

Active and Healthy Travel - Cycle Streets

Cycle Streets (also known as Bicycle Boulevards in USA) originated in The Netherlands (Fietstraat) and Germany (Fahrradstrasse). A cycle street is

- On a main cycle route with high cycling flows
- Remains open to local motorised traffic, but
- Cyclists have priority over motorised traffic



Cycle priority means that cyclists can ride two abreast and cars have no right to overtake or pass cyclists on the Cycle Street. Cyclists should behave as if they are cycling on a bicycle path and motorised vehicles should also have the feeling that they are on a bicycle path and should therefore anticipate cyclists behaviour as though on a bicycle path. Cyclist priority is primarily created by street design. Cycle Streets are often converted from existing town centre streets or in new developments. Street designs are not mandated and vary in different towns and countries. Cycle priority is embedded in highway law in both the Netherlands and Germany. DfT proposed introducing a similar legal priority in UK, but this was never taken forward.

Street design features

To achieve the feeling of comfort for cyclists to take priority, Cycle Streets should have:

- A maximum traffic speed of 20 mph
- Psychological and physical traffic calming features
- Priority for cyclists at junctions
- Surfacing and surface markings (e.g. cycle logos) to encourage cyclists to take priority position in the road
- Narrow street profile to prevent or discourage overtaking. A typical maximum length should lie between 200 to 500 metres.
- High flows of cyclists – Dutch guidance suggests 1000+ cyclists per day
- Low flows of motorised vehicles – traffic levels vary between 1000-3000 vehicles per day
- The use of the Cycle Street sign to inform both cyclists and motorists – however, there is no TSRGD approved sign nor internationally agreed sign. Examples are given below.

International and Oxford examples [1]

Cycle Streets (by various names) are common throughout Netherlands, Flanders and Germany. TfL Quietway's are often designed as Cycle Streets. In Oxford, Jack Straw Lane was designed to be similar to a Cycle Street. The original design of Cowley Road

was also designed to encourage cyclists to take priority position, with central cycle logos the length of the road.

Advantages

Cyclists are highly visible. A bicycle street uses up less space than cycle tracks. The street remains accessible to motorised traffic. A bicycle route typically contains different kinds of bicycle amenities and the bicycle street is one of them. The bicycle street fills a missing link between two other bicycle amenities, such as two bicycle paths.



1) 2 cycle lanes with colour surfacing

Central reservation – crossable but forces cars to stay behind cyclists

2 x 2.5m with 1.0 m wide paved strip



2) Mixed Carriageway

Coloured surfaced to look like cycle track with narrow margins

Typical width 4.5 to 5 m

Cyclists encouraged to ride in centre



3) Quiet residential street, Tarmac surface

Typical 4.5 m wide

Use cycle logos to emphasise cyclist priority



4) Cycle lanes (2 m wide) at side

Car path max 3.5m width. In two-way roads, traffic must pass by moving into cycle lane

Speeds

A safety study (Delbressine 2013) found median motorised speeds at sites were fairly similar, except for in Alkmaar. Average speeds of the different vehicle categories on bicycle streets differ between the two-bicycle street lay-outs. Speeds of all vehicles are higher on two-lane bicycle streets than on single-lane bicycle streets. Slower speeds can be achieved by a narrower profile and speed humps.

[1] References

Delbressine R (2013) The traffic safety of bicycle streets in the Netherlands, Master thesis, Delft University of Technology [155 pp in English]

Eder, S (2017) Radverkersforderung mit dem Instrument der Fahrradstrasse in Osterreich (Cycling promotion with bicycle streets in Austria), Master Thesis, Technical University Vienna [217 pp in German]

Presto (nd) Cycle Streets [3 pp]

Sustrans (2014) Cycle Streets – Technical Information Note No. 32 [12 pp]

Walker L, Tresidder M, Birk M (2009) Fundamentals of Bicycle Boulevard Planning & Design, Initiative for Bicycle and Pedestrian Innovation, Portland State University, Oregon, USA [95 pp]

Question 1

Active & Healthy Travel: Cycle Streets - What do you think?

Can we make cycling safer through cycle street ideas? What else could we do to make cycling more attractive to everyone across the county? What might make you cycle more often, and for different types of journey?

To respond please use the online consultation form.