AfricanMobilityMonth

Information Brief

Join #AfricanMobilityMonth from 20 September to 20 October 2019 to show your support for walking and cycling in our cities!

#AfricanMobilityMonth

Why participate in African Mobility Month?

Around the world, cities are recognizing the importance of catering for the needs of pedestrians and cyclists to improve quality of life. Making walking and cycling safer and more appealing is one of the most affordable and effective ways for cities to reduce CO₂ emissions, while boosting mental and physical health, improving access to economic opportunities for the poor, and creating more livable, equitable and prosperous cities for all.

In many African cities, over a third of citizens move between their daily activities on foot or by bicycle. Without safe infrastructure for walking and cycling, these commuters are exposed to significant hazards from motorized vehicles, and it is no surprise that Africa has the highest proportion of road fatalities in the world with 39% of deaths being pedestrians and 4% cyclists (WHO, 2015). African cities have the potential to lead the world in sustainable mobility by protecting and supporting pedestrians and cyclists, but active mobility is often overlooked in national transport budgets and urban plans.

Africa’s urban citizens need to challenge the widely held assumption that they all wish to drive cars by showing their support for walking and cycling, in order for national and local governments to better appreciate the demand for safe walking and cycling facilities. Various local initiatives around the continent (such as car-free days, place making, Open Streets, Critical Mass etc.) are inspiring citizens to reimagine and reinvent their streets to be accessible for all. African Mobility Month (20 September to 20 October 2019) aims to celebrate these and other activities to raise the priority of walking and cycling in the continent’s development agenda.

For more information, visit https://ecomobility.org/african-mobility-month/
What is active mobility?

Active mobility refers to forms of transport that use human physical activity to move people and sometimes goods from A to B. It is typically used to refer to walking and cycling, but can also include running and the use of roller blades, skateboards and kick scooters.

What are the benefits of active mobility?

Active mobility includes clean, affordable and flexible modes of transport that facilitate social integration while helping cities to meet international climate targets. In contrast, motorized transport comes with many negative externalities such as traffic congestion, high costs, road injuries and fatalities, increased carbon emissions and air pollution which is harmful to public health. In extreme cases, these factors can damage a city’s international reputation and ability to attract tourists and investors. To slow and reverse the large-scale uptake of cars in African cities, all citizens need to be made aware of the benefits of walking and cycling so that they can support local initiatives calling for better infrastructure for active mobility. To help cities, partners and media communicate the urgency of a shift towards active mobility and the benefits derived from prioritizing active mobility, this brief outlines some facts and figures.

1. ROAD SAFETY

Cities prioritizing walking and cycling see a decrease in traffic injuries and fatalities, saving on medical costs and protecting lives.

- Globally, the number of road traffic deaths continues to increase, reaching over 1.35 million people in 2016. Road traffic injuries are now the leading cause of death for children and young adults aged 5–29 years. (World Health Organization, 2018)
- Deaths due to road injuries have grown by 84% in sub-Saharan Africa since 1990, almost twice the global increase. Road injuries killed 231,000 people in sub-Saharan Africa in 2010, accounting for almost one-fifth of the global road injury death toll. In addition, there were over 8 million non-fatal injuries, of which 885,000 were severe enough to warrant hospital admission if adequate access to medical care were available. The combined burden of non-fatal road injuries in sub-Saharan Africa exceeded 14 million healthy life years lost. Four countries (Nigeria, Ethiopia, South Africa, and Sudan) together account for half the road injury death toll of sub-Saharan Africa. (Bhalla et al., 2014).
- In Nairobi, between 59% and 65% of road fatalities are pedestrians, in Cape Town the proportion is 57% and in Dar es Salaam it is as high as 67% (Vanderschuren & Zuidgeest, 2017).

