that cyclists go through and the lack of safety and infrastructure in the U.S. Part of this was because I went to school in Eugene, OR which is a top cycling city. I wanted to be able to see a super successful and sustainable practice first hand. Coming to Copenhagen and Amsterdam has changed a lot about my understanding of planning.

I didn't have much knowledge on bicycle infrastructure prior to coming here, so I was overwhelmed with all of the knowledge I gained during this trip. I was uneasy and uncertain at first, but that soon transformed into pure joy and excitement. I quickly realized how important transportation planning is

because there will never be a time when humans no longer need to get from one place to another. With most people transporting on a daily basis, it seems crazy to not have a sustainable system. I love how bicycles are incorporated into the culture here and how it's so easy, convenient, and safe. My perspective on public space also changed. I never realized how important public space is to communities and how drastically it can change a person's choice in mode. I think that my biggest takeaway from this experience was that planning must be done for the people. Often times in America, we plan things in hopes of making people act a certain way instead of observing how they are acting and plan accordingly. As soon as I can afford it, I'm buying a nice bike. Then I will get a great job and bike there every single day, rain or shine! Even if I don't end up in transportation planning, I still gained very valuable knowledge for planning in general. If I do end up in transportation planning, I feel as though I could have a role in explaining to people that a bicycle culture is possible. I became very interested in the idea of marketing for bicycle infrastructure and other sustainable transportation. I would love to come up with creative ways to get people excited and hopeful for changes in their communities.

celebrating
the
ordinary.



Discussion from
Bradley Tollison
Sydney Herbst
Holly Hixon
Daniel Chibbaro
Emily Thomason
Myra Tetteh
Kyle Meyer
Heather Murphy

When Life Becomes a Queen Song

by Bradley Tollison



To many of us in the U.S., riding a bicycle falls into three very different worlds leisure, exercise, or something children do. In the leisure world, one takes his or her dusty bike to the beach and cruises around marveling at the scenery. The exercise world throws one into tightly fitting clothing and some of the most expensive bicycles imaginable, the human racecar on two wheels. Finally, there is the tradition of teaching a child how to ride a bicycle, although keeping them in a protected environment. Cycling in the U.S. is viewed as dangerous, and this isn't just speculation. Roads designed to maximize the flow of cars have proven to be deadly for all other users.

The Danish, Dutch, and later I found out the Spanish have normalized cycling. We're the ones who are out of place asking why they cycle. They're much more interested in why we don't. It's not that they don't understand why anyone would use a car, because they use them too. They wonder why is it that we don't have an alternative? After all, congestion is inevitable in all modes if you invest in them. It's all about the trade-offs of how much space you take up or spend to get from one place to another.



It's important to point out that, while these three nations cycle quite a lot, they are by no means identical in culture. In Denmark things are orderly when it comes to the rules of the road, but if you want to park your bicycle laying it against any surface you can if there are no designated zones. The Dutch have less obvious rules and at a glance, things look as if there are none at all, but try to park a bike in an unmarked area and you'll be met with resistance from the locals. Spaniards are newer to cycling, but they have retrofitted their cities quickly over the last decade to do things like use bike share to go to work. For Spain, it's about doing the most economical thing.

cycle kids

by Sydney Herbst



“ I don't think about safety at all. I know it sounds very strange and irresponsible...

But it must be the same way as other people driving [cars aren't] thinking about safety...

Everybody I know is transporting their children by bike

and I don't know anybody [whose ever had] an issue. ”

Sidse, Mother

With the right infrastructure, parents can feel safe bicycling their children from one destination to another. It is possible to have a culture where bicycling is so ordinary that those choosing to bike don't even consider themselves cyclists. Children and parents can feel safe with the use of separated cycle tracks, bicycle signals, continuous paths, and a general understanding of cycling culture.



Normal People on Bikes *by Holly Hixon*

While cycling through the Netherlands and Copenhagen, one of the aspects that surprised me the most was the immense amount of diversity in the types of people riding bikes. Cycling culture in these places has made it past simply being a subgroup of people that operate outside the norm and share common characteristics, the people cycling in these places mostly just share the commonality that they all need to get places and want to do so in the most rational way possible.

The infrastructure in both Copenhagen and the Netherlands is deliberately created to make cycling the easiest way to get around and thus, travelling by car is viewed less as a luxury and more as the mode that is most accompanied by frustration. Because of this, there are people of all ages from 6 to 76, of all races, social classes, and genders commuting to work, school, to see friends, and to go shopping. The landscape of bikers is filled with suits and ties, dresses and heels, jeans, and lycra alike. The bike baskets are filled with dogs and groceries and children, all comfortably and carefully placed turning the bike into a tool, taking on tasks that many people might think are reserved just for cars. Seeing this sort of inclusion gave me hope and energized the idea that truly anyone can cycle and can make it a part of their daily routine.



The Cycling Community

by Daniel Chibbaro



Residents of cities such as Copenhagen and Amsterdam are the lifeblood that flows through this transportation system. Each individual has endless reasons why they prefer to cycle more than other modes, but the common sentiment is that it is simply the most convenient and fastest method of getting around given the infrastructure investments and urban layout of the cities.

Nevertheless, each cyclist has a story; telling those stories is an important part of promoting bicycle transportation as a worthwhile investment for any society to make. In cities where bicycles are a respected part of the transportation system, bicycles are creatively utilized for a variety of trips and reasons. Whether it is take a child home from school, grocery shop, or run a business, cyclists contribute to the vibrancy of a city in fascinating ways.



Cycling at All Ages

by Emily Thomason

The streets of Copenhagen, Utrecht and Amsterdam are filled with people of all ages on bicycles. These cities are all proof that safe, consistent infrastructure encourages people of all ages and abilities. Young children and retirees file in between tourists, parents and commuters in suits. In Copenhagen, I met a pair of friendly older ladies (top right) who were more interested in showing us the brand new bicycle parking at nearby Nørreport Station then bragging about the fact that they both still cycle regularly. To them, the fact that cycling was part of their everyday life was unremarkable.



“Here, everyone bikes, even old ladies like us!”

The fact that more seniors don't cycle in the U.S. has more to do with culture and infrastructure than any lack of physical ability. Cycling reduces stress and depression, increases life expectancy and provides aerobic benefits without putting much strain or stress on the body. It's also a cheap, flexible way to get around and allows seniors to maintain independence and an active social life well into their older years. According to one study, the average length of time that older people live after giving up driving is, for men, seven years, and for women, ten years¹. Without a car, many American seniors are likely to feel socially isolated and dependent on friends and relatives for transportation but new technology has made bikes lighter and more comfortable than ever. Electric bikes increase mobility options for those who don't live close to friends, family and commercial districts. However, for some older adults, even electric bicycling just isn't an option. A Danish initiative called Cycling Without Age, pairs limited-mobility older adults with “pilots” who bike them around in electric-assist cargo bikes and has found that even being biked around improves seniors' moods. Cycling really can boost mental and physical health at all stages of life!

Everyone Cycles

by Myra Tetteh



As Detroit experiences a resurgence of cycling, essentially reclaiming its past prior to the domination of motored vehicles, some have begged the question if cycling can be used as an every-day measure for commuting or if cycling is solely for recreation. During the visit to Copenhagen (Denmark), Utrecht (Netherlands), and Amsterdam (Netherlands) the idea that cycling does not extend beyond recreation was wholly debunked. Cycling in these locations is more than recreational; it is the way of commuting for everyone, from young children for school to adults for work. People can be observed cycling with groceries, equipment, and children in tow.

Additionally, cycling in Copenhagen, Utrecht, and Amsterdam occurred regardless of the weather conditions. Reportedly, during times of snow, the separated bike lanes (“cycle tracks”) are the first to be cleared to guarantee that cycling can continue in inclement weather. Furthermore, cycling has been adopted by many because in the words of residents, it is the “easiest way to get around.” Across the aforementioned cities they have implemented a cycling network which allows persons to travel to school, work, and other locales easier than independent motor vehicles.



Specifically, one example which illustrated this was a visit to Basisschool de Spits, a primary school in Utrecht. During this school visit, I observed that instead of teacher and staff vehicles in the lot, there were a number of bicycles in the lot. Furthermore, the cycling there was not limited to just the teachers and staff of the school, but the school children there also commuted by bicycle. Once the school day was over youth hopped on their bicycles to head home and in cases where the youth did not cycle themselves in, parents picked up children not in cars, but on bicycles.



Living Life by Bike

by Kyle Meyer

I was awestruck by the sheer variety of people commuting by bike in Denmark and Holland. Beyond that, the adaptation of bicycles to carry a wide variety of items was impressive. Carrying groceries, appliances, kids, pets, even large musical instruments can be done with ease with the right accessories or even just a bit of creativity. Pictured on the right here is one of many examples we saw of kindergarten age kids riding in small groups inside cargo bikes instead of individual cars or a school bus. Some cities and towns even have programs where young school children take field trips by bike throughout the school year. They go to parks and playgrounds near their school, then are asked to rate the parks with a gold star sticker system and to give feedback on their riding experience. Below in the top right photo is of a woman having a picnic in Copenhagen with her dog. She usually rides a standard step through bike with a basket to commute and shop. On bad weather days she rides transit. This bike is borrowed from her boyfriend, who normally uses it to transport his drum set and do courier work. Pictured below her are two more musicians carrying large instruments on their daily commutes.



Cycling as a Way of Life

by Heather Murphy



After spending time in Copenhagen, biking around and talking to other people cycling, I have come to understand that cycling here is a way of life. It is not only a hobby, although it is that as well. It is so much more. Cycling is seen as the most efficient and easiest way to get around since there are cycle tracks on every street. Parents feel their children are safe, so children are allowed to begin biking at a very young age, progressing their skill level until parents feel they are able to ride on cycle tracks and in bike lanes.

Bikes are used to run both short errands, less than a five kilometer distance, as well as longer trips on the supercycle highway that connects different towns throughout the country. Weekends are seen as time to camp or spend time with the family, and all these activities are undertaken while on a bike. Longer rides in the country are common, and taking small trailers to be pulled behind bikes are popular for weekend trips away. The picture to the right depicts a gentleman whose bike is his work, it is pulling his coffee stand to a local market, where he will sell coffee for the day.



