

# moving sustainably

Newsletter 1, June 2006



**Cities boosting for sustainable transport**



**Peer review is about sharing problems and solutions**

# Beyond the traffic jam

By Virpi Kaukavuori

## Cities boosting for sustainable transport

**Hopping into a private car to join the tail of the queue in the morning is becoming a less attractive option for the future as other cities follow the example of London and Stockholm. There, traffic jams is left behind by better organised and more sustainable transport systems. The idea of 'floating' and more environmental friendly traffic is entering the political agenda at high speed.**

- In central London, in particular, increasing the capacity of the transport system cannot be based upon the private car – the necessary road building programme would be financially and environmentally unacceptable, Mayor of London, **Ken Livingstone**, declares in his Transport strategy.

London, a city of 7,5 million people, will never be the same again after Mayor Livingstone put his words into practice - taming wild traffic growth by collecting a congestion charge of eight Pounds from drivers entering the central zone. Money seems to make a big difference. According to Transport for London, the congestion charge has cut congestion by about 20-30 per cent, which is comparable to the reduction during school holidays. London is now planning to extend the charging beyond just the central areas of the capital.

In Stockholm the trial period of the road pricing system started January 3<sup>rd</sup> 2006 and will last for seven months. Already in its first months, it has removed 100 000 vehicles from the central area during rush hours. Three months after its introduction city officials claim that the system has not harmed businesses. **Christopher Ödmann**, Stockholm City Councillor, The Green Party of Sweden, agrees that following the example of London has been a good idea.

The referendum about the road pricing system will be held in Sweden September 17<sup>th</sup> this year. A system where people have to open up their purses, has split the residents of Stockholm. Ödmann believes Stockholmers will not let clean air to be spoilt again once they have been used to the significant improvements within such a short period of time.



Drawings by Seppo Leinonen

- People think twice before they take their own car in the morning. And now we can breathe. The residents of Stockholm will have this system, says Ödmann, also a member of the Union of the Baltic Cities (UBC) Executive Board.

- I would recommend road pricing to a city around the size of Stockholm, or bigger. Experiences can be learnt from us, but the systems in each city should be individual. And think what to do with the money saved. In Stockholm we have put it in public transport, buses and metros, Ödmann adds.

### **“Charging is not the only means of improvement”**

Elsewhere in the Baltic Sea Region, there are other encouraging signs of UBC cities that are taking the issues of urban transport and congestion, in particular, seriously. The Bustrip project is one of the first large-scale attempts in Europe to find and share practical tools to solve the problems of sustainable urban transport. The twelve cities in the Baltic region started working together in July 2005 to solve these urban transport problems. The project will finish in December 2007.

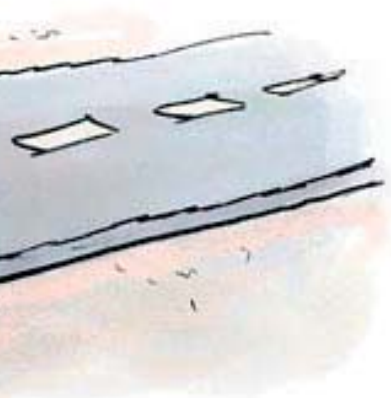
- But there are means and solutions other than charging, **Risto Veivo**, the head of the environmental secretariat of the UBC, points out.

- Success in this project can only be based on a package of effective actions. In Bustrip, the cities are making this package through Sustainable Urban Transport Plans (SUTP), Veivo explains.

For example Latvia, Lithuania and Estonia, which have the highest growth in Gross Domestic Product in the EU, have an opportunity to act preventively before the amount of traffic passes the pace of economic growth. Small cities and growing economies won't necessarily have to face the problems of urban traffic jams and emissions that many European metropolises have already driven themselves to.

### “Kaunas redesigned the transport system”

Picture this: Confusing timetables and routes, missing customer service, vehicles as cold as a fridge and worn out with years. The industrial centre of the former Soviet state, Kaunas in Lithuania, had to redesign its public transport system after the collapse and the closures in early 1990's. At the same time the country started to build market economy and attract new investments.



Businesses and industries are growing fast within the city centre. Traffic on the main highway between Kaunas and Vilnius has increased. Yet, the urban traffic is not as congested as it is in many western European cities.

