

The Strategy of Popularising Cycling as a Means of Transport

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Abstract - The City of Gdańsk lies on the crossroads of two major European cycling routes, the "Baltic Sea Circuit" and the "Baltic Sea to Adriatic Sea" route.

Thanks to the endeavours of the municipal authorities in 1992-2002 the city gained about 30 km of cycle tracks, including a very attractive route running along the seashore all from Gdańsk through to and including Sopot.

The role of the bicycle transport can become more prominent in Gdańsk so that it may account for up to 10% of the city traffic over the next 10 years. This is the goal woven into the Gdańsk 2010 Development Strategy. To reach it, however, the cycling track network must be expanded to at least 150 km in total.

The projects completed to date were undertaken either as self-standing ventures (e.g. Jana Pawła II Street through to Jantarowa Street) or included in larger road-building works (Potokowa Street).

Gdańsk is also a stop on the way of two routes of the EuroVelo European Cycle Route Network, the Baltic coast "ring route" (R-10) called the „Hanseatic Route”, and the route leading from Gdańsk to Trieste / Pula on the Adriatic Sea, called the „Amber Route”.

„The Concept of a Cycling Track Network in the City of Gdańsk and the Conceptual Plan of a Cycling Thoroughfare along the Main Traffic Route across Gdańsk” envisages that the Hanseatic Route will follow the shoreline crossing the Main City on the way, while the Amber Route will cut across the Main City from the terminal in Nowy Port and onwards south along the Radunia Canal.

The venture currently in progress is the „Gdańsk Cycling Investment and Promotion Project” pursued under the operational programme No. 11 of the Global Environment Facility. Our aim is to build ca 30 km of separate cycling tracks in the city within the next two years. The secondary objective is to slow down the car traffic along ca 70 km of streets and roads.

1. Foreword

The City of Gdańsk, sprawling beautifully on the Baltic shore in the vicinity of the Vistula mouth, lies on the crossroads of two major European cycling routes:

- the Baltic Sea Circuit running all around the sea basin, and
- the Baltic Sea to the Adriatic Sea route

However, in the city itself the bicycle is not a popular means of daily transport. The prime cause lies in the fact that the network of cycling tracks in Gdańsk is modest.

Thanks to the endeavours of the municipal authorities about 30 km of tracks were built or arranged in the years 1992-2002. In this way the city gained a very attractive route running along the seashore. In the year 2000 the Gdańsk section was linked to a sister track in Sopot.

The already dense and still thickening car traffic on the roads carries the threat of collisions, which almost invariably put the cyclist in the position of the gravest injured party.

Cyclists must be provided with the possibility of travelling safe within the town transport grid for recreational purposes, to commute to work or school, and/or to get to shopping centres.

The observations amassed by many cities indicate that in line with the development of the cycling infrastructure the travelling customs among city dwellers undergo positive transformations irrespective of the climate or terrain. In Gdańsk the role of the bicycle in the city transport system can become more prominent and in the next 10 years its share in the transport volume can go up to 10%. This goal is woven into the Gdańsk Development Strategy until 2010. The fundamental condition of achieving the growth, however, is that the city must be criss-crossed with a grid of cycling tracks totalling at least 150 km. When working towards that aim it is also important to remember that:

- the bicycle transport can only become an alternative for the car, if the accident hazard is drastically reduced, and
- the bicycle can only be promoted as a means of transport if a cycle traffic system meeting basic safety criteria is in place.

2. The Existing Cycling Tracks

Thanks to its authorities, in the period from 1992 to 2000 the city built the following cycling tracks within its borders, see Attachment No. 1:

Tracks built under specially dedicated projects

1. Cycling track laid as an extension of Jana Pawła II Street, from Czarny Dwór St. to Jantarowa St.

track length – 900 m

built in – 1994/ May 1995

the project comprised a pedestrian track, cycling route, squares with recreation facilities, and elements of landscape architecture. Its cost added up to about PLN 5,700,000. The cycling track is paved with concrete cobble block.

2. Pedestrian and bicycle route in the course of Jantarowa St., from Jelitkowo to Brzeźno (along the seashore)

route length – 3.2 km

built in – 1994/1995

cost of the investment – ca. PLN 3,600,000

The paving was laid of concrete cobble block.