This attitude of biking as a way of life is complemented by a complete network of cycling infrastructure that adds to the ease of getting from point A to point B. Clearly marked cycle paths, along with a clear set of rules for drivers, cyclists, and pedestrians, contribute to cycling as the easiest form of transportation in Denmark and the Netherlands.





by Holly Hixon, participant in the 2015 University of Oregon Study Abroad Bicycle Transportation Seminar

Ever since being introduced to cycling a couple of years ago in the context of urban planning, I immediately found a passion for it and began looking at the world in terms of bike lanes. In the town I come from, often given praise for its bike friendliness, Eugene, Oregon was the perfect place for me to begin learning about the process of transportation planning, what comfortable and complete bike corridors feel like to ride on, as well as give a critical eye to the parts of this system that are fragmented and incomplete. When I heard about all the ways the most bike friendly cities in the world are different from Eugene I couldn't have imagined how much of a perspective change I would have about what is possible for our bike infrastructure. Before any of this though, I wanted to experience those differences firsthand and hoped to widen my scope of knowledge on a topic I find interesting and improve my ability to make change in communities I am apart of through these experiences.

During the first half of the program my mind was blown by the things I saw in Copenhagen. The cycle track system is so complete, comfortable, heavily used by every type of person you can imagine and is ingrained in their way of life as a major form of transportation. This idea was accompanied by the polite, rule-following, demeanor of the people

using the system and gave me a perspective of how a bike city like mine could actually look someday in the future. We were also given a look into how smaller cities tackled bicycle planning in Denmark and that felt even more realistic to how my city could someday look. Through a few of the lectures we heard from local experts in particular, I realized my biggest area of interest in transportation planning is advocacy to hopefully continue the spread of love for cycling and encourage more people to use their bikes more of the time and improve their ability to get involved in cycling. Travelling to the Netherlands blew my mind again, though in a completely different way. The beauty of the city of Utrecht, its immense amount of bike storage and the free-form style of cycling that happens there was unlike anything I had seen before. This continued into Amsterdam where cycling is a part of everyone's way of life, the city offers a huge mix of people and one thing everyone seems to connect on is biking. The "bicycle anarchy" and ambiguous street space is more of a distant view of what cities in the U.S. could look but it's inspiring to see that bicycling can move from a culture to being just another part of daily life. These experiences have shaped my view of what is possible from our transportation systems and I feel ready and energized to get more involved in creating meaningful change back home.



Vectoring in the Right Direction

by Kirsten Jones, participant in the 2015 University of Oregon Study Abroad Bicycle Transportation Seminar

My desire to fix struggling cities stems from my experiences working within them. My original intention was to focus my career solely on policy. When I was a junior in college, I studied abroad in South Africa, where I held a service learning position in a school. This provided me with the clarity that I wanted to focus on education policy. I believed that to fix urban problems, the silver bullet was the provide quality education to kids in impoverished neighborhoods so they would be equipped to handle other problems.

However, I found it hypocritical to attempt to make education policy reforms without being in a classroom first. So, upon graduation, I joined Teach for America and taught middle and high school English in Kansas City, Missouri. While I am incredibly proud of the work that I did and the progress that my students made, it became increasingly clear over two years of teaching that improving cities could not be done through a single channel. As hard as my students worked inside the classroom, there were always more issues to be addressed in other facets of life that had just as strong of impact on them. For example, the city failed to provide the proper infrastructure needed, such as useful public transportation system. If a student missed the school bus, they could not attend school that day because public transit was not an option and their parents did not own cars. More students missed school if it snowed; the city was unable to sufficiently plow the streets so snow days were a common occurrence. The problems affecting my students were immense and systematic. I came to the realization that there is no way to improve schools without addressing all aspects of urban

life. My classroom was not a big enough platform. Therefore, I moved to Oceanside, California to open an after-school program for low-income students age 7 to 17. I was able to provide the educational opportunities necessary for students through tutoring, while simultaneously coordinating with other governmental and non-profit agencies to create a better city for the students. For example, I worked with the superintendent and police chief to try to create a safe way for students to walk to the center from their schools. We were never able to find a satisfactory solution. Oceanside was so car-centric that walking even the one and a half miles from school was impossible. Speed limits were 50 miles per hour. There were no crosswalks. Blocks were incredibly long. Cul-de-sacs meant that kids had to walk on busy streets instead of cutting through residential neighborhoods.

I realized that the fabric of society, the building blocks that enabled all other social interaction and decision-making was flawed. People were making logical decisions not to allow their children to walk to the after-school center, even if they wanted to take advantage of the programs, because they couldn't guarantee the safety of their children. People make rational decisions given the conditions with which they are presented. To improve people's choices, better conditions need to be created. This was the final event that led me to planning. To improve the lives of people, and thereby improve struggling cities, the fabric of their conditions need to be addressed. Planning is the most meaningful tool to be used in improving communities and reducing social problems. Specifically, planning can enable safer streets that encourage more social interaction.

The opportunity to study bicycle transportation planning through the University of Oregon has assured me that I have vectored in the right direction. I may not have set out to become a planner, but through other experiences, I have come to realize that the most effective way to help students as well as the entire community is through planning for people.



by Patrick Kelsey, participant in the 2015 University of Oregon Study Abroad Bicycle Transportation Seminar

My personal and professional growth on this trip went beyond anything I could have ever expected. I came to urban planning as a second career about three years ago with my admittance into Tufts, and had been working in the health and fitness industry for several years with waning interest and prospects. I knew I loved helping people, but helping one wealthy person at a time with their personal health goals felt not only hollow, but inefficient. When I befriended an MIT professor and he helped me into a research internship, I knew I had found my second calling and that I would become a sustainable transportation professional.

My passion for cycling and bicycle planning came from my daily commute between three gyms, which gave me the sense of self-righteousness that cyclists are famous for. I hail from one of the most privileged demographics in history and being part of a population that is marginalized was a new experience. Once I began reading about active transportation, I knew that this field combined my love of active living, social justice, and behavioral economics.

The things I've seen on this trip were eye-opening not necessarily in terms of concepts, but in terms of ubiquity. The nicest bicycle facilities in the US are a matter of course in these countries. It isn't a privilege

to be able to bicycle safely here, it is a human right. This is the level the US needs to be on, and I know I will have a long career ahead of me implementing what we've seen here. My current work in bikeshare has been rewarding and fun, but it won't bring the livability that these nations have to the US. In order to do that, a great deal of courage will be necessary. I've been a loud voice for bicycle advocacy in my job, but I've been facing the general public of Boston. I believe it's time for me to transition to a role where I can learn more about what need to be done on a municipal level and try to influence decision makers, or simply become one myself. I'll never forget this experience as long as I live and the people and places that made it so special.





From Copenhagen to California Learning How to Create Cycling Culture in Cities

*by Emily Kettell, participant in the 2015 University of Oregon Study
Abroad Bicycle Transportation Seminar*

I think that I could say that I've always wanted to be an urban planner, even before I really knew what that meant. As I thought about how I could use my public policy degree after college, I knew I wanted to be part of creating sustainable and thriving places. After attending college at DePaul University in Chicago, I started to notice the lack of connectivity and accessibility when I would go back to my hometown, Geneva, IL, a suburb of Chicago.

For example, the easiest way to get around Geneva really is by car. When I tried to bike, I encountered sections of the bike path that ended, no room on busy roads to cross or even bike on the shoulder, and almost no bike parking.

After observing this and talking to my professors, I realized that I could better put my skills to work as an urban planner. I cared about creating vibrant, sustainable, and accessible places, but I didn't see my strengths being put to use as much in the policy field as in planning.

I've been very fortunate these past two years during graduate school at the University of Oregon and have had some great opportunities that helped me focus in on my interests and learn how I can achieve my goals. I'm particularly interested in how well-thought out land use and transportation planning can reduce vehicle miles traveled and preserve natural and public space. I'm interested in this on all scales from the neigh-

borhood to the regional level. I'm also particularly interested in how suburbs can be retrofitted to incorporate more sustainable initiatives and direct connections to nearby towns and major cities.

This program has been extremely helpful in learning more about areas that interest me. Most importantly, this trip has provided an opportunity for me to see what is possible, so I now know how high the bar is set for transportation and land use planning. After interviewing locals and biking around, I can tell personal stories about how people in Denmark and the Netherlands bike in nice clothes to work, bike with their kids, bike to get groceries, and overall, just bike as a way of life. After hearing these stories and witnessing people on bikes in many different cities, I know that there are no excuses for American cities in creating safe and comfortable cycle tracks and that investing in cycling infrastructure will be the way forward in creating great places.

Overall, I think I've learned that it's the people moving around places that make cities vibrant. Our public places and transportation infrastructure should be linked so that it is easy and accessible for people to get from place to place. I am excited to be part of a cohort of planners who are dedicated to making things happen and moving projects forward in order to create better cities. As I begin my internship in California, I will always keep in mind the reasons that inspired me to be a planner while living in Chicago, and the examples that helped me realize it's possible to create cities with huge cycling cultures that lead to vibrant spaces as in Copenhagen and Amsterdam.

infrastructure
that
works.



Discussion from
Daniel Chibbaro
Sydney Herbst
Heather Murphy

Infrastructure by Daniel Chibbaro



If Americans believe innovating better infrastructure for bicycles on our streets is a complicated venture, they have not considered the minimalistic but effective infrastructure that is ubiquitous in Amsterdam and Copenhagen. Raised concrete between the automobile and pedestrian right-of-way and paint sum up the main elements of cycle track design in various municipalities of Denmark and Copenhagen. Residents overwhelmingly feel comfortable and have the ease of mind knowing that the cycle tracks will make up a comprehensive network of lanes and shared streets that will not abruptly become an automobile-centric highway. Even so, residents continue to demand a better system from their cities. A culture of trust in their public institutions leads to reliable annual investments in new infrastructure to close gaps in the network, increase bicycle parking. An ever evolving, ever improving system helps support these livable cities for the future. If American citizens could learn to value “complete streets,” or balanced streets for all modes at the reduction of car facilities, there is more than enough room to work with in order to build quality bicycle infrastructure.



A standard cycle track: raised concrete between the automobile and pedestrian right-of-way and paint



Newer infrastructure examples that exemplify ever improving bicycle networks in Denmark and the Netherlands



Cycle Tracks by Sydney Herbst

A white line separating a bike lane from traffic is not enough to make someone commuting by bike feel safe. In Denmark and The Netherlands, most cycle tracks are physically separated from moving vehicles and are distinct from sidewalks. Often, the cycle track is raised and separated from moving vehicles with on-street parking. This allows for cyclists to feel more safe and secure than when the only thing separating them from traffic is a white line drawn on the street. Many Americans don't commute by bike because it is unsafe and inconvenient. Cycle tracks are a great way to address both of these concerns while making it known that a cyclist's needs are equally, if not more, important than the automobile's.