**MEDELLIN, Colombia:** Road safety has been improved by investing in quick, low-cost and impactful street interventions (costing between 1,700 and 17,000 USD) and introducing vehicle restrictions. The mortality of pedestrians and motorcyclists reduced drastically. For instance, there were no accidents recorded in the Laureles neighborhood of the zone of Consolata in 2018, where generally at least 11 road accidents occur monthly (ICLEI, 2018).
2. HEALTH

Cities promoting walking and cycling boost their citizens’ physical and mental health, helping them prevent diseases such as type 2 diabetes, cardiovascular diseases, Alzheimer and depression whilst reducing absenteeism at work.

- Worldwide, obesity has nearly tripled since 1975. In 2016, more than 1.9 billion adults were overweight; 650 million of these adults were found to be obese. (World Health Organization, 2017).
- In Africa, the number of children who are overweight or obese has nearly doubled since 1990, increasing from 5.4 million to 10.3 million (World Health Organization, 2016). In 2015, 37% of women in South Africa were classified as obese and 15% of men (OECD, 2017).

DID YOU KNOW?

- 25 minutes of brisk walking a day could add to seven years to your life, while cyclists on average live two years longer than non-cyclists (EUROPEANMOBILITYWEEK, 2019).
- People who walk to work report greater job satisfaction and wellbeing, which in turn leads to increased employee retention and reduced costs to business (Chatterjee, 2017).
- Employees who are physically active take 27% fewer sick days than their colleagues (UK National Institute for Health Care Excellence, 2012).

3. AIR QUALITY

Cities promoting walking and cycling are more attractive and can offer their citizens better air quality, less congestion and higher quality of life while preventing premature deaths.

- WHO estimates that globally 3.7 million people die each year as a result of outdoor air pollution. (World Health Organization, 2015).
- The total of annual deaths from ambient particulate matter pollution (APMP) across the African continent increased by 36% from 1990 to 2013 (from ≈ 180 000 to ≈ 250 000). In the same year, the estimated economic cost of premature deaths from ambient particulate matter pollution was = USD 215 billion, which is more than the cost of premature deaths due to unsafe water (OECD, 2016).
- Research for the GFEI has shown that over 90% of respiratory diseases in Nairobi are likely to be due to air pollutants (FIA Foundation, 2016).

UTRECHT, Netherlands: The economic savings from reduced air pollution and healthcare costs derived by an increase in bike infrastructure and active mobility are estimated to be worth about 300 million USD annually (Citylab, 2019).
4. **INCLUSIVITY**

Cities investing in walking and cycling infrastructure are more inclusive as those who cannot afford to travel in vehicles are better able to access opportunities in the city in a safe manner. Accessible and complete streets which take into accounts all users’ needs are essential as they determine how people move.

- People with disabilities benefit directly from good pedestrian infrastructure, which improves their mobility and independence. **Over 15% of the world’s population live with some form of disability**, and this number is growing (WHO & World Bank, 2011). The risk of disability is higher amongst the poor, women, the elderly and children.
- In Nairobi, Kenya, 95% of roads have high pedestrian flows, but only 20% have pedestrian footpaths, while in Kampala (Uganda) **more than 60% of road networks have no footpath segregated from motorized traffic** (UN-Habitat, 2013).

**TANZANIA:** AMEND has shown that introducing sidewalks, speed reductions and traffic calmed crossings can reduce serious injuries by as much as 26%, at a cost of around 25,000 USD per school. (FIA Foundation, 2019).

5. **ECONOMIC GROWTH**

Cities can use active mobility as a strategic tool to boost local economies, reduce poverty and provide access to places of employment, culture and exchange. More people walking and cycling in streets throughout the day and night can help to build a community feeling that in turns can create a higher level of perceived security.

- According to Tom Tom Data, Cape Town has the worst congestion levels in the whole of South Africa. Each year, the city’s **motorists waste an average of 152 extra hours behind the wheel because of traffic congestion**, which significantly diminishes the productivity of its working population (Tom Tom, 2019).
- **Congestion costs London’s economy 9.5 billion Pounds each year** (INRIX, 2017).

