



Poznań

About Poznań

Poznań, Poland's fifth-largest city, together with Poznań County forms a metropolitan area of nearly one million inhabitants. Situated on the Greater Poland Plain, the city's flat and slightly undulating terrain, along with its historical layout of districts centered around local markets, fosters favorable conditions for cycling.

The city's cycling policy dates to 1991, and since 2007, it has been shaped by multi-year strategies focused primarily on infrastructure development, safety improvements, and integration with public transport. In recent years – despite the termination of the municipal bike-sharing program in 2022 – the share of cycling in overall traffic has been steadily increasing, reaching over 10%, which is among the highest in Poland.



Photo: Urząd Miasta Poznania



Cycling in Poznań

Over the past decade, numerous initiatives and programs have been launched by local government, NGOs, and businesses, each playing a distinct role in promoting cycling. The municipality focuses on strategic and comprehensive mobility planning, including the development of radial cycling networks and district-connecting ring routes.

NGOs play a key role in changing societal and cultural attitudes towards cycling by organizing a variety of promotional and engaging events, such as group bike rides, incorporating cycling into local celebrations, and hosting Winter Cycling Day. These initiatives also target excluded groups, such as for example the Deaf, seniors, and refugees.

While public and third-sector efforts center on individual trips, businesses are increasingly leveraging cargo bikes for goods delivery and transportation. The city is home to three manufacturers of various types of cargo bikes. Poland's first tests of micro-hub logistics are also being conducted in Poznań, with the potential to serve multiple postal and courier operators using cargo bikes for deliveries.



Examples of cycling promoting initiatives

Policy

Poznań Cycling Program (2017–2022 with a perspective to 2025)

The main strategic document on cycling in Poznań focuses on developing a cohesive cycling network, achieving a 12% cycling modal share by 2025, and reducing cycling incidents, including the elimination of fatalities. The program supports these goals through traffic-calming zones, bike parking systems (public, residential, and transit-integrated), and enabling contraflow cycling on one-way streets. It is worth noting, however, that the implementation of the plan is progressing much more slowly than initially anticipated.

NGO

Poznań Bicycle Association (1993 – today)

The oldest and largest cycling association in Poznań, Rowerowy Poznań, engages in extensive consulting, lobbying, educational, promotional, and inclusive activities, fostering a shift in the city's mobility culture. Key initiatives include submitting projects for the participatory budget, co-creating the Poznań Cycling Map, participating in city events and celebrations, organizing the “Rzeka Rowerów” (Bicycle River Parade) and “Rowerowe Powitanie Wiosny” (Cycling Spring Welcome), promoting winter cycling, and running inclusive campaigns for groups such as the Deaf and seniors. The association also monitors and reviews the city's cycling investments.

Infrastructure

Greening Regional Freight Transport in fuAs (GRETA) (2023 – 2026)

The GRETA project aims to decarbonize last-mile freight transport by utilizing zero-emission vehicles like cargo bikes. It focuses on developing micro-hubs for package pickups by couriers and future use by residents. Pilot projects in Maribor, Reggio Emilia, Verona, Poznań, and Budapest leverage existing infrastructure for rapid implementation. In Poznań, project partners include Łukasiewicz – Poznań Institute of Technology, the City of Poznań, and GLS.



Factors enabling cycling in Poznań

Every meter matters

Analysis of municipality reports and documents and data from 2017-2023, as well as a meta-analysis of data from other cities, confirms that the dynamic and consistent development of a diverse cycling infrastructure is one of the key and indispensable factors enabling the growth in cycling popularity.

Stay 30!

Numerous studies in other cities have shown that 30 km/h zones significantly improve pedestrian and cyclist safety, ultimately leading to increased cycling rates. Poznań has already implemented 30 km/h zones in many areas around the city center. This policy should be continued.

Fun, fun, and trendy!

Social initiatives that contribute to a cultural shift in the perception of bicycles and their function as a mode of transport are also crucial in increasing cycling popularity. Group rides, picnics, and information campaigns are essential complements to infrastructure and legislative solutions.

Great Plain

Terrain is a fundamental, highly significant, and naturally occurring factor that facilitates cycling. It can be leveraged in communication and promotion to demonstrate that cycling in Poznań and its surrounding county is effortless and accessible to all.

Factors hindering cycling in Poznań

Mind the gap!

While Poznań's cycling infrastructure has developed rapidly and, for the most part, maintains a high standard, a certain problem remains: its continuity. The fragmented nature of the infrastructure affects cyclists' experience and can both discourage people from using bicycles as a mode of transport and impact the safety of cyclists and pedestrians alike.

Beyond the city center

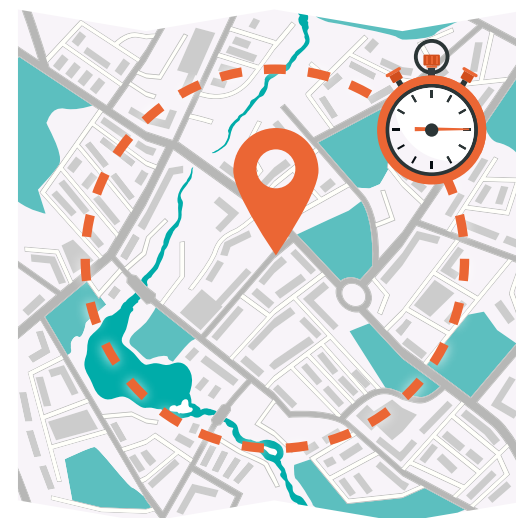
Due to population density forecasts, investments in cycling infrastructure are concentrated in the city center. For residents of the Poznań County commuting to the city for work, the lack of continuity in cycling infrastructure at Poznań's borders may discourage them from choosing bicycles. There is a lack of a comprehensive cycling plan between the City and the County.

Not only leisure

Less than 20% of residents in Poznań and the Poznań County use bicycles for commuting. The majority use them for leisure, while only a small percentage use them for transporting goods. The association of bicycles solely with recreation significantly reduces the potential for using this mode of transport for daily errands.

Winter is coming!

Cycling naturally decreases in winter as the weather pushes people toward other forms of transport and recreation. On top of that, safety concerns play a big role—poor visibility, slippery or uncleared surfaces, and the need to ride on sidewalks or roads make cycling less appealing during the colder months.



Lessons for governance and planning

The city of Poznań, along with local NGOs, research institutions, and businesses, has successfully shifted the transportation paradigm, promoting cycling as a viable, comfortable, and safe mode of transport. Their complementary initiatives, supported by research and global examples, highlight the importance of well-developed cycling infrastructure as a key driver of growth.




To advance further, the focus should shift to the social and cultural dimensions of cycling and optimizing freight transport. Encouraging more people to cycle daily, beyond recreation, is crucial. Creating cyclist personas and identifying specific barriers can help develop targeted solutions.

Addressing the concerns of other road users, such as drivers and pedestrians, is essential. Proactively responding to complaints about cyclist behavior can foster a more inclusive environment.

Finally, Poznań should recognize the potential of cargo bikes. A local subsidy program could boost their adoption, making them a practical, eco-friendly alternative or supplement to cars.



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