It's all in the Details
by Heather Murphy

The Little Infrastructure that Matters

While the basic bicycle infrastructure is easy to look at and see its effectiveness immediately, there are also many details that help make cycling more enjoyable that may easily be overlooked by an inexperienced eye. Signage is especially good, with clear markers on the streets and cycle paths indicating where cyclists should be, which direction they should be traveling in, and where pedestrians should be, minimizing bike-pedestrian collisions. There are signs that show the amount of cycle parking spaces that remain at some train stations, as well as signs showing how many other people have passed a certain point, adding to a feeling of camaraderie. In addition, most stairwells include ramps, allowing cyclists ease in getting up and down stairs. In Copenhagen, all taxis must have a bike rack for 2 bikes, so cyclists can find a way home in the rain or from a bar. There are lights specifically for bikes in both Denmark and the Netherlands, so cyclists are aware of the signals and when it is best to cross. The lights flash yellow before they flash green, so cyclists are already moving when the light turns green. There are bars at certain intersections that allow cyclists to rest their feet and hands, making it easier for them to get going at a green light. Trash cans are tilted so cyclists can throw their trash away conveniently without needing

to stop. On busier streets, a “green wave” has been put in place; at a speed of 20 km/h, cyclists can have a wave of green traffic lights through the city without putting a foot down. When it snows, city policy dictates that snow is removed from the cycle tracks before it is cleared from the car lanes with a special cycle lane-sized plow. While these are only some examples, and I have only scraped the surface of the ones mentioned, it is easy to see that these countries see cycling and the cyclist’s needs as a priority, and are implementing little things that make the daily commute more comfortable and convenient.

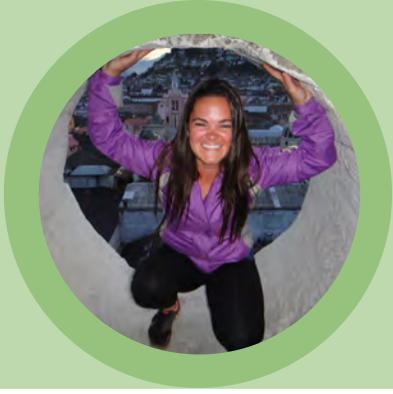




A MORE IN-DEPTH LOOK AT BIKE LIGHT SIGNALS

As previously stated, there are smaller lights at most intersections throughout Denmark and the Netherlands. These lights allow bikers to see when their light turns green, as bikers are usually given a few seconds head start over cars. In Copenhagen, a green wave was implemented on major arterials. During the morning commute towards the city center: going 20-kilometers/hour cyclists can hit all green lights. In the afternoon rush hour, the direction is reversed but the principle is the same. The green wave also includes signage on the route, and a little LED light on the path in some locations encourages cyclists to continue with a 20-kilometers/hour speed, making cyclists more efficient. Most cyclists bike an average of between 14 and 16 kilometers/hour, so this helps with efficiency in getting from point A to point B, and keeps all the cyclists moving at a good pace. These fantastic lights also include countdowns in some areas, counting down either the amount of time left at a green signal or the amount of time left at a red signal before it turns green again. In certain areas, there are countdown signals about 100 meters before the light, so one can see how long until the light turns green/red and plan one's speed accordingly to avoid stopping. This could easily be transferred to the US. Americans are notoriously impatient, so this might help with increasing the cycling rate because cyclists would be aware of the activity of the light ahead.





by Christina Lane, participant in the 2015 University of Oregon Study Abroad Bicycle Transportation Seminar

Almost four years ago I had the life changing experience of doing Semester at Sea, a program providing students with the opportunity to travel to multiple countries while studying a multitude of subjects on a ship.

My voyage circumnavigated the globe visiting eleven different countries and three continents, forever changing my perspective of the world. It was after this experience that I changed my field of studies from Business Marketing and Public Relations to Planning, Public Policy and Management and Environmental Studies. Being interested in sustainable development, the Bicycle Transportation Field Seminar was an opportunity to explore in depth an integral part of my field of interest. Although I had taken a bicycle transportation course in the past, I knew experiencing bicycling in cities that have the best of the best in cycling infrastructure would allow me to see what is actually possible for cities back home and elsewhere.

Being an inexperienced cyclist, I was overwhelmed by the amount of cyclists on the roads in Copenhagen. The cycle tracks were filled with people zooming by as I tried to enter them and I was unsure how I would enjoy my time cycling everywhere for the next three weeks. But by day two, after exploring the streets with so few people on them, I began to feel like a natural; the “Copenhagen left” wasn’t

going to intimidate me! Having the chance to get a feel for the cycle tracks and the culture of cycling with no one else on the roads made later experiences more manageable and enjoyable. This was also a great preparation for entering Netherlands, where the cycling culture is immensely different; a borderline free-for-all on street laws. I was concerned with how I would handle the chaos, but after a day of exploring I was yet again a natural. Surprisingly enough, I enjoyed the model of Utrecht and Amsterdam more than that of Copenhagen and other Denmark cities. While there were fewer regulations, it worked and it worked well.

While the main point of this course was to bring back bicycle infrastructure knowledge, which I believe I can do, one aspect that took hold of my thoughts was the role of public space in the transition from an auto-centric to bicycle-centric society.

Because automobile infrastructure takes up an enormous amount of space, reallocating those spaces to parks, street dining, or plazas takes away the idea of ownership and brings people together; something I believe has been missing in the United States for too long. I hope to see more experimentation across our country in reallocating streets and parking lots into fun public spaces that people can realize make a community stronger and happier.



Pedaling Towards a Brighter Future

by Kyle Meyer, participant in the 2015 University of Oregon Study Abroad Bicycle Transportation Seminar

I am passionate about making the world a better place. Slightly more specifically, I want to make the human built environment better for people and for the planet. In my time as an Environmental Studies undergrad focused on sustainable design and policy at the University of Oregon, I took a wide variety of classes that opened my eyes to the multitude of strategies and perspectives that aim to fundamentally shift the ways humans interact with the environment on a daily basis. I got my first taste of bicycle planning in the spring of 2014 working with Medford as a part of the University of Oregon Sustainable Cities Initiative. It was deeply satisfying to present ideas to decision makers in my hometown and see them received with enthusiasm and sparks of inspiration.

I decided to go on this trip to Denmark and the Netherlands for my first class at a graduate level because I knew that bicycles can be a key tool in lessening environmental impacts and making cities operate on a human scale. Beyond the multitude of bikes and their extensive infrastructure in these countries, I relished the opportunity to meet citizens and officials who lived with ubiquitous bicycles as a normal way of life on a national scale.

After the trip, I can safely say that no amount of videos or stories could have prepared me for the beautiful places, people and experiences I encountered. The impacts of prioritizing the bicycle as an essential tool of the city are so pro-

found and widespread that I still have a hard time wrapping my head around it all. After riding daily in large packs of friendly strangers and sitting on quiet, inviting city streets in the afternoon, I was a little sad to come back to the states. I also felt inspired to bring back the lessons I had learned and talked to anybody I could about the examples of greatness I had experienced. I remain greatly appreciative of the inside perspective we got from planners and community members. They taught us that the current state of bicycles in these countries is far from constant — both in the past and the future. It has been a long process to get to the point where things are now and there is a communal understanding that these systems will continue to evolve. Contextually and logistically, these countries serve as great models for further study in showing the plethora of benefits to be shared through bicycle and pedestrian friendly planning. People of all ages are happier and healthier, the cities and countrysides are beautiful, and the economies are strong. I'm still not sure what I want to do long term in my professional life. No matter what it is though, I will always be an advocate for cycling (and other alternative transportation), community building, and environmental protection. I am inspired by and will continue to seek strategies that incorporate and encourage all of these cohesively.



An Adventurous Goofball

by Heather Murphy, participant in the 2015 University of Oregon Study Abroad Bicycle Transportation Seminar

Let me introduce myself: My name is Heather Murphy, and I am a second year graduate student at the University of Colorado in Denver. While my undergraduate years were spent studying psychology, my (much later) graduate years are now being spent studying urban planning and landscape architecture. The much later part was due to my adventurous spirit and desire to learn about other places, and the idea to spend some time abroad came about. I decided to travel throughout Europe immediately following my undergraduate graduation, and there my interest in travel was first ignited. Following this experience, I decided I wanted to learn more about my heritage, so I spent some time in Israel. After being exposed to such a rich cultural history, I decided I wanted the experience of living abroad for a longer amount of time, integrating myself completely in another culture. Once I realized this, I moved to Australia. While learning the culture and customs in Melbourne, I noticed how efficient the trams and trains were in the city and outlying suburbs, and realized I could get along quite well without a car, as opposed to the many auto-dependent cities in the United States. I enjoyed the many free gardens, parks, and open spaces, and saw how the built environment could enhance satisfaction by making people's lives easier and more productive.

I then traveled to New Zealand, where I spoke with Christchurch residents about the devastation caused by the earthquake in early 2011. I saw that this destruction presented an opportunity to rebuild the city in a way that would benefit its population. These travels allowed a clear vision of how the built environment can translate into a more satisfying lifestyle for both residents and visitors. And so my interest in city planning was born, cultivated by my desire to understand the intense relationship between the environment and its inhabitants, realizing the built environment could be improved by a few tweaks, and I wanted to be the one to study this and make these changes.

After beginning my masters last fall, I managed to receive an internship with a company called LoFI, simultaneously interning for BikeDenver as well. Both nonprofit companies are dedicated to bringing bikes to people, helping people in Denver have the resources and the will to cycle as

more than a recreational activity. Working for these companies, I found my niche in the bicycle community, and knew my focus would be bicycle transportation. While I was with LoFI, I did some work trying to implement a Green Streets program in Denver, to show people what it means to reclaim our streets from the automobiles that normally occupy the entire right of way. In addition, I helped with organization of Denver Cruisers, a Wednesday evening social ride that began 10 years ago with 10 people and was now attended by almost 4000 people every week. I also did advocacy work with BikeDenver, assisting with bicycle and pedestrian counts and beginning to collaborate on a safe routes to school-type program for college students. While engaged in these activities, the opportunity to apply for a bicycle transportation program through University of Oregon emerged. The head of the Urban and Regional Planning masters program sent me the information, and I was immediately hooked and applied right away. The chance to study bicycle transportation in the city of Copenhagen, where the best bicycle infrastructure is, was just the opportunity I needed. As a landscape architecture masters student, I have brought my love of biking to meet my interest in infrastructure, and would love to design cycle tracks in Denver in the future. Copenhagen was everything I thought it would be, and nothing like I thought it would be, and I immediately fell in love. Everything was orderly and consistent, and the cycle tracks were magnificent, like nothing I could have pictured. Following time there, we traveled to Utrecht, with a laid back vibe, coupled with more hectic biking, a little less orderly than the synchronized biking in Copenhagen. After Utrecht, Amsterdam was the final stop. If I thought Utrecht was hectic, boy was I in for a surprise. Signal lights are merely a suggestion here, basically ignored. Aggressive riding is the only way to get around, and you need to be on high alert at all times, scanning all directions to make certain no one will hit you. Even though each place was so different, I have come to respect each in various ways. I have been inspired to make a difference. Once experiencing how other people use cycling to do everything, I have concluded this is the way of life I want to bring back to the United States, and work on changing the mindset and habits of American residents, while building cycling infrastructure that makes sense and that residents will be encouraged and excited to use.



