



Graz

About Graz

Graz, Austria's second largest city (with around 300,000 inhabitants) and the capital of the province of Styria, is located in the Graz Basin on the eastern margin of the Central Alps. According to the modal split of Graz, cycling accounts for roughly 20% of trips, while motorized private transport comprises 40%. Graz's 'Mobility Plan 2040' aims to reverse this trend, reducing car use to 20% and prioritizing sustainable modes (such as walking, cycling, and public transport). This plan includes expanding the cycle path network, implementing traffic calming measures and introducing bike-sharing schemes. A parallel 'Masterplan Radoffensive 2030' for Graz and its surrounding further envisions cycling as the primary mode of daily mobility, achieved through a comprehensive cycling infrastructure network.



Cycling in Graz

In Graz, there has been a multi-faceted approach to promote cycling, integrating both top-down and bottom-up strategies. These encompass public awareness campaigns, action-oriented movements, infrastructure development and financial incentives, involving public authorities, NGOs, businesses, research institutions and citizens. Interest groups play a key role in shaping policy. Beyond lobbying, citizen engagement and data-driven approaches, interdisciplinary collaboration is also fostered. The overall objective is to strengthen cycling as a mode of mobility, shift transport policy towards prioritising bicycle-friendly infrastructure, and thereby enhance quality of life for residents and promote sustainable urban development.



Examples of cycling promoting initiatives

Interest group

MoVe iT (since 2019)

MoVe iT is an association advocating for a sustainable, socially inclusive and ecologically sound mobility system in Graz. The initiative has established a network of organizations, businesses and individuals, and launched a non-partisan campaign for transport transition. MoVe iT also participates in action-oriented events like Kidical Mass and is a recognized partner in local transport policy dialogues.

Radlobby ARGUS Styria (since 2013)

The association Radlobby ARGUS Styria advocates for cyclists' interests and aims to promote non-motorized transport by championing a cycle-friendly environment and improved cycling infrastructure. They maintain in close dialogue with city officials, provide critical oversight of infrastructure projects and partner in various projects, such as cycling school buses and cycling training programs.

NGO

VCOE – Mobility with Future (since 1988)

VCOE, a non-profit organization, focuses on sustainable transport systems that are socially just, ecologically sound and economically efficient. Through a knowledge-based approach, they support climate goals by using data analysis, public relations, networking with politicians, experts, businesses and interest groups, and organizing events and mobility awards to promote sustainable transport in Austria.



Factors enabling cycling in Graz

Shining a light on cycling thanks to media coverage

By successfully leveraging significant media interest and public attention, a transport transition campaign shifted the public discourse towards sustainable mobility. By attractive option, the initiative catalyzed a broader conversation about urban mobility and elevated the development of a cycling-friendly environment to a priority issue in Graz.

A mandate for change through public engagement on cycling policies

A transport transition proposal, supported by a 12,000-signature petition, advocated for sustainable mobility. By lobbying for dedicated cycling lanes, safe school routes and increased funding, the campaign influenced local decision-making, contributing to €100 million allocated for cycling in Graz and Styria by 2030. This demonstrates public engagement's power in shaping cycling culture and urban transport policy.



Lobbying for shaping the future of cycling

The sustained engagement and effective collaboration of cycling initiatives play an important role in ensuring that cycling mobility remains a priority, especially on the political agenda. Fostering continuous dialogue through strategies interventions, such as cycling demonstrations, workshops and direct meetings with stakeholders, can effectively influence decision-making processes that promote cycling.

Factors hindering cycling in Graz

The slow pace of cycling improvements

A significant obstacle to promoting cycling in Graz is the lengthy process from project submission to the realization of cycling infrastructure. Complex bureaucracy, involving multiple authorities and administrations, often results in delays in decision-making and project implementation. This is particularly challenging for smaller-scale infrastructure improvements, which could quickly enhance cycling conditions.

Car-orientated culture as an obstacle for cycling

A car-centric culture remains prevalent, hindering efforts to curtail car use. Consequently, reducing grey infrastructure, such as parking spaces, often faces resistance from residents and businesses. Moreover, the prevalence of drive-through traffic in many urban areas of Graz creates an unfavourable environment for cycling and presents a considerable obstacle to its promotion.

The role of perceived safety in cycling adoption

Perceptions of unsafe road conditions significantly influence the adoption of cycling as a primary mode of transport. These perceptions are shaped by concerns regarding traffic speed, road infrastructure design and personal safety experiences. This is particularly noticeable among families with young children, as many parents are unwilling to take their children to school by bike or let them cycle on their own.

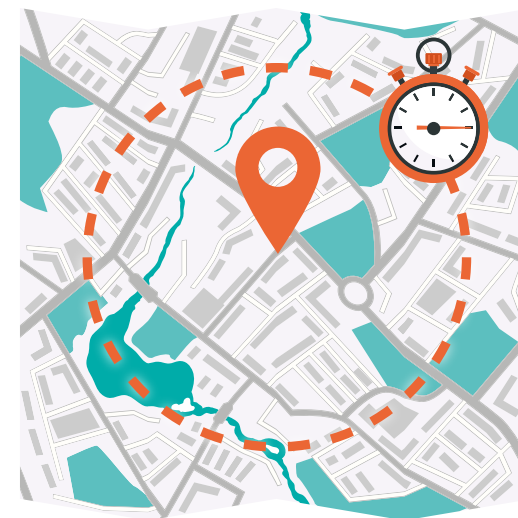





Lessons for governance and planning

While cycling initiatives in Graz demonstrate potential, they face challenges due to the limited resources of volunteer-run associations. Initiatives often struggle with capacity, requiring participants with the necessary know-how and frequently depending on donations. Although a collaborative network with other organizations and interest groups exists, improved internal communication within the city administration and authorities would facilitate the project proposal submission and implementation, beyond funding.

Furthermore, these initiatives highlight the need to address perceived safety concerns. In addition to awareness measures, which should specifically target children, women from diverse sociocultural backgrounds and elderly people, the ongoing development of traffic-calmed neighbourhoods, coupled with expanded cycling infrastructure, particularly on the city's outskirts, serve to establish cycling as a viable everyday mobility option and foster more just socio-spatial conditions.



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