Kaunas is one of the partner cities in BUSTRIP. During the past five years, the city has invested in energy efficient electric trolley buses and promoted cycling and walking. The result is an almost 50 per cent reduction in nitrogen oxide (2001-2002). This success is one of the reasons why UBC granted Kaunas “Best Environmental Practice Award” in 2005. Another reason is that Kaunas has learnt about best practice through participation in European Commission's CIVITAS programme – winning the award for “The Best Practice of Transport” (2005).

**Mindaugas Kucinovas**, the chief specialist of Transport Division in Kaunas, says that sustainable development is a rather new idea for the people of Lithuania to understand. In spite of the awards, support is still needed, especially from the politicians.

- Sometimes I feel like fighting with windmills. But I believe it will change in the near future. Then we'll be able to run the project dedicated to sustainable development in even a larger scale, Kucinovas says.

In Kaunas, with its nearly 400 000 inhabitants, 60 per cent of passengers choose public transport, and only 22,5 per cent

drive private cars. It's a high rate compared to many other European countries.

James McGeever has worked in Kaunas for a few years and is managing the projects that help to develop the transport system, with which he personally is quite happy.

- I have chosen not to own a car, he says. I think it would be unfair of me to be suggesting ideas for public transport development if I never used the services. This attitude is one I try to promote within the municipality, especially to the politicians who are responsible in many cases for discussing and deciding public transport policy.

He would like to see the trolley bus system to be further developed.

- Most western EU cities stay clear of trolley buses and tram lines believing them to be 'messy' for the look of a city due to the presence of overhead wires. However, it is far more 'messy' to have diesel fumes spewing out of the de-regulated busses that clutter up their city centre streets, he says.

Meanwhile, because the explosive growth in Asia creates more pressure for the effective use of oil, sustainability has become a bigger political issue than anyone could have expected a few years ago.

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# Peer Review

## pointing out direction for sustainability

- The idea of Sustainable Urban Transport Plans (SUTP) emerged from the work of the European Commissions' expert working group on Sustainable Urban Transport. Their work recognised the interdependence of all activities in urban areas and the need to integrate transport planning with all other planning to make our cities more sustainable. All the Bustrip partner cities are committed to making their cities more sustainable places to live work and visit. The Bustrip project is using 'peer review' to help partner cities understand the contribution that their current activities, policies, and processes are making. Crucially the peer review teams are pointing the cities towards changes that may help in their quest to be more sustainable.

### **What does the peer review involve?**

The peer review method involves certain elements. To start with, each partner city prepares and publishes a self assessment report on its progress towards sustainable urban transport. A peer review team of experts from the other partner cities carries out a 'desk review' of the self-assessment report and agrees with each partner city on a list of stakeholders that they will interview during their visit.

The peer review team visits each partner city and carries out a review of the self-assessment report, meeting stakeholders and interest groups. The team presents its headline review 'findings' to the municipality stakeholders at the end of the visit.

After the visit peer review team writes a report and agrees on its contents with the partner city, who then publishes this review report. The partner city uses its self-assessment report and the peer review report in designing their Sustainable Urban Transport Plan and actions.

City partners use the reports to verify their pilot action that will be carried out and the process helps partners to accelerate progress towards Sustainable Urban Transport Plans.

### **What will the peer review achieve?**

The peer review will stimulate internal and external discussion about current and future progress towards sustainable urban transport. It also provides an independent assessment of the progress being made towards sustainable urban transport in each partner city. The Peer Review will assist in the preparation of Sustainable Urban Transport Plans, and within the BUSTRIP project - to kick start this work.

The method has the benefit that it allows the representatives from other municipalities, as the peers, to share their varied skills and experience. The review allow for comparison and exchange of information among municipalities

One synergy of carrying out a review of this kind is that it raises sustainable urban transport issues on the political agenda. The reviews also provide a framework for understanding how partner cities can make a greater contribution to the Lisbon Strategy<sup>(1)</sup> and provide a reporting framework to the Aalborg +10 Commitments<sup>(2)</sup>.

### **Performance assessment by peer review**

The BUSTRIP peer review is a 'performance assessment'. This is the 'considered judgement' (assessment) of experts, on the 'progress being made' (performance) by municipalities towards a benchmark (or 'ideal').

The benchmark used in this assessment has been developed within the BUSTRIP project. It is substantially based on the work of the European Commissions Expert Working Group on Sustainable Urban Transport<sup>(3)</sup>. This assessment is carried out by teams of peers from Baltic Sea municipalities and European institutions – ‘a peer review’.