Accidental Advocate

Reflecting on how I got to Amsterdam
and figuring out where I'll be next

*by Olivia Offut, participant in the 2015 University of Oregon Study
Abroad Bicycle Transportation Seminar*

I am riding along a wide quiet asphalt road lined with tall trees, meandering through countryside and farm land. The sun is on its long journey down to the horizon and it casts glorious melting rays of glittering gold through the trees, warming my skin and casting beautiful dappled shadows on my friends riding in front of me. I am in Utrecht, Netherlands on a study abroad program focusing on bicycle transportation planning, and I am experiencing some of the most innovative bicycle planning in the world. Each day, filled with presentations, tours, and discussions, has a mesmerizing moment like this one, where I find myself wondering- how on earth did my life lead to this moment?

To be honest, I came into bicycle planning by complete accident. I didn't grow up on a bike and I never felt much of anything about bicycles for most of my life. Then, in 2012, I took a two-credit course called "Projects in Sustainability" on a whim because I expected it to be easy (it was two-credits after all) and fun. In actuality, this class turned out to be one of the hardest but most fulfilling courses I have ever taken. With a small team, we were expected to plan and execute a project that would improve the sustainability of the campus or community in some way. My team decided our goal was to increase cycling commuting to campus, and this small seed of a concept morphed into a \$75,000 project to completely upgrade the college's bicycle facilities. By the end of the class, my group had successfully applied for a grant, we got our plans approved by the school, and I had become a full on bicycle commuter, myself. By the end of the next year, the grant was received, the ground was broken, and the plan was realized.

Since then, I became an Urban Planning undergraduate student at Cal Poly Pomona, a member of the

Pomona Valley Bicycle Coalition, the founder of the University Cycling Coalition, and I resurrected the university's annual Bike Week festival. My undergraduate research has focused on active transportation, and I have been in city halls in both Santa Barbara and Pomona to speak on behalf of bicycle infrastructure. Today, I can officially say that I drank the cycling Kool-Aid. A lot of it.

When the University of Oregon Sustainable Transportation Planning Seminar called for applicants, I naturally applied right away. But I definitely had some preconceived ideas of what I would experience and I certainly had reservations about the idea of taking home lessons from small, homogeneous European countries. I have to say, though, that no amount of reading and video-watching could prepare me for the mind-blowing infrastructure and the unbelievable volumes of people (all kinds of people!) who ride every day, in any weather, for all purposes.

Beyond the pure shock of the ubiquity of Danish and Dutch cycling, I also found in this culture an incredible feeling of engagement in life. In the pages I author, I attribute this feeling to cyclists and cycling adding a dimension of humanity to streets that is stripped away when cars take over the landscape. In Denmark and the Netherlands, I experienced how humane and textured life can be when it is traveled by bicycle-- and this has simply overwhelmed me. I had previously taken a rather clinical perspective on why cycling is good for cities: lowered CO2 emissions, lower road congestions, better health, better equality, etc. I didn't even really enjoy bicycling very much, but I did it as a kind of martyred environmentalist and social justice advocate. But now, I am coming back to the Los Angeles metro area as someone who simply loves cycling, without qualification. I am coming back as a person who sees the potential life and community in highway scarred cities--and I see it through the lens of cycling culture and infrastructure.

Frankly, I am still trying to figure out how I am going to use all of this new information and experience. I feel a little like Plato's caveman, a bit blinded by new truths and still adjusting to them. I am optimistic, though, about the future form of American cities, and I know that in some way I'll be a small part of the transformation. For now, though, it is a beautiful day out, and I think I'll go for a ride.

shift
in
paradigm.



Discussion from
Jody Trendler
Sam Copelan
Bradley Tollison
Emily Kettell

Planning for People on Bikes: *by Jody Trendler*

The Micro-Infrastructure that Makes Cycling More Convenient and Comfortable in Denmark and the Netherlands

Myth: People often claim that ideas from Denmark and the Netherlands wouldn't work in the United States because the Danes/the Dutch are somehow different from us. They must be some kind of other hardcore weather-immune, super-strong breed of people to cycle so often! Reality: People are people - the Danes and the Dutch want convenience and comfort just like we do. They want to get to their destination quickly. They can be impatient. They don't cycle because they are accustomed to discomfort. Cities can encourage cycling through targeted investments and planning and design interventions that make cycling more comfortable and convenient for people, even in little ways.

The Netherlands



Cyclists are able to pass beneath the Rijksmuseum in Amsterdam on what used to be a tram route.



Countdown clocks at intersections let cyclists know how long they'll be waiting for a green light.

Denmark

On top of the myriad cycle tracks, greenways, and superhighways built just for bikes, Denmark and the Netherlands had an impressive array of little improvements that made things easier and more convenient for people on bikes. Nearly everyone we spoke with mentioned that they ride their bike because it's easier and faster than driving a car.



Footrests adjacent to the cycle track give cyclists in Copenhagen a place to rest their feet at intersections.



Hey cyclist! Bike counters on busy routes let Copenhageners on bikes know they're not alone.



Left: Ramps help cyclists reach the train platform at Copenhagen's central station.



Center: Wayfinding signage.



Right: The Green Wave changes the timing of traffic signals to give cyclists priority during morning and evening rush hours in Copenhagen.

Bicycle Sized Roads *by Sam Copelan*

Why do Denmark or the Netherlands have so many bikes and very few helmets? The answer is infrastructure designed to keep bicyclists safe while on their daily commute. These 'bicycle sized roads' separate the faster moving cars from bicycles, which prevents many fatal crashes every year. The Dutch and the Danes have created these miniature intersections by utilizing cycle tracks and bicycle traffic lights.

Cycle Tracks

The purpose of the cycle track is to provide a safe space for bicycles that is separated from the car traffic. Denmark and the Netherlands have implemented some creative ways to protect the cyclists.



Many Danish cycle tracks are paved slightly higher than the road for cars, and lower than the sidewalk to give bicycles their own place on the road. Intersections have lanes painted for cyclists. Red asphalt signifies a road for bicycles. Cycle tracks are located on the busy roads, and paved slightly higher than the road for cars.

Bicycle Traffic Lights

Streets are being reconfigured so that bicycles have signals, just like cars and pedestrians. Bicycles and pedestrians feel safer because the light gives them a green light before cars, allowing pedestrians and bicyclists to be seen in the road by cars.



Copenhagen streets have the bicycle signals attached to traffic poles with the car traffic lights. Dutch bicycle signals include a timer for bicycles, so that bicyclists know how much time they need to wait.

Cars are Guests by Sam Copelan



In English: Bicycle Street, Cars are Guests

The idea of Dutch bicycling is summed up very well with one sign: “Auto te gast”/ Cars are guests. These signs frequently line the roads that are major routes for bicycles, as well as smaller roads for cars. Those who bicycle move around stress free, and the cars drive very cautiously because they are the ones who need to be careful on the bike streets.

In a nation where bicycles outnumber the people, it is a necessity that faster moving cars are constantly looking out for the bicycles. This “strength in numbers” mentality has helped create a nation where bicycles are safe because bicycles outnumber cars on the roads in many locations.

Possible American settings in which to introduce this idea:

- Narrow streets in city centers
- Streets that have more bicycle users than cars
- Streets that are nearby parks and schools



Bicycle Streets are paved red, continuously emphasizing that the road is mainly for bicycles and mopeds.



Cars can be regulated on narrow streets that are primarily for bicycles.

Better by Design *by Bradley Tollison*



These three countries have invested heavily in cycling infrastructure; on the left you can see an intersection just outside of the Amsterdam city core. It's not just about building out paths for cyclists though, it's about making that experience a good one. Signals are timed for pedestrians and cyclists, not just cars. Spaces on mass transit are made for bicycles as well, and you'll often find areas dedicated to bicycle parking where in the U.S. or historically in these countries it was for cars.

Retrofitting has become an art form here, if you think your American city is fully built out, imagine going to cities older than the U.S. itself. In Seville, Spain the changes are so fresh you can see them in plain sight. On the right was former a car lane; it is used as a bus stop so the cycling lane deviates around the bus stop but that's no problem despite the trees.



In France and Spain, signals are placed before the intersection to prevent vehicles from encroaching on the pedestrian and cycling right-of-way. The last thing a driver wants is to not know when they can or can't go. I was fortunate enough to visit many places this summer and these two countries were the only ones where I encountered this tactic, but it appears to be highly effective. If nothing else, it's exceptionally logical.



Planning for Safe Routes to School in Utrecht *by Emily Kettell*



One of the elements of this trip that has made the biggest impression on me is the idea that planners need to plan cities that are comfortable for people of all ages. Nowhere is this idea more evident than in Utrecht, a city that leads the way in Safe Routes to School education for students.

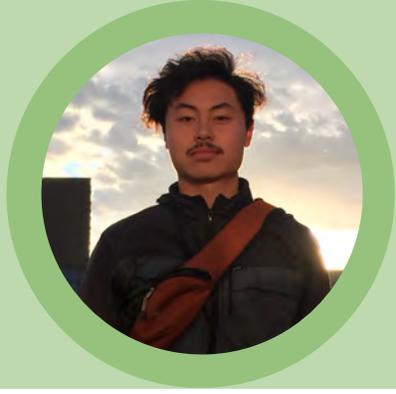
In many places in the Netherlands, cycling is the fastest way to get from place to place and the idea of cycling is embedded within the culture. To ensure that all children feel comfortable cycling, the principal at an elementary school in Utrecht has developed a program to teach children about cycling safely on one's own. In each grade, children learn something new about cycling, such as how long it takes for a car to stop or how to make a left hand turn.

This program, which is replacing the traffic garden in Utrecht, lets children explore biking on their own in some ways, while still ensuring parents that children are learning how to do so safely. Later on in their education, the students will have to pass a test that involves biking in traffic.



