A Mayor’s Guide to Cargo Bikes

This project has received funding from the European Union’s Horizon 2020 research and innovation programme under grant agreement No. 769086.
City Changer Cargo Bike (CCCB) builds on the limitless potential of cargo bikes, promoting their usage among public, private, and commercial users. Through support of the Horizon2020 programme, CCCB brings together a team of 20 partners from Norway to Greece, the United Kingdom to Bulgaria.

Learning from best practice across Europe, the initiative will raise awareness and support the uptake of cargo bikes and cargo bike initiatives. In doing so we will foster exciting developments that, among other things, offer more sustainable logistics operations, improve public spaces, engage citizens, and reduce traffic congestion.
Executive Summary

This guide equips readers with newfound inspiration for how to foster cargo bikes. Though there’s nothing particularly new about them, cargo bikes are having a bit of a moment, due to recent innovations in electric batteries and bike designs.

Their relative ease, affordability, and accessibility make them an increasingly popular choice for families, SMEs, NGOs, municipalities and international logistics companies across Europe. Through regulation, taxation, advocating, and procurement policies are mayors able to foster this movement. Sectors that can especially benefit from the full potential of cargo bikes include food, logistics, retail, family, community, and the public sector.
Introduction

This guide is intended for European mayors looking to make for healthier, more efficient and resilient cities. To showcase the efficiency and transferability of cargo bikes, this guide offers perspectives and case studies from cities who have embraced cargo bikes as real solutions to larger problems facing European cities.

The guide addresses how families, SMEs, not-for-profits, and international corporations are using cargo bikes across six sectors: food, logistics, family, retail, community, and public sector featuring case studies from Vienna, Copenhagen, Basel, Oslo, San Sebastian, and Strasbourg. After reading this guide, you will have a better understanding of what cargo bikes are and their potential.
What is a Cargo Bike?

Cargo bikes are bicycles that have been specifically designed to carry cargo, be it heavy or light, big or small. Cargo bikes take many forms, ranging from the traditional short john, to the three-wheel cargo-trike models, to custom built four-wheel frames with electric pedal assist motors for specific commercial needs. And while cargo bikes have been in use for more than a century, recent design and battery innovations have made contemporary models much more efficient and accessible.

Load capacity and prices of these bikes very greatly as well, with lighter bikes priced at €1000–€2000 managing a load up to 80 kg while heavier bikes ranging anywhere from €2000–€12000 being capable of moving up to 350 kg. These bikes have the potential to tackle the environmental, logistics, traffic and social issues facing many European cities, all while providing a new perception of mobility, transport and quality of life.
Why Cargo Bikes?

The inherent **ease, affordability, and accessibility** of cargo bikes make them an increasingly popular choice for families, SMEs, not-for-profits, and international logistics companies across Europe. But cargo bikes represent more than an efficient urban logistics and mobility solution, they are triggering a new bicycle culture, fostering social enterprise concepts, engaging citizens, and transforming public spaces.

For mayors promoting cargo bike usage and initiatives can be **cost effective, low risk, visible, and rewarding**. Cargo bikes and associated initiatives are relatively untapped potential, in many cases requiring minimum municipal investments. And even so, when required, investments in cargo bikes are affordable, especially relative to other e-vehicles.

By their very nature, **cargo bikes are visible and mobile**, making them the type of sight that make people stop and take notice, even if out of sheer curiosity. And of course it doesn’t hurt that cargo bikes and cargo bike initiatives are especially photogenic and uplifting, making them popular with journalists.
What Can a City Do?

In striving for healthier, more efficient and sustainable cities, decision makers can tap into the enormous potential of the cargo bike. Mayors steer towards a common good with both professionalism and passion. Typically mayors have four powers for influencing city life: regulation, taxation, information, and procurement. Through these four powers, there are many ways in which mayors are able to encourage and foster the use of cargo bikes in their cities.

**Regulation:** A city’s jurisdiction over local regulation can have considerable influence on city life. From social services to land use, public works to mobility, local regulations can be used to encourage cargo bikes and related initiatives. For instance, a growing chorus of mayors and city councils are using their regulative power to pilot street closures, handing previously autocentric spaces over to pedestrians and bicycle riders.

**Taxation and Subsidies:** Though municipal taxation powers range from country to country, there can be opportunities to nudge market preferences towards desirable outcomes through individual and business tax policy. From congestion taxes to consumer tax credits that reward sustainable choices, municipalities play an important role in guiding and influencing tax policies from all levels of government. Subsidies, on the other hand, can provide more targeted support, directly funding desirable outcomes.
What Can a City Do?

**Information:** Relative to other levels of governments, municipal politicians have the good fortune of sitting close to their constituents. Serving as both public role models and policy makers, mayors and members of council have the power to spread ideas. Whether by just by owning a cargo bike or by establishing formal municipal communication campaigns promoting the potential of cargo bikes, mayors and council members can play an influential role.

**Procurement:** Municipal procurement is a strong power, often unrealised. Through the tendering process, municipalities can, and have, used factors such as emissions to encourage greener goods and services. In the realm of logistics, for instance, municipal procurement has the potential to both support smaller local cyclelogistics companies and coerce international logistics companies into adopting electric-assisted cargo bikes.
Through formal and informal avenues, mayors and council members have the opportunity to encourage cargo bikes and related initiatives. A growing chorus of cities across Europe are witnessing a cargo bike movement that can be categorized across six categories, all of which could benefit from the support of municipal backing. These six categories are: food, retail, logistics, family, community, and the public sector.
The food service sector has been one of first movers tapping into the potential of cargo bikes in cities. The sector has seen how cargo bikes can prove useful in nearly all aspects of the supply chain including ingredient delivery, mobile street vending, delivery service, and food waste redistribution and management.
Case Study

In Vienna, Austria, local catering service, Rita Bringt’s, provides lunch for offices and homes. Working primarily with organic and local ingredients, Rita Bringt goes above and beyond by delivering meals on their fleet of more than a dozen cargo bikes. This growing business has benefited greatly from a local initiative that covers up to 50% of the bike pricetag through a direct funding scheme.