**DID YOU KNOW?**

- Cycling produces global benefits of 150 billion Euros per year. In comparison, negative externalities of motorized road transport are estimated at 800 billion Euros per year. (ECF, 2018)
- In the UK, it has been calculated that for every Pound invested on walking and cycling, the equivalent of 13 Pounds of benefits are returned to the local economy (UK Department for Transport, 2015).

**LONDON, England:** Pedestrian sidewalks are good for business. In London, people who walk to the high street spend up to 40% more than people who drive to the high street (TfL, 2013). Improving London high streets for walking and cycling led to a 216% increase in people stopping, sitting and socializing. Retail vacancy was 17% lower after high street and town center improvements and retail rental values rose by 7.5% (Carmona et al, 2018).
SUWON, South Korea: The city invested in the “Urban Regeneration Project” creating pedestrian-only streets, gardens and public space. The improved pedestrian-only streets attracted more people to walk and shop at the local stores, generating 90 million USD in commerce, roughly equating to 1,500 jobs created throughout the 2-year preparation (ICLEI, 2018).

What infrastructure do we need?

Instead of being trapped in bumper-to-bumper traffic, imagine being able to save time and money by walking or cycling to work. What would we need to make walking or cycling a safe and appealing option? Here is what cities can do to attract citizens out of their cars and engage in active mobility:

- Ensure that all roads (especially in busy areas) have continuous paved sidewalks for pedestrians.
- Build dedicated cycle lanes that are physically separated from vehicle traffic and pedestrians.
- Install vertical barriers (e.g. bollards, posts, planters or concrete medians) to prevent motorcycles and vehicles from using pedestrian sidewalks and cycling lanes.
- Provide night lighting, shading and gardens alongside sidewalks to attract people to use them during the day and night.
- Pedestrianise some roads in commercial areas so that more people can walk there without being endangered by cars.

For more information on how to design this infrastructure to improve access for all, please refer to the “Streets for Walking and Cycling” guide (see link at the end of this document).

What should we ask from our leaders?

African Mobility Month aims to show citizen support for walking and cycling in our cities, and can be used as an opportunity to engage with leaders on these issues.

Here are five things that we can ask from them:

1. **Do as you say:** Show your support for active mobility by walking and cycling in public to show that it is for everyone (not only the poor) and should be respected just as much as cars.
2. **Take the first step:** Introduce a national or city active mobility policy (if you don’t have one), or revise existing policies if they are insufficient.
3. **Budget for active mobility:** Set aside at least 20% of the total transport budget to fund active mobility programmes at national and city level.
4. **Measure the miles:** Set quantifiable and measurable goals for active mobility, then collect the data you need and evaluate your success. Revise your approach if you are not making progress.
5. **Work together:** Include a diverse range of local stakeholders in your planning and implementation, paying particular attention to the needs of more vulnerable road users (e.g. those with disabilities).
Learn more

If you would like to learn more about how to support a shift toward active mobility in your city, please make use of the following free resources:

- Active Mobility Policy Guidelines: https://nmttoolkit.itdp.org/
- Infrastructure Design Guidelines: https://www.itdp.org/publication/africa-streets-walking-cycling/
- Global Outlook on Walking and Cycling: https://wedocs.unep.org/bitstream/handle/20.500.11822/17030/globalOutlookOnWalkingAndCycling.pdf?sequence=1&amp%3BisAllowed=
- Open Streets Toolkit: https://openstreets.org.za/open-streets-toolkit
- Learning from other African Cities: https://ecomobility.org/tumi-network/

Global partners

Technical partners
Full resources


Carmona M, Gabrieli T, Hickman R, Laopoulou T, & Livinstone N. Street appeal. UCL for Transport for London


TOMTOM (2019). Traffic Index. Link


World Health Organization (2015). Health in 2015: from MDGs to SDGs.


World Health Organization (2017). Obesity and overweight fact sheet. Link