Equally important is the example that parents set for their children in getting to school by bike. When parents came to pick children up from school, nearly every single parent rode a bike with space for their child, or rode alongside them. Additionally, without the school buses in front of the school, as is traditional in the United States, the school is a public space where parents can interact with other parents before their children get out of class. If a parent was not able to pick a child up from school, they could feel good knowing that the red and yellow posts make it known that children are biking in the school zone.





Being Human

by Hank Phan, participant in the 2015 University of Oregon Study Abroad Bicycle Transportation Seminar

Concluding my first quarter at California Polytechnic University, Pomona as a transfer student studying Urban and Regional Planning, I came across an opportunity that our department chair had forwarded to Urban Planning students. The program promised up to 25 miles of daily cycling and tours of bike-friendly European cities. Well, it only made sense for me to apply considering I commute by bike daily, I have an odd obsession for bikes, and it is my passion to spread cycling awareness and education in my community. Throughout the entire application process I doubted my ability to obtain admission to the program. It just seemed so surreal to be applying for a program that basically described my interest and desired career path. In addition, I have never been to Europe before so I felt that this trip would allow me to not only experience champion bike cities and their infrastructure, but to be an explorer and immerse myself in a different culture as well as to participate in a new way of life.

Yes, that is me on the left in the picture, raising one to my fellow friends on the edge of Christianshavn Kanal on my 22nd birthday. This is surely not the last Skål of the trip; if anything it is cheers to the start of a life moving journey. Throughout this trip, I

experienced an evolution in my perspective as well as in my feelings. At first I was provided an immense amount of information that took some time to process, but when all the grandiose infrastructure, strategic planning, rich history, abundant facts, and discussions came together in my head, I began to understand this new environment with a new lens. My participation in this trip provided me an additional example that further develops my future analysis of urban environments. Throughout the weeks I felt confusion followed by motivation, then disappointment in U.S. planning, and finally coming out of it a sense of strong inspiration from the things I have witnessed and experienced. After reflecting upon my perspective of this journey, it dawned upon me that I have discovered what it is like to be human. I appreciate and cherish all that this humane culture has taught me, and I will always embrace their values and reciprocate their ideology in my daily life and professional practice





Aggressively Ambitious

by Marc Schlossberg, Ph.D, Professor of the 2015 University of Oregon Study Abroad Bicycle Transportation Seminar

My 2015 journey to Denmark and the Netherlands began about ten years ago when I was hit by a car while biking my two young children to preschool. Amazed that a mom driving her daughter to school turned into me without looking, I decided that my ‘revenge’ would be to start teaching a university course on designing cities for people on bikes. I knew little of the topic other than my very utilitarian trip making by bike – drop kids off at preschool, go to the university for work, return home -- a triangle trip that maybe added up to two miles. I’m not a weekend bike racer, don’t know how to fix my own bike, don’t own special bike gear, and basically don’t think of myself as “a cyclist”. Yet, I thought it should be possible to bike my kids to preschool, and eventually have my kids bike themselves around the city themselves without being fearful for my life or theirs. It was tiring to move about the city of Eugene – known as one of the most bike-friendly cities in the U.S. – with a constant mindset that every person behind the wheel of a car was a potential threat.

So, I asked around the country for resources and ideas on how to develop an entire academic term’s worth of content and the following year I began teaching one of the country’s first university courses exclusively on designing cities for people on bikes. Students showed up from multiple disciplines and the course has continued to this day, sold out each year. Yet, I now know that I had little idea of what I was actually teaching those first few years because I had never experienced what it is like to truly be able to get around a city on a bicycle as a full fledged part of the mainstream, let alone as a member of the majority mode of travel.

In 2009, I received a Distinguished Fulbright Scholarship and spent the year in the United Kingdom and on my way back to the U.S. I made my first stops to Amsterdam and Copenhagen. That’s when everything changed for me. Here were cities where biking was normal, people on bikes were normal, bikes themselves were actually designed for city travel, and where bicycle transportation was the most efficient and convenient way to get normal daily tasks done. In these cities, I have heard people say that bikes should be thought of like vacuum cleaners – tools to get a job done. There is no vacuum cleaner culture, no vacuum cleaner clothing, and no vacuum cleaner identity – they are simply tools to clean. In many cities in Denmark and the Netherlands, bikes are the same thing – tools to get normal life things done whether it is work, socializing, buying groceries, getting to school, or most of the other trips we make day in and day out to live our lives.

One of my very first thoughts upon seeing Copenhagen was that I needed to bring students there to see what is possible. It is imperative to know how high to set the bar and how to be appropriately ambitious in one’s goals. There is no way for anyone in the U.S. to know what is possible related to the use of bicycles as everyday transport without being in cities where more than 45% of all trips (or 35% in the suburbs) are taken by bike. There is no substitute for first hand experience of seeing older people gliding through a city on bike or young children biking themselves to school or everyone in the middle getting around all parts of a city by bike without fear of being hit by a car because the system has been designed to avoid that outcome.

The Summer of 2015 was the third time I brought students from the U.S. to the Netherlands and Denmark to see how cities can be designed for normal people doing normal things living their normal lives, but doing those things with a bicycle as the transportation tool most of the time. Students now know what is possible and can be aggressively ambitious as they do the hard work of moving communities throughout the U.S. toward a more bicycle-normal future.



Bringing Lessons Home

by Myra M. Tetteh, participant in the 2015 University of Oregon Study Abroad Bicycle Transportation Seminar

I am a native Detroit and very proud of it. I am an alumna of the University of Michigan with an undergraduate degree in Political Science and Sociology, as well as a Master of Public Policy.

Currently, I am a doctoral student at the University of Michigan School of Public Health in the Department of Health Behavior and Health Education. My research focus is on how the physical design of communities impacts reaching recommended physical activity targets. Specifically, I focus on contextual factors in urban communities including lighting, the presence of violence, and built environment infrastructure. Aside from my school commitments, I serve as the Detroit Food and Fitness Collaborative (DFFC) Active Living Work Group Co-Chair and the Detroit Complete Streets Coalition Coordinator for the DFFC. In the latter role, I facilitate coalition meetings between over 15 representative organizations (including, AARP, a wheelchair advocacy organization, community-based organizations, and municipal departments), coordinate events to educate the community and policy makers on complete streets, participate in the writing of a complete streets ordinance, and communicate regularly with coalition members and policymakers. When I received the email regarding the Bicycle Sustainability Study Abroad Program from my co-chair on the DFFC Active Living Work Group, I jumped at the opportunity to apply. The program as described fused my interests in the built environment, public policy, and public health. Additionally, I viewed this as an opportunity to become a better cyclist and advocate as it relates to my work

in Detroit. Furthermore, I have a strong interest in urban planning, though I have not had the opportunity to take extensive coursework in urban planning.

As I entered the program, I expected to see and experience the best cycling infrastructure in the world and to take multiple ideas back to Detroit with me on what infrastructure and policies should be adopted in Detroit immediately. To a certain extent this perspective evolved during the program. In visiting Copenhagen, which is my favorite cycling city in relation to the other locations visited, my perspective changed by gaining further respect for what Detroit is currently doing as it relates to cycling infrastructure. The Copenhagen city administrators affirmed that the bicycle infrastructure did not happen overnight, but was an intentional process which took over four decades and is still in process. Hearing this, I considered that the work in Detroit must begin somewhere and then continue to progress to improve the infrastructure. Furthermore, I noticed that the cities visited during the program did not have the level of infrastructure as is seen in the United States for those who are disabled or aging, such as curb cuts or ramps. This was affirmed during the Amsterdam leg of the trip when a young disabled woman commented that the infrastructure there makes it challenging for her to use independently.

I plan on taking what I have learned during the Bicycle Sustainability Program and presenting lessons-learned for Detroit City Council and representatives of the Mayor's Office for future projects. As stated, I am already working with the Detroit City Council on a complete streets ordinance, this program will give me the opportunity to review the ordinance language again and provide additional recommendations to ensure that Detroit can reach the prominence of Copenhagen as a cycling city. Lastly, as a result of the program I have improved my skills as a cyclist and intend on cycling more than I did prior to the program.



In Search of Food and Smart Land Use

by Emily Thomason, participant in the 2015 University of Oregon Study Abroad Bicycle Transportation Seminar

The first time I went to Europe, five years ago, I had no knowledge of or interest in urban planning but remember one of the first big differences I noticed was being able to walk to not one but three different grocery stores. At home, I'd go to the grocery store a few times a month and always took my car (mostly because the grocery store was far away and groceries are heavy). But in Glasgow, I shopped almost daily. As a result, I got fresher food and more exercise!

Unfortunately, in many U.S. cities, daily grocery trips made on foot aren't a realistic option. Grocery stores are usually large (which means a wide selection and items to be purchased in bulk) but not built to be accessed by those walking, biking or using public transportation. This was not always the case (before the rise of car-dominance, local grocery stores served individual neighborhoods) and is slowly changing but the importance of access to small, local grocery stores continues to impress me as I visit different countries and cities. Every time I visit Europe, I learn new things and most recently, I traveled to Denmark and the Netherlands with an eye specifically for things I could take home and imple-

ment as a Masters student, a local advocate and a hopeful future planner in Richmond.

In the 20th century, zoning in the U.S. has favored segregated uses – residential strictly separated from busy, noisy commercial and retail. While concerns about noise pollution and quality of life are valid, small, quiet neighborhood stores have historically served individual neighborhoods without large, noisy parking lots. Of course, access to local grocery stores is just part of a larger challenge. One of the biggest things I want to bring home with me is a focus on building density, preserving human-scale development where possible and retrofitting auto-centric areas.

One way to retrofit areas that were built without pedestrians in mind is to appeal to and protect those traveling by bike. Distances that seem daunting on foot (especially with bags or children) are often manageable by bike. Building safe, protected bike lanes make medium distance trips by bike even more comfortable and encourage more people to bike short and medium distances. With more people biking, cities can relax their minimum parking requirements and leave more space for non-parking-lot development. This helps foster more dense development and means that even more people can benefit from being able to safely use their bicycle to get around (and that includes getting groceries).

In short, I went to Europe looking for better ways to build bike lanes and now return to the U.S with better reasons to build bike lanes.

accessibility
is
redefined.



Discussion from:
Hank Phan
Emily Thomason
Myra Tetteh
Emily Kettell

Accessibility Redefined **by Hank Phan**



Meet Katherine, she lives in Copenhagen and this is her and her bike at Central Station. Katherine enjoys biking because she can go wherever and whenever she wants to. She tells us she feels free with her bike.