Photo courtesy of Re-Food
Faced with increased competition from e-commerce, many local retailers are looking for ways to better serve and connect with their clientele. And for some retailers the cargo bike has been an important part of this shift. From product delivery to small pop-up street shops, the cargo bikes flexibility, PR potential, and low buy-in costs have made it an integral part of the business.
Case Study

Bike and Bloom is a Copenhagen-based social enterprise redefining the notion of a traditional flower shop. Bike and Bloom’s mission is to offer refugee and immigrant women a way into the Danish labour market. Working with newcomers, they both sell their bouquets and deliver them to clients across the city by cargo bike, achieving both environmental and social change. Similar initiatives are emerging in many cities across Europe. Through their management of relatively new national policies liberalizing the ease of starting up small business, the Municipality of Copenhagen has indirectly facilitated merchants of all shapes and sizes to sell by cargo bike. Bike and Bloom is just one example of how SMEs can tap into the potential of cargo bikes.
Logistics

Logistics operations are often the unsung lifeblood of cities. Though with this degree of movement contributes to congestion, pollution and traffic conflicts, all factors that the cargo bike is perfectly suited to address. And while bike messengers have long been a fixture on the urban landscape, recent deployments of cargo bike fleets by large international logistics corporations have signalled that this modern mode of moving good is here to stay.
Case Study

The Swiss urban logistics company, Kurierzentrale, provides a wide range of transport solutions tapping into intermodality across a wide fleet of vehicles. Acknowledging the inefficiency of delivery trucks in urban settings, Kurierzentrale augments their fleet of trucks with traditional bicycles, two wheel long john cargo bikes, and the City Cruiser, the ‘cargo bikes big brother’. But perhaps the most innovative aspect of their model is the integration of passenger trains to their fleet, allowing a package to travel by bike to passenger train to bike, resulting in a minimal carbon footprint. Procurement policies that favour bidders with lower carbon footprints are one way in which municipalities can encourage cycle logistics operations like Kurierzentrale.
Cargo bikes are perfectly suited for solving many of the everyday logistics needs of urban families. Across Europe the cargo bike is replacing automobiles, empowering the concept of car-free living. With the potential to carry children, groceries, toys, and family dogs (sometimes all at once) with their given high load capability, cargo bikes are redefining transportation for the modern urban family.
Oslo’s Baby Biking Meetup was born out of an online community of citizens interested in mobility. Through the program, parents with cargo bikes meet up for social rides through the city along recreational paths and protected on-street infrastructure. The program creates a sense of community while making cargo bikes for everyday use more visible, attracting families who may have doubts about investing in a cargo bike. Tax incentives can often be strategic tools in encouraging families to purchase cargo bikes.
Community

Designed to carry people and goods, cargo bikes have proven to be great at carrying ideas. Social enterprises, community groups, and volunteer organizations have found cargo bikes to be useful tools in engaging citizens, connecting neighbours and simply getting the job done, big or small.
Case Study

With over 1,200 local chapters in more than 40 countries, Cycling Without Age has used rickshaws, a form of cargo bike, to facilitate intergenerational relationships while addressing mental health among the elderly. In their San Sebastian chapter, nursing home staff, local volunteers, and family volunteer to take the elderly and the handicap out on cycle trips, giving them the ‘right to wind in their hair’. Throughout Europe, and beyond, local chapters are sharing magnificent stories of integration, social cohesion, and community development. Local chapters can benefit from municipal support by way of grant funding, and safer traffic calmed streets, and promotion by role models such as city mayors.
Public Sector

Given their role as employers, economic actors, and regulators, municipalities themselves often have plenty of potential to put cargo bikes on a pedestal, showcasing the potential of such a simple tool. Whether moving equipment, cleaning city streets, or hosting pop up engagement opportunities, cities can rely on cargo bikes as a sustainable, flexible and effective alternative to automobiles.
Case Study

The French City of Strasbourg serves as an excellent example of how the public sector can utilize cargo bikes effectively. Here the City has added cargo bikes to their public vehicle fleet to be used for everyday tasks of street cleaners, public libraries, and the road safety department alike.
16 Ways to Become a More Cargo Bike Friendly City

1. Make encouraging cycling central to road safety policies
2. Implement 30 km/h speed limits on urban streets
3. Strengthen road traffic laws and enforcement
4. Provide connected network of bicycle infrastructure
5. Provide secure, ubiquitous bike parking
6. Apply a “polluter pays” principle taxation policies (Road pricing etc.)
7. Promote cargo bikes through funding and rental schemes
8. Address the threat from lorries by limiting access to inner city districts
9. Monitor perception of danger that prevents people from cycling
10. Provide free trials of cargo bikes or low-cost rental schemes
11. Solicit suggestions from staff and public on initiatives to replace cars, vans and light trucks
12. Provide supportive framework conditions for cycle delivery
13. Favour cyclelogistics in procurement procedures of municipalities
14. Make cycle delivery the first choice for municipal deliveries
15. When tendering for logistics, include cycle delivery as a preferred option
16. Give a cargo bike a try!