

# Sustainable transport in Freiburg

Freiburg is a city of 200,000 people that has established an international reputation because of the way in which it has integrated transport and land use policy over the long term to become Germany's "environmental capital".

The fullest study of the experience, which began in 1972 with the opening of the city's first network of bicycle paths, has summarised the achievement like this:

"Over the last three decades, Freiburg's coordinated transport and land-use policies have tripled the number of trips by bicycle, doubled transit ridership, and reduced the share of trips by car from 38% to 32%.

"Since the early 1990s, the level of motorization has leveled off, and per-capita CO2 emissions from transport have fallen, in spite of strong economic and population growth.

"Those are impressive accomplishments in a country such as Germany with a powerful car industry, influential car lobbies, and a love affair with the car perhaps even more passionate than in the USA, Canada, and Australia."

An integrated approach that involved establishing car-free zones, better conditions for safe walking and much improved public transport, as well as the bike lanes, has been the key to Freiburg's success. However, another key lesson that is often overlooked has been the role of democratic participation at the local level.

Buehler and Bucher's study concluded that one of the key lessons of the Freiburg experience has been that "citizen involvement must be an integral part of policy development and implementation", and they explain:

"Since the 1970s, citizen participation has been a key aspect of transport and land-use planning in Freiburg. For example, citizen groups worked with the city administration to redevelop Vauban into an environmentally friendly car-free

## qualitypublictransport

is a partnership between the International Transport Workers Federation (ITF) and Public World, with the support of Friedrich Ebert Stiftung.

Its purpose is to build the capacity of urban transport unions to campaign for quality services and build alliances with passengers and other civil society organisations to promote sustainable transport systems.

That means services that enable everyone to travel safely, comfortably and quickly, and employ enough securely employed, properly trained and fairly rewarded transport workers to achieve that.

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neighborhood. Moreover, Freiburg's latest land-use plan has been developed with sustained input of 900 citizens.

"Citizen involvement and public discourse kept the environment and sustainability of the transport system in the news in Freiburg for decades. Over time, public opinion in Freiburg has become more and more supportive of sustainable policies. Even politicians from the conservative party have accepted restrictions on car use and have promoted public transport, bicycling, and walking as alternatives."

The information in this briefing is drawn from:

***Sustainable Transport in Freiburg: Lessons from Germany's Environmental Capital*** Ralph Buehler and John Bucher, **International Journal of Sustainable Transportation, Vol 5, pp 43-70, 2011**

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