According to Katherine, we were in for a treat because she rarely ever takes the train. Today was an exception because she was attending her friend's bridal shower outside of Copenhagen. She was bringing her bike to Central Station to catch a train out to the station nearest the event and then she would bike the rest of the way to the final destination. Katherine thinks public transit is "okay," because her daily routine only revolves around the most convenient form of transportation, her bicycle.

We see that cycling proves accessibility to all users such as Katherine riding her bike to a bridal shower wearing a trench coat over possibly a formal dress that goes with her leggings and pink flats. The bike is an accessible tool for all residents of Copenhagen. Bicycles are far more affordable than automobiles and this allows an increase in safe and sustainable mobility, which also represents empowerment of the people.

However, bicycles can only transport people so far before it becomes an unreasonable form of mobility. Here at Central Station today, we see many people like Katherine connecting the bridge by combining two types of transportation to reach their destination. Transportation

does not have to be strictly one form, like it currently exists in the urban realm of typical American cities. Here at Copenhagen Central Station, we witness accessible transportation through multimodal methods involving the combination of bicycles and trains. There are tremendously well designed bicycle infrastructures to allow residents to live their daily lives car-free. However, there are additional forms of transportation such as bus, metro subway, suburban train, and regional train services that allow endless alternative transportation options for residents. There are no incentives for automobile transport because one can access neighborhoods and towns in the greater Copenhagen metropolitan, other parts of Denmark, and even through international borders.

The accessibility made possible by multimodal transportation planning in Copenhagen shows a society that genuinely prioritizes social equity for their human scale culture.



Just a Piece of the Puzzle by Emily Thomason

Europe boasts some beautiful, memorable bike lanes – wide, scenic rural lanes shaded by a canopy of century-old trees, peaceful urban connections through parks and an elevated bridge (built just to make an important connection for bicycles) curving between buildings – but what connects those bike lanes to a wider network of trains, ferries, bike-shares and car-sharing systems is possibly even more impressive (though less visible and less well-suited for a postcard).

A great transportation system recognizes the limits of each mode (e.g. one can't bike through a canal or take light rail directly to one's front door) and, instead of playing them against one another (and forcing people to choose), it allows users to use multiple modes where it makes sense.

Those biking to or from a rail or metro station will find a safe place to park their bike, while those wishing to take their bikes with them on regional trains can do so and will find a dedicated place to store their bikes on the train. Even ferry connections are simple and quick for those on bikes or on foot! Of course, not everyone will want to take their bike with them on a train or have a bike in another city. Thus, bike and car-share systems are invaluable last-mile tools to get people to their destination.

Europe: Come for the bike lanes, stay for the amazing web of multi-modal options!



Connection to Other Modes by Myra Tetteh



The efficiency of the cycling networks in Copenhagen (Denmark), Utrecht (Netherlands), and Amsterdam (Netherlands) relies on more than just a well-connected network of bike lanes on-road and separated bike lanes (“cycle tracks”). The cycling network also relies on connecting to other forms of transportation, including trains, trams, buses, and car share. During the visit to Copenhagen, Utrecht, Amsterdam, and Malmö (Sweden) it was observed that cyclists employ other forms of transit as a part of their commute.

Residents were observed leaving their bicycles at transit stations and then boarding forms of transit to for the next leg of their commute. In some cases, residents were quoted stating that they own two inexpensive bikes which remain at the ends of frequented transit stops. The Bicycle Sustainability course students even used the train and light-rail on multiple occasions to commute with their bicycles to other municipalities. The ease of commuting when connected to other forms of transit made owning a motor vehicle less necessary to reach destinations.

Specifically, one example which illustrated this was a trip to Albertslundruten (Denmark), approximately 20km (12 miles) outside of Copenhagen. Students in the Bicycle Sustainability course took their bicycles by train to the community and completed the ride back via a “Bicycle Superhighway,” which is a separated bicycle transit road solely for cyclists connecting several communities. The ease of options to either take a train with the bicycle or use the “Bicycle Superhighway” for the roundtrip are very attractive options that can be adopted for Detroiters. Furthermore, in Amsterdam, within the network within a 30 minute radius from the city center, one can catch up to 200 trains. Another example of the connected modes of transportation was seen in Malmö. There, Volvo has sponsored a car share program of hybrid vehicles which receive their plug-in power via solar power.

These examples highlight the need for an integrated network with various forms of transportation options for users.





Cycling as a Way to Support Regional Connectivity

by Emily Kettell

One of the best things about this program was realizing that there are solutions to connecting various municipalities and major cities without using the car! It was exciting to visit Gladsaxe, a suburb of Copenhagen, and learn about the bicycle superhighway that goes to and from Copenhagen to Gladsaxe, as well as the many other routes that will be built in the coming years.

The cycle superhighways are a partnership between 22 municipalities, including Copenhagen, that work together to create safe and comfortable routes to encourage bicycle commuting for distances greater than five kilometers, as opposed to using a car. As the region grows, congestion from commuting to work will increase as well. The bicycle superhighways are a great way to encourage a sustainable mode of transportation as well as promote public health, and more affordable transportation options.

To encourage usage of the cycle superhighways, there are bike fix it stations along the paths. Additionally, on the cycle superhighway from Albertslund to Copenhagen there were wayfinding signs that included distances to the final destination, in this case, Copenhagen. The paths were well-maintained and often meandered through open space, making for a nice commute.

Figure 1: Leaving the Cycle Superhighway into Gladsaxe

Figure 2: Wayfinding Sign Along the Albertslund to Copenhagen C99Path





by Brad Tollison, participant in the 2015 University of Oregon Study Abroad Bicycle Transportation Seminar

When I was growing up, I would spend countless hours pushing the limits of my imagination. I built stadiums with Legos, airports with foam board, and ruined carpet with crayon because naturally that was the best way to create roads.

Oddly, I had no idea planning or managing a city was even a career that existed. I suspect many urban planners felt this way, as the old joke goes -- a future urban planner tells their family about choosing a career in urban planning, only to be met with “what’s that?”

It was not until the “Great Recession” of 2008 that I had the freedom to discover urban planning. I had a lot of free time, and so I began to get into advocacy for transportation. The more I learned, the more I wanted to be a part of making things happen. I met my future boss, Kim Turner in 2009 at a public hearing. I had previously asked numerous counselors and searched the internet on what kind of education is required to be a part of the transportation field, but I had no real answers until I asked Ms. Turner. From this moment on, I pushed to learn and do everything I could, especially with the transit department at the City of Torrance.

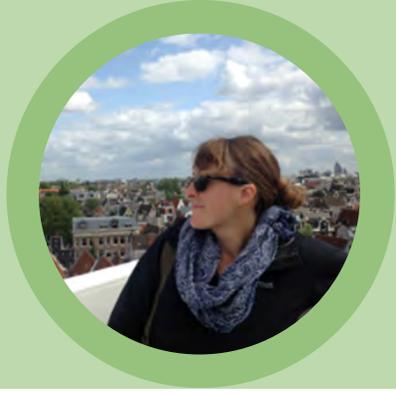
My academic career until this point was mediocre at best. I was simply unmotivated. I had spent several years in and out of community college and had a stint learning sound engineering only to realize I had more fun taking the bus and train to school than actually being there. The same was true for the IT job I had at the time. I was motivated now though, and I decided my best option was to go to Cal

Poly Pomona to study Urban & Regional Planning.

Fast forward to 2015 and I found myself with the opportunity to travel to Europe and learn about perhaps the most well regarded transportation infrastructure in the world. I didn’t even have to think about this, it was a true no-brainer.

The night I arrived in Copenhagen, I was totally shocked to find a sea of bicycles at Norreport Station. I had heard that this city loved bicycles, but I had no idea they could swim in them. As I walked to the hostel, I saw streets where car lanes were converted for use with bicycles only. Signals that controlled bicycle traffic, and most importantly over the next few days I’d see countless more examples of a society that invested in people instead of cars. In Los Angeles, where I grew up, people look at you with tremendous confusion when you tell them you didn’t use a car to get somewhere. They simply can’t imagine life without a car. The same is true for the Danish and the Dutch, only for them it is in regards to bicycles. After the study abroad program had ended, I went back to Utrecht where my Airbnb host lent me her bicycle because she too could not understand how I could possibly get around without it.

This experience taught me that people will do what is easiest. If driving is easy, then that’s what they will do. If it’s riding a bicycle, or walking, sure, no problem. A small minority may choose an option for health or philosophical reasons, but the reality is we all value our time, money, and sanity. Design can push people to an option, but ultimately it’s the public who has to come to a consensus on the quality of life they’d like to have. It’s my goal to engage the public on the options available to them along with the trade-offs that come with them.



Best. Day. Ever.

by Jody Trendler, participant in the 2015 University of Oregon Study Abroad Bicycle Transportation Seminar

I couldn't even ride a bike until I was 11. To be specific, I couldn't balance on a bike without training wheels. When I finally did learn to balance on my old 3-speed it was the best day ever. I could ride anywhere in my hometown of Eugene, Oregon with my friends or little brother in tow. From these wobbly beginnings emerged a lifelong appreciation for all types of cycling - from bike commuting in rainy Portland, Oregon to long road rides along the McKenzie River to shredding singletrack in Austin, Texas.

I became interested in the field of transportation planning while studying alternative transportation as an undergraduate at the University of Oregon - one glance at the UO's Bike Master Plan and I was smitten. I am now pursuing my passion for active transportation as a graduate student in Community and Regional Planning at the University of Texas at Austin.

Going into the Bicycle Transportation Field Studies program, I was looking forward to being inspired and energized by the bicycling culture, infrastructure,

and supporting policies of Copenhagen, Utrecht, Amsterdam, and others European cities along the way. My hope was to acquire a tool kit of great ideas from these places, as well as strategies for how to implement them someday in the U.S. I was also feeling a bit skeptical about the applicability of these European ideas to the existing conditions for cycling in the U.S.

Every day of this program was the BEST DAY EVER. There is just no substitute for experiential learning. I was relieved to discover that none of the cities we visited were perfect (although strolling through Tivoli Gardens might give a different impression) - they were all works in progress, just like cities back home. Likewise, I realized that there is no one way to build and no one solution that magically makes a place bike-friendly. It is a process of trial and error, and these cities offer a library of initiatives and examples for us to draw from. It's hard to tell which details will be the most important when I get back home, so I've been trying to take it all in - infrastructure, policies, culture, taxes, signal timing, cycling attire - all of it might be useful in the future. I am forward to returning to the U.S. with fresh vision and a head full of new ideas.