3. Cycling track across the Jelitkowo Park, from the Sopot border to Morska St.

track length – 0.381 km

construction commenced – 4th quarter of 1999.

construction completed – May 2000.

total project cost – PLN 844,875

The track across the Jelitkowo Park is laid with non-chamfered paving brick. Double-lane, it is 3m wide on average.

The track was appended with a pedestrian track running alongside.

4. Cycling track along Pomorska St.

Stage I: section between Jantarowa and Chłopska Streets

track length – 1.1 km

construction commenced – January 1998.

construction completed – July 1998.

total cost of the project stage – PLN 294,866.12

The works on Stage I comprised the erection of a bridge over the Potok Oliwski stream.

Stage II: section between Chłopska and Subisława Streets

track length – 1.1 km

construction commenced – March 1999.

construction completed – June 1999.

total project cost – PLN 532,774.00

The double-lane track along Pomorska St. (stages I and II) is paved with concrete cobble blocks and averages 2.5 m in width.

5. Cycling route along gen. J. Hallera St. from Al. Zwycięstwa St. to the beach in Brzeźno

track length – 4.5 km

construction commenced – March 2001.

construction completed – June 2001.

total project cost – PLN 1,348,172.00

The track along gen. J. Hallera St. is paved with mineral pitch mix. This double-lane route is 2.5 m wide on average.

The project works included the erection of a 5.84m wide and 10.27m long bridge to span the Potok Strzyża stream.

Cycling tracks built in combination with road projects:

1. Track along Potokowa St.

The investment in Potokowa St. was carried out in 1997/ 1998 at the total cost of PLN 4,411,627. The track marked in the width of the pedestrian track follows the course of the road and is given a bitumen paving. It is 790m long.

2. Cycling track along Armii Krajowej St.

The track is laid at the crossroads of Łostowicka, Armii Krajowej, and Witosa Streets. Totalling ca 400 m in length, it is paved with concrete cobble blocks. The entire project it was an element of, called the W-Z [East-West] Route stretching from Łostowicka to Jabłoniowa Streets (1.9 km long) was pursued in the years 1999 to 2001 and cost PLN 63,500,000.

3. Cycling track along Damroki St.

This 900m long section forms a lane marked in the body of the pedestrian track and is paved with concrete cobble blocks. The Damroki St. roadwork project was executed in the years 1996-1997 and cost PLN 664,345.

4. Cycling track along Sikorskiego St.

The road project embraced the construction of a section of the P-P [North-South] route from Armii Krajowej St. towards Witosa St. and the crossing of Chałubińskiego, Sikorskiego, and Dragana Streets. The investment was pursued in 1997 to 1998 and cost PLN 3,506,784. The 400m long cycling track along the street is paved with concrete cobble blocks.

5. Cycling track along Cienista St., from Witosa to Worcella Streets

The construction works on the street, 750m in length, were launched in 1999 and completed in 2001. The entire project cost PLN 3,500,000.

6. Cycling track along Jaškowa Dolina St., between Wileńska and Piecawska Streets

The investment was carried out in 2001 at the cost of PLN 3,800,000. The track is ca 700m long.

Tracks built by third party investors:

1. Cycling track in Kartuska St. (along the bridge over the Ring Road)

This section of the track was included in the Auchan roadwork project (agreed with the city) on the development of the existing road system so as to provide access to the newly erected supermarket at Szcęśliwa St.

The cycling lane running in the width of the pedestrian track is 400m long and paved with concrete cobble blocks.

Non-standard cycling tracks marked with lines out of the existing pedestrian tracks (usually following the length of the pedestrian tracks):

1. Cycling track along Chłopska St.

track length – 1.841 km x 2

2. Cycling track along Rzeczypospolitej St.

track length – 2.1 km x 2

3. Cycling track along Al. Zwycięstwa St.

track length – 1.66 km

3. Development of the cycling route network

The main streams of cycling traffic were identified in the study entitled: „The Concept of a Cycling Track Network in the City of Gdańsk and the Conceptual Plan of a Cycling Thoroughfare along the Main Traffic Route across Gdańsk”.

