

Velo-city 2011 Seville - more than 60.000 cycling trips per day prove that change can happen – and fast!

Three years of dedicated cycling infrastructure development put the Spanish city in the forefront of successful mobility conversion

Seville, January 3, 2011. - Imagine the Seville City metropolitan area with its 1,5 million inhabitants, latitude 37° north, with a hot and arid climate, a car-centric city plan topped off by a nonexistent urban cycling tradition or cycling infrastructure!

Now imagine riding your bike in Ankara, or Tunis, Teheran, Las Vegas or Seville for that matter! Imagine yourself on a bike in the scorching summer temperatures from June to September, not only fighting the average 30° +C (high 90's°F) heat but also the typical 'hot tempered and spicy' Spanish driving style. Add some serious public bus traffic and you might have an idea of how dedicated or 'adventurous' one would need to be to mount a bike to venture off to work, university or the nearby shop for errands.



And yet – that's exactly what happened in Seville, the new capital of urban cycling in Spain.

The successful establishment of a complete system of cycling infrastructures by the City Government of Seville has led the European Cyclist Federation (ECF) to select the city of Seville in hosting the 2011 edition of Velo-City. As a consequence Velo-City 2011 will take place in Seville, from March 23-25.

In just three years the Infrastructures for Sustainability department, a part of the Seville City Council with their Steering Plan for Bicycles (2007-2010), created a fully segregated cycle tracks system of more than 120 km length, ten folding the daily cycle usage, from 6,000 to 60,000 trips a day. This means that almost 7% of all journeys with a vehicle are made by bicycle today and 30% of these 'new' cyclists actually switched from their cars. And as research showed - many use one of the 2500 SEVici-rental bikes (<http://www.sevici.es/>) provided by the JC Decaux system.

In effect, this ranks Seville as the city with the highest use (+25.000 trips a day) of a rental bike fleet, topping in all of the other 63 city locations that currently offer the rental bike system.

Seville, the fourth largest city of Spain and the artistic, cultural, and financial capital of the autonomous province of Andalusia has thus become an extraordinary point of reference on a worldwide scale for cities without a tradition of cycling as a means of urban transport, showing that a rapid and efficient transformation of mobility behavior is possible.

The combination of the above-mentioned factors that are currently in place in Seville creates a successful formula for other cities across the world to follow and benchmark their own ambitious plans to change mobility patterns.

As José Antonio García Cebrián, member of the City Council of Seville and director of Velo-city 2011 explains: "In a very short time, we have combined our economic efforts with a firm, decisive policy aimed at developing road interventions, sectional programs and strong policies to foster the use of bicycles as a healthy and sustainable means of transport with a positive impact on both the individuals involved and on society in general. We are now confident that we have established the basis for Seville to become a member of the club of cycling-friendly cities, making for happier citizens, and there is no going back.

We proved that it is possible to prioritize in favor of sustainable transport and make a significant contribution to the necessary battle against climate change."

Dr. Bernhard Ensink, Series Director Velo-city and Secretary General of ECF adds: "The four theme areas for Velo-city 2011 will be centering on the overall goal on how the bicycle can be introduced as a means of transport in cities, making them healthier to live in and improving general quality of life.

Many examples will be shared on how to change mobility habits and increase the use of bicycles. And how public investment can contribute to sustainable mobility, and how greater use of the bicycle can therefore contribute to the economy and social wellbeing - in short - enhancing quality of life in cities."

The conference will look into a breadth of subjects on Health, Education, Efficiency of public investment and Economic impact and employment.

Out of the more than 250 submissions that were received from 27 countries, 120 entries will be selected to be presented and discussed in plenary and sub-plenary sessions, workshops and round tables.

Dialogues between speakers and audience will be monitored and led by master of ceremonies, Guillermo (Gil) Peñalosa, Executive Manager of the Canadian non-profit organisation "8-80 Cities" (<http://www.8-80cities.org/>) and former Commissioner for Parks, Sport and Recreation in Bogota.

And as Manfred Neun, ECF President concludes: " One thing holds true - for us the term Cycle of Life only refers to 2 wheels to meet the sustainable mobility needs of the many people living in their ever growing global urban environment.

So let's get these wheels rolling...for a better LIFE for all of us!"

835 words, 5113 characters



About Velo-city

The Velo-city conference series is the premier international cycling planning conference series in the world, organized by the European Cyclists' Federation (ECF) and select host cities.

Velo-city conferences serve as a global communications and information platform and target to influence decision makers, improve the planning and provision of infrastructure for the daily use of the bicycle in an urban environment.

The conferences traditionally involve experts, representatives of associations, institutions, policy-makers and social agents, universities and companies.

More information www.ecf.com

Velo-city 2011 Seville - The Cycle of Life

The city of Seville, which was just awarded a UN-Habitat Best Practice Award, has been chosen to host the 2011 edition of Velo-city as a result of its successful establishment of a complete system of cycling infrastructures.

Velo-city 2011 expects to welcome more than 1,000 visitors from all over the world who, during the three-day conference, will highlight cycling as a means of urban sustainable transport. The conference will be supplemented with an interesting exhibition related to urban cycling.

The conference slogan, "The Cycle of Life", refers to the bicycle as a part of everyday life and source of health for people of any age in more inhabitable cities and regions.

Velo-city 2011 will be taking place in Seville from March 23-25.

The conference will be conducted in Spanish and English.

More information and registration: www.velo-city2011.com

Media registration open until March 4.

For a selection of images go to

http://www.velo-city2011.com/eng/recursos_img_recursos.php or

<http://sevillacyclechic.blogspot.com/>

Feel free to contact us for further information or images.

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