BUSTRIP is designed to assist cities in their work on Sustainable Urban Transport. In particular this performance assessment methodology was developed to assist cities understand their progress towards having a successful sustainable urban transport plan.

#### The elements of a BUSTRIP Peer Review:

- Each partner makes a (self assessment) report
- A peer review team carries out a ‘desk review’ of the report
- A list of important stakeholders is agreed upon.
  
- The team is meeting stakeholders and interest groups.
- The team presents its headline review ‘findings’ to the municipality stakeholders.
  
- The peer review team writes a report.
- Agrees on its contents with the partner city.
- The partner city publishes the peer review report.
- The partner city uses its self-assessment report and the peer review report to
  - o design their Sustainable Urban Transport Plan
  - o verify their pilot actions that will be implemented during BUSTRIP project
  - o accelerate progress towards Sustainable Urban Transport Plan

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<sup>1</sup> [http://europa.eu.int/growthandjobs/pdf/COM2005\\_024\\_en.pdf](http://europa.eu.int/growthandjobs/pdf/COM2005_024_en.pdf)  
<sup>2</sup> <http://www.aalborgplus10.dk/>  
<sup>3</sup> [http://europa.eu.int/comm/environment/urban/pdf/final\\_report050128.pdf](http://europa.eu.int/comm/environment/urban/pdf/final_report050128.pdf)



## Gdynia Kick-starts Bustrip Peer Review Visits!

It was an exciting experience for the City of Gdynia to host the first Bustrip Project Peer review visit. The external experts arriving from various Baltic Cities examined our urban transport in detail and gave us valuable feedback. The team provided us with a politically independent and honest view of our transport system and transport related policies and strategies. We found all of the comments very useful and will strive to include most, if not all, of the raised issues in our Sustainable Urban Transport Plan.

However, some of the challenges will require more time and additional financial and human resources. Nonetheless, we are convinced the peer review will have influenced the authorities responsible for transport and traffic planning and provided the incentives to kick-start the long process of developing a sustainable transport in Gdynia.

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#### City's comment

- The Peer review showed that Tartu has many good values in the city transport but it also raised the question how the sustainable transport is handled in the city planning process.



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# Thematic Strategy on the Urban Environment

In the beginning of 2006, the European Commission published a communication on Thematic Strategy in the Urban Environment. The rather short 12 page document stresses the importance of urban areas in delivering the objectives of the EU Sustainable Development Strategy.

Environmental problems are more concentrated in cities and the quality of life in urban areas is very dependent on the state of the environment. The communication stresses the importance of a high quality urban environment to achieve the goal of the Lisbon Strategy, "to make Europa a more attractive place to work and invest" and to enhance cities potential for growth and job creation.

An integrated approach to environmental management at the local level is recommended as a key to successful implementation and long lasting improvements, especially for transport.

With an integrated approach based on a long-term vision of the development of the city, conflicts between different policies and initiatives can be avoided and better results achieved. Further, the strategy highlights the importance of stakeholder consultation in planning.

Transport is considered to play a key role in the sustainable development of cities and the Commission strongly recommends for local authorities to develop and implement sustainable urban transport plans.

It also announces that the Commission will provide some technical guidance based on the recommendations of the 2004 Expert Working Group and give best practice examples.

The BUSTRIP project is fully in line with the strategy suggested by the Commission. BUSTRIP-cities are forerunners in developing local sustainable urban transport plans and the knowledge and experience gained in this project will be of great value for many other European cities. BUSTRIP will provide other cities both with a several good examples and, even more importantly, a SUTP-toolbox that will help other cities to follow the suggested strategy for more sustainable transport.

To download the Thematic Strategy, search for: Thematic Strategy on the Urban Environment (COM/2005/718).

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## BUSTRIP in Örebro

In 2005 the Örebro City Council decided to develop a strategy for sustainable transport. Soon afterwards, the BUSTRIP project was announced. The Council applied and our partnership was accepted. This is a real winner for Örebro as it gives us access to international experts and a methodology for strategy development.

Since BUSTRIP's December 2005 launch in Örebro, we have been busy compiling the self-assessment report which was sent to the peer review team mid-March.

One of the most rewarding parts of the work so far has been in bringing together officials from different areas of the city's administration