CYCLING-FRIENDLY COMMUNITY DESIGNS: COMPARATIVE CASE STUDIES OF CITIES IN GERMANY AND TEXAS, USA

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ABSTRACT

Cycling has been increasingly recognized for its various environmental, human health, and economic benefits. Supportive built environments and policies are essential to promote cycling. European countries, such as Germany, Denmark, and the Netherlands, are known for their many exemplary efforts. Cycling levels in these countries are at least 10 times higher than those in the US. While empirical studies have examined various cycling policies and interventions, most of them are individual case studies. Studies comparing the differences between European cities and American cities are limited. This study is designed to use two German cities (Berlin and Bonn) and one American city in Texas (Austin) for comparison, and identify opportunities and challenges in improving cycling environments in Austin. Assessments of multiple evaluation components showed that cycling was much safer and more convenient in German cities than in Austin, due to more supportive bicycle policies and infrastructure/facilities. Both national and city-level bicycle policies existed in German cities, and those policies were geared toward integrating cycling into the overall transportation system, including transit. Austin, on the other hand, only had the city-level policies, and most of its streets are still dominated by automobiles. In terms of the community design, German cities feature mixed land use, high density, and complete cycling networks making cycling highly attractive, contrasting to segregated land use, low density, and discontinuous cycling networks in Austin.

Keywords

Cycling, urban design, policies, community designs, infrastructure and facilities