The planned grid of the major routes included in the „Conceptual Plan...” adds up to 150km. Most represent cycling tracks.

The system of cycling routes proposed in the „Conceptual Plan...” forms the basic grid, a starting point for designing further tracks all over the city. Its design links the network with the regional system of cycling routes in Northern Poland.

The developed concept of expanding the cycling traffic network within the city of Gdańsk is based on the following assumptions:

1. The planned grid accommodates various travelling purposes one might expect in the city and the adjacent communes
2. All tracks are planned on the assumption they should form a grid of continuous routes

3. The plan reflects the hierarchy of various track categories, i.e. main routes, supplementary routes, and local tracks, as proposed in the study entitled „Technical Standards of the Cycling Infrastructure for the Cycling Route Network in the City of Gdańsk”
4. The routes are integrated with the city's public transport system
5. The plan identifies the main multi-modal nodes with attended car parks and bicycle hire facilities
6. The document indicates the phasing of the works on individual cycling tracks
7. The conceptual plan of the cycling route network is aligned with the assumptions adopted in the „Study of the Conditions and Directions of Spatial Development of the City of Gdańsk”.

The cycling traffic programme in Gdańsk is pursued simultaneously along several independent lines (for the routes in execution see Attachment No. 2):

1. under the project called „The Gdańsk Cycling Investment and Promotion Project” co-financed by GEF:

- a. track along Cienista St., length =680m,
- b. track along Legionów, Wyspiańskiego, and Miszewskiego Streets, length =1750m,
- c. "Długie Ogrody" cycling track, length =2800m,
- d. route along Al. Grunwaldzka St.:
 - from the Sopot border to Pomorska St., length =1087m
 - from Pomorska St. to Derdowskiego St., length =1 884m
 - from Derdowskiego St. to Słowackiego St., length =3520m
 - from Słowackiego St. to Miszewskiego St., length =1290m
 - from Miszewskiego St. to Hallera St., length =933m
- e. track along Kościuszki St.
 - the project is currently in the phase of preparing the materials needed for the development of the technical documentation,
 - the cost of developing the construction and structural documentation is estimated ca PLN 70,000

2. under other investments pursued by the city:

- a. cycling track along Nowotna St. included in the project called „Technical Infrastructure of the Stogi Bathing Site”,
- b. cycling route along Słowackiego St. included in the street modernisation project,

3. out of the funds granted by the Commune Fund for Environment Protection and Water Management, and the County Fund for Environment Protection and Water Management:

- a. pedestrian and cycling route along Kołobrzaska St.,
- b. pedestrian and cycling route along Obrońców Wybrzeża St.,
- c. pedestrian and cycling route across the Sobieszewska Island.

4. International cycle routes

EuroVelo is a project to develop 12 high-quality, long-distance, cross-border cycle routes envisaged to total ca 62 thousand kilometres. Approved for execution in 1997, the network is to link large cities and attractive tourist areas all across Europe. The project idea came from the European Cyclists' Federation and is now sponsored by the European Commission. The aim of the initiative is to encourage people to cycle instead of driving.

All EuroVelo routes are approved and constructed according to uniform technical criteria. In this respect the countries of Western Europe are in a more advantageous situation as they already have an extensive net of regional and national cycle routes in place.

The EuroVelo routes have to meet certain criteria, to name but a few major ones:

- ◆ They have to go across city centres
- ◆ accommodate cyclists travelling with heavy luggage
- ◆ be asphalt-paved in at least 80%
- ◆ retain the same paving type for stretches not less than every 2 km long
- ◆ in the event they form a lane of regular road the car traffic on the road may not exceed 1000 vehicles a day
- ◆ if built as a separate track following the course of a road, the traffic density on the road must not exceed 10000 vehicles a day
- ◆ be wide enough to accommodate 2 people riding side by side
- ◆ slope no steeper than 6%
- ◆ be usable all year long, irrespective of the weather
- ◆ pass by shops spread no rarer than every 30 km, ensure accommodation is available every 50 km and public transport every 150 km