Cycling as a Mode of Easy and Efficient Transportation

by Xiao Xiong, participant in the 2015 University of Oregon Study Abroad Bicycle Transportation Seminar

I applied for this program as I went into the final year of my undergrad. I had the pleasure of taking Professor Schlossberg's Introduction to City Planning course in 2012, and remember his exciting description of this program abroad. Studying ANYTHING in Europe sounded amazing! I mean, it's Europe! Although I was excited to learn more about it, I couldn't help but be disappointed that the next time program would be offered would be the summer of 2015—my final year. I always thought that studying abroad was something you did as a young undergrad trying to figure out your place in the college world. Little did I know that I would still be a young, clueless undergrad in my senior year. Throughout college, the idea of studying the bike transportation system in Denmark and Holland was always in the back of my mind. As time went by, I thought that I could replace it with another study abroad program: maybe teaching English in South America? Maybe study architecture in Spain? They just never worked out. Going into the winter term of my final year, I thought that I had made peace with not studying abroad; I didn't have to go, not everyone studies abroad and they're fine! But when I was browsing the study abroad website (dreaming that I could magically go) I came across this program again. I remembered the reason for my passion of planning and knew that this was something I needed to do. With this in mind, I took a leap and decided to apply as what

I called a “non-traditional study abroad student”.

However, it was quite the opposite when I arrived in Denmark! I was happily surprised that I was actually among the youngest in our program, which consisted more of graduate students. Alongside these talented students, I learned the culture of these great European cities but more importantly discovered that they are just like Americans! Of course they were not heavily obese-ridden from the overconsumption of McDonalds (which were everywhere in Europe), but the idea of convenience was really what made them ride bikes. My perspective on this changed entirely after being immersed in these cycling cities; Europeans were not different than us “lazy” Americans because they heroically cycled every day. It was just the easiest option. That is something that Americans, me included, always use as an excuse for driving: it's just easier. My mind was blown as locals laughed about cycling to save the environment; I guess that's not what wakes them up in the mornings as I had previously thought. The methods of transportation are switched in the U.S. and these European cities: driving is a means of daily commute in the U.S., whereas abroad, it is seen as recreational and something you do when going on a holiday. This switch-up really is quite fascinating, and is the main reason why things are so different between the U.S. and these countries. This experience was absolutely insightful as it taught me how simply cycling has great health, economic and social benefits. I hope to be able to use this experience in my future when working with networks such as Safe Routes to School or transportation planning departments. In addition, I want to use this experience to influence my close friends and family on cycling and using alternative modes of transportation more often.



by Yazmin Valdez-Torres, participant in the 2015 University of Oregon Study Abroad Bicycle Transportation Seminar

My interest in cities and bikes started when I moved to Tallahassee Florida. I am originally from Mexico City, but I spent two years in Cholula Puebla, a small town located west of the state capital of Puebla. Since the very first day on Cholula I noticed two things: there are almost the same amount of street dogs as inhabitants and the bicycle is the common mode of transportation among local people. As a result, I was always afraid of running into either a dog or a cyclist!

It did not take me too long to buy a bicycle. I never used the car in Cholula, I moved around either walking or cycling. However, my interest in cities and cycling did not start there. After a month living in Florida's Capital, Tallahassee, I was feeling depressed and I realized that I missed being able to walk and bike around. I missed seeing people on the street and having casual encounters with others. How can I feel isolated and depressed if I had a car to move around? I could go everywhere I just needed to take the car and drive around. But the car provides such a private space that, if necessary, people are able to get goods and services without even getting

out of their cars. This is how I realized that my new city is an auto-oriented city with poor walking and biking opportunities.

That's how I got interested in cities and biking. I got obsessed with understanding what makes cities vibrant and others not so exciting, what makes people to be part of a community, what makes people love their cities.

On summer of 2014, I visited Amsterdam and I could not believe what I was seeing: such a beautiful city, with people walking and biking. I rented a bike right away and biked all around the city. I felt free, secure and happy. I was able to move around, seeing people and being part of the city. At that moment I made the connections: I liked Cholula so much because the main plaza was free of cars, there were people everywhere and because you do not need a car to move from point A to point B.

Since that time I have committed to promoting the use of the bicycle as an urban form of transportation in Mexico, specifically in my hometown Mexico City. This is not an easy task but if it is possible in Copenhagen and Amsterdam it should be possible in other cities. I assure you, we can do this, we just need to show others the beauty of biking and the rest is history.

safe
cycling
culture.



Discussion from
Patrick Kelsey
Christina Lane
Yazmin Valdez-Torres

Safety *by Patrick Kelsey*

The conversation about bicycle infrastructure should begin and end with safety. Of course the reality of the situation is that many other factors are weighed and measured. Europeans had very clear, rational thinking about safety



“ The culture came first not the infrastructure ”

- Finn & Heidi, newlyweds opinions on the reason Danes are courteous of each other on the roads



“ Lot’s of women don’t wear helmets, I think, because of vanity, but I have two daughters, so the morality of not wearing a helmet when they have to is unfair of course ”

- Lena, Copenhagen cyclist

Children Safety **by Christina Lane**



In the United States, the avoidance of bicycling comes from the uncertainty of safety. When thinking about children's safety during daily routines, such as going to and from school, Americans put up a guard that prevents them from experiencing the joy and freedom that a cycling culture brings.

But with the help of planners, designers and community, the consistent and continuous cycle tracks, separation from cars, and strong and responsible culture has increased cycling safety dramatically in Denmark and Netherlands. The sense of security felt by locals in the children's role in the cycling culture has allowed for further growth of infrastructure, increased safe routes to schools, and more classes for children.

While talking to locals within Denmark and Amsterdam, safety was never a concern because, as according to Sidsel, a local mother, cycling is the norm. She said it was “weird” we were even asking her about safety stating, “it must be the same way as other people driving [cars aren't] thinking about safety...Everybody I know is transporting their children by bike and I don't know anybody [whose ever had] an issue.” Because locals do not consider themselves “cyclists” and simply use bicycles as their main mode of transportation, our concerns over cycling are difficult to comprehend.



If Riding is Safe for Kids, it is Safe for Everybody

by Yazmin Valdez-Torres

There's much debate around cycling with a baby in the US. Some people think it is dangerous and irresponsible. However, in Western European countries it is part of normal life: Danish kids are trained to use the bike early in life.

Is it safe to cycle with a baby?

I asked Eva Ekbrant, Engineering and Environmental Manager of the City of Copenhagen, if it is safe to cycle with a baby and she responded, "It is always safe! It is safe to cycle with a newborn, there is nothing to worry about. However it depends on the parents, usually babies are transported by bicycle from a very early age, probably when there are a couple of months old. In Denmark, there is not a law about it: adults can transport babies and small children whenever they want. In fact, it is not required that the children wear helmets. However most of their parents make them wear it as an extra security measure."

Of course the main concern about cycling with a baby is the possibility of falling, but many moms argue that they never fall off and that a bike collision with a baby on board is extremely low, "Much lower than falling down the stairs while having their baby in their arms" (Hay, 2014).

Which baby carrier is best to transport kid?

There are a variety of ways in which a parent can transport kids: bike seats such front and back bike seats are probably the most popular type used by parents. They are easy to install and they can be switched to different bicycles which makes it very convenient for parents. The bike seat can be located in the handlebar or in the frame behind the cyclist. Either way has pros and cons. Bike seats on handlebars provide a good view to the baby so parents can see the child the whole time. To make it more comfortable for babies a transparent wind shield can be mounted in the seat. This type of baby seat can be used with babies about 33 pounds, which is about the weight of a three year old kid (Wagenbuur, 2013).



Woman biking with baby in Copenhagen



Woman with two children in Utrecht



On the other hand, bike seats at the back of the frame provide more stability to the rider. In addition, children up to 50 pounds can be transported on them. The Dutch Cycle Union indicates that children of all ages can be transported by bicycles. However they recommend bike seats only for children that are able to sit independently (Fiertserbond, 2014). For smaller babies they recommend to use bucket seats that are similar to car seats.

Bucket seats can be installed in the front, in the back of the bicycle, and even on cargo bikes. They provide more stability to newborns and small babies and it protects them from the sun, rain, and wind.

In the same way, Dutch bike seats manufacturers recommend to use the seats with babies who are 6 to 9 months old, or when the baby is able to sit upright on its own (Wagenbuur, 2013).

If you don't cycle as a small child in this country you are not part of the group

- Ronald Tamse, Traffic Engineer at Gemeente Utrecht

Cargo bikes are another alternative to transport children. They are usually more expensive than bike seats but they provide multiple benefits. For instance, the big advantage is that multiple children can be transported at the same time, and that children are always at parent's sight. Small babies, can be transported too using bucket seats. In addition, they provide plenty room to carry a variety of items.



Once little kids are able to walk, they are ready for their first bicycle experience. Balance bikes, small bicycles with no pedals, allow children to develop basic skills such as stability and steering without the fear of falling. When they have mastered balance and steering they are ready for a normal bike.



Once they have mastered balance and steering, children are ready to be cyclists. For Dutch children cycling is a very important aspect in their lives. That is why children learn to cycle by themselves at an early age: probably when they are three or four years old! Cycling is part of elementary school activities. According to the Fietsberaad, 49 percent of the Dutch primary school children cycle to school. In this regards Ronald Tamse, Traffic Engineer at Gemeente Utrecht commented, "If you don't cycle as a small child in this country you are not part of the group."

As you can see Dutch children learn to be cyclists even before they born: "Before their memories will even kick in, they are on bikes" (Shahan, 2014). Probably some of their first memories are being transported on a bike. They also grow up thinking that the use of the bicycle as an urban form of transportation rather than solely as a recreational activity.

In order to have bicycle friendly cities riding needs to be safe for kids. If it is safe for kids it is safe for everybody! If we make riding safe for small children we could change the cyclist culture. Culture is not static and can be changed with time. Now it is in our hands to make safe and friendly cities for cyclists.

wheels of fortune.



Discussion from
Xao Xiong
Kirsten Jones
Kyle Meyer

Economics of Cycling by *Xao Xiong*



Myth: Cars and Car Parking Are Required For Successful Businesses



There is a certain belief that many, mainly business owners, have about running a successful business. This is that there needs to be a great number of parking spaces allotted to a business in order for its survival. However, I happened to dine in a Thai restaurant called “Suphan Thai Take Away” and was able to interview two workers who commuted to work solely by metro and bike. They also mentioned that none of their customers drive to their restaurant and instead walk or bike. There can be such a busy lunch rush sometimes that customers have to park their bikes far away because there isn’t enough bike parking nearby. One of the workers even went as far as expressing enthusiasm in providing more bike parking to help keep up with the growing number of customers, which I had never heard of any business worker say before! If this restaurant relied on their driving customers, it would not have any chance at survival. Furthermore, the world’s longest pedestrian street known as “Stroget” has thousands of visitors and shoppers every single day. Out of the thousands, maybe a handful comes by car. There are hundreds of bikes lined up in the bike parking racks as people come to shop or partake in the busy atmosphere. I interviewed a young man parking his bike in front of the “Magasin du Nord” mall and asked him if the bike parking was usually this full. He laughed a little bit and mentioned that it is usually more crowded to where bikes are literally sandwiched together. “Sometimes I end up taking the metro home because my bike is covered by five or six other bikes.” That is mind blowing! Additionally, two girls that I interviewed afterwards mentioned that they never bike to Stroget because there are simply too many pedestrians that navigating efficiently is very difficult. Instead, they take the metro and walk to the pedestrian street to do their shopping.

Myth: Cyclists don’t Spend Money

It can be assumed that cyclists only commute to work and home, as it doesn’t make sense to shop; where would you put it? Luckily the Dutch and Danish have baskets and back racks that they use. In conjunction to the previous section, bikes in Denmark are the main modes of daily commute—which include grocery, retail shopping and just going to hang out with friends. One can even argue that shopping is easier on a bike because it’s much quicker to park, get in, and then get out. I pulled up behind a woman at a red light and noticed the bottle of tequila, champagne and 6 rack of Carlsberg beer in her basket. I pulled up next to her and commented that I’m quite jealous of the party she’s going to. She laughed and replied “This is how all my friends bring the fun to our parties.” She recommended the tequila she just picked up at a nearby liquor store on her way to a birthday celebration and sped off. People bike anywhere and everywhere because it’s easy; it’s a way of getting to and from one place to another most efficiently. There is nothing in the water that the Danish and Dutch consume to make them cycle more. It starts from education at a young age and teaching the importance of safe transportation.





Bikes and Businesses ***by Kirsten Jones***

More stops, More often, Means More Money

One of the major arguments against bike lanes is that it takes away precious on-street parking. Business owners regularly state their concerns that their customers need to park directly in front of their establishments so that they may remain economically successful.



However, such a notion is repeatedly being disproven. Automobile traffic does not have to be the sole way in which a person visits a shop. In fact, increasing bicycle accessibility to a store can dramatically increase sales. According to the New York Department of Transportation, after the construction of a protected bike lane on 9th Avenue in Manhattan, “local businesses saw a 49 percent increase in retail sales. On other streets in the borough, the average was only 3 percent” (“Measuring the Street”). People who are able to feel safe while biking directly to the store are more likely to shop more often, thereby spending more money. A redesign of New York City’s Union Square to include a protected bike lane, “resulted in 49% fewer commercial vacancies, compared to 5% more throughout Manhattan.”

In a 2012 study, it was found that patrons who arrive by automobile, “do not necessarily convey greater monetary benefits to businesses than bicyclists, transit users, or pedestrians” (Clifton, et. al., 2012). It is true that people who drive spend more, on average, per visit. However, cyclists stop more often and spent more money overall. This can clearly be seen in Copenhagen, where 63 percent of all trips in the city center are taken by bicycle. Bikes are regularly staked up outside of shops, especially during rush hour. “I stop at the shops every day on my way home from work. It’s just part of my day,” says Helene, a young professional walking out of the 7-Eleven convenience store with a sandwich in tow.

Synergy can be created between bikes and businesses; both benefit from the other. People who may not have any other way to access stores are easily able to do so by bike. At the same time, businesses gain more patrons. As one shopper in Utrecht, Netherlands explains, “I don’t have a car so my bike is everything to me. Whenever I have time to shop for fun, we bike to the stores. I do all of my grocery shopping by bike, too. I go three or four times a week.”

Eradicating on-street parking for the construction of protected bike lanes and increased bike parking helps businesses more than harms them. It allows people to have easier access to stores, and encourages them to stop in, and open their wallets, more often.





Business by Bike ***by Kyle Meyer***

The number and variety of bicycle based businesses makes perfect sense in a bike friendly place but can still be surprising. Aside from traditional bike shop storefronts, there are a stunning variety of business types that can be done from the bicycle itself. Far beyond traditional courier services, a plethora of business ideas exist on and around the bike. There are advantages and disadvantages to bike based businesses. It seems that most potential limitations can be overcome with imagination and innovation though.



Bike based businesses are far more mobile and adaptable than traditional storefronts. They can relocate on a daily basis if they want, allowing them to reach more customers. Their rent cost is much lower or nonexistent. Potential customers feel more comfortable interacting with storekeepers, even while riding around town. Plus a ride is a great way to start and end a long day of work!

The biggest disadvantage is that large bikes take practice to maneuver. One shopkeeper we talked to said she sometimes feels the large bikeways are overcrowded and she gets stressed about other commuters not signaling turns. Like tractor trailer drivers, bike businesses deserve space and respect on the road. This is both a problem of culture and infrastructure. Like the businesses themselves, these will continue to adapt.



shifting
public
opinion.



CPH

Discussion from:
Patrick Kelsey

Marketing by Patrick Kelsey

One of the most surprising and promising features of the municipal bicycle programs was the depth and vision of their marketing. The long term strategies and dedicated resources showed the importance of evolving outreach efforts, even in the presence of great infrastructure. To these cities, just as no street is ever complete, contemporary campaigns are a major part of maintaining their robust bicycle culture. We saw some of the most creative marketing tactics I've seen (in any industry) being employed by local governments.

This gives me hope that there is indeed a career opportunity for a marketing professional such as myself in these great cycling cities. Next stop, exploration year in Holland!



Photo credit: Julie, IBikeCPH, Copenhagen

When a street is redesigned, there is typically a launch event which brings foot traffic to local businesses who may be worried about whether reduced parking will hurt their sales.



English and native language maps and documents containing cycling statistics are made readily available in many municipalities. These city marketing materials are thoroughly researched, well designed, and updated regularly.



In Malmo Sweden, a banner stating "You are driving in one of the worlds best cycling cities" stretches across an intersection during a red light phase.

Place Making in Europe

Closing Remarks from Adam Beecham, Program Coordinator

Every once in a while in life you meet an exceptional person. It's the kind of person that inspires you to become a better person yourself. Someone that is so selfless they are doing something for the greater good of humanity, not for themselves. Someone so passionate that you yourself can't help but get swept up in their cause. Someone whose ego isn't shattered from being wrong, but who wants to learn from their mistakes and make themselves and others around them better people.

Recently I was lucky to have met a group of 20 such people. Coming together from universities all over the United States, 19 students and University of Oregon professor Marc Schlossberg showed up in Copenhagen ready to learn about how to make their cities more livable.

Let's face it, there is something wrong with America's city infrastructure. As an American that has now lived in Europe for four years I've grown to love the sense of community you get just by living in one of its cities, such as the social aspect of the cities, squares where parents let their children roam freely as they enjoy a conversation with their friends, or when people of all ages from infant to senior citizen using the cities cycling paths and feeling safe while doing so.

These were just a few of the many things these students came to experience in Denmark, Sweden, and the Netherlands. My role in this equation was to provide logistical support and a bit of in country know how to the students and Marc on their journey as they met with city officials, architects, and ordinary people to figure out what these countries are doing to make their cities so comfortable and inviting for their inhabitants.

There will be a point in my life when I move back to the USA. One of the things that makes Europe so difficult to leave is a term that I've come to learn as 'place making'. "Place making" as it's called in city planner speak, has roots deep within many European cultures. In Denmark it's called *hygge*, in the Netherlands it's called *gezelligheid*, in French you could say it's *joie de vivre*." Most European cultures have a term that in some way reflects their cultural desires to make life pleasant, enjoyable, sociable, serene, happy, healthy and balanced for its citizens.

Gezelligheid in Holland has permeated into almost every aspect of life. It's not hard to find a pleasant canal to walk, or to have a *gezellig* night out with friends. In Denmark, making your home or community *Hygge* is a quintessential part of life. In France *joie de vivre* means experiencing joy in everything around you. All of these cultural ideals have a major underlying theme: Enjoyment.



For anyone that's spent any amount of time in these cultures, it's no wonder that now American city planners are looking to these countries for inspiration. Since Napoleon III commissioned work to be done on the city center of Paris in 1853, a revolution of city planning began that continues to this day across Europe. Ordered to bring 'light and air' into the city center, Architect Georges-Eugene Haussmann's work began the age of designing cities towards the health and well being of its citizens. Until that time the city center of Paris was a dark and decaying city where disease was running rampant. Now Paris is arguably the most beautiful city in the world.

The Dutch have also left great contributions to the world of city engineering. The word landscaping is derived from the Dutch word landschap. After centuries of shaping and forming the land, the Dutch have become masters of their landscape. Their skills in water management, architecture, wind-power energy, and cycling infrastructure have now become exportable commodities as the world looks to them for solutions.

The Danes along with the rest of Scandinavia are known as world leaders when it comes to sustainability. A few brief tours with city officials in their major cities left our group feeling as if America had a lot of catching up to do when it came making our cities sustainable. With aspirations to become carbon neutral by 2030, Malmö Sweden is just one example of a culture trying to do it's part in creating a sustainable planet. The City of Copenhagen has a major facility that turns it's garbage into energy without creating pollution. We learned that there are also big plans to expand these facilities, along with dozens of other major projects we saw these countries making investments in. Investments to better the lives of their citizens.



In our visits to these cultures, this idea of European "place making" seemed to impress the students the most. These projects were all major investments into it's citizens health and wellbeing by their governments. Whether it was the cycling superhighways, the incredible urban parks created in the cities poorest neighborhoods, the random urban trampolines, the harbor-side pedestrian walking streets, the car free cafe lined city centers, the creative modern and classical architecture that you can cycle through, the expansive city and rural bike networks, the island of food vendors, the ease of car sharing, or the safe routes to school for kids, there were many 'places' that left a lasting impression upon the students. It's no surprise that these countries are amongst the happiest nations in the world year after year.

America is a relatively young culture and is carving out its identity into the world. Are we still that culture that was born out of incorporating the best ideas from other countries to them our own? The answer to that question is yes.

Having spent three weeks with Professor Schossberg and the university students I realized that all of them were excited and energized by the prospects of trying to incorporate the many things they had learned abroad into the cities they were from. Many have already begun projects, made goals or action plans that will eventually turn our future cities into fun, safe, and smart and sustainable places to live.



It has me optimistic about an eventual return to the United States. Having grown accustomed to Europe's great "place making" it would be a difficult part of life to leave behind. So it is with great pleasure that I introduce to you the future stars of urban planning.

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