Gdańsk is a stop on the way of two routes of the EuroVelo European Cycle Route Network:

the Baltic coast "ring route" (R-10) called the „Hanseatic Route”: St. Petersburg – Helsinki – Turku – Oulu – Luleå – Umeå – Stockholm – Gotland – Øand – Kalmar Ystad – Bornholm – Malmö – Copenhagen – MON – Falster – Lageland – Erø – Als – Schleswig – Kiel – Rügen – Stralsund – **Swinoujście** – **Gdańsk** – Kaliningrad – Klaipeda – Liepaja – Saaremaa – Tallin – Narwa,

and the route leading from Gdańsk to Triest / Puli on the Adriatic Sea, called the „Amber Route”: **Gdańsk** – **Wrocław** – **Walbrzych** – Náchod – Bern – Vienna – Graz – Ljubljana – Triest – Paula.

„The Concept of a Cycling Track Network in the City of Gdańsk and the Conceptual Plan of a Cycling Thoroughfare along the Main Traffic Route across Gdańsk” envisages that the Hanseatic Cycling Route R10 will follow the seashore route along Hallera and Al. Zwycięstwa Streets down to the centre of the Main City, then out along Elbląska and Szutowaska Streets. The Baltic - Adriatic R12 route, on the other hand, will lead from the terminal in Nowy Port, along Marynarki Polskiej St., then follow the main thoroughfare crossing the Main City and continue onwards towards the south along the Radunia Canal. The courses of the R10 and R12 routes are shown in Attachment No. 3.

The works on the above-named international routes should be co-ordinated by the provincial government considering their scope and the need to work closely together with the neighbouring provinces.

It is also desirable to embark on co-operation with the Union of Communes of the Polish Republic, Euroregion Baltic, so combine their effort in obtaining finance from the aid funds of the European Union programmes.

5. Non-budgetary sources of financing cycle track construction projects

Success in applying for the European funds depends on winning the support of the „cycling lobby” formed by various organisations operating in the European countries and related to the promotion and development of cycle traffic.

Among them one should list Cities for Cyclists, the federation grouping about 30 cities from different European countries, all supporting the development of cycle transport on their own grounds.

The Secretariat of the organisation is run by the Danish Cyclists' Federation in Copenhagen, member of the European Cyclists' Federation (ECF).

The Federation formulates its mission as promoting the development of cycling for both commuting and tourism purposes through:

- preparing proposals of new cycle routes
- disseminating information on the methods available for solving specific cycling-related problems
- publishing maps and guidebooks
- financing research and studies related to cycle transport
- organising conferences and international meetings
- supporting members of the Federation in their applications for financial aid from the European funds to finance the development of the cycling infrastructure.

According to the information obtained from the Federation secretariat the membership fee depends on the size of the population and is rated at EUR 5 per thousand inhabitants, though the minimum fee is EUR 750 and the maximum is EUR 1500.

Gdańsk falls in the EUR 1500 category.

The venture currently in progress is the „Gdańsk Cycling Investment and Promotion Project” pursued under the operational programme No. 11 of the Global Environment Facility.

The „Gdańsk ...” Project was put together thanks to the joint effort of the local authorities and NGOs – the Polish Ecological Club and Citizens' Ecological League.

The project budget presented to GEF amounts to USD 2.5 million, out of which USD 1 million is subsidised by GEF.

The main goal of the „Gdańsk ...” project is to build ca 30 km of separate cycling tracks in the city within the next two years. The secondary objective is to slow down the car traffic along ca 70 km of streets and roads. The initiative has a broader perspective to it, since through promoting the trend of changing the car for non-motorised transport it will reduce the level of greenhouse gas emitted from the traffic. Popularisation of the new means of transport in everyday journeys among the community is perceived as a solution that will bring the

inhabitants of Gdańsk obvious environmental, economic, and social benefits. The project also attempts to tackle the institutionalised mentality barriers, which limit the use of the bicycle in its function of a means of urban transport, and the legal, cultural, and financial obstacles, which prevent wider use of the bicycle in large cities. The proposed investments in the infrastructure will make the cycle traffic safer and transport more affordable to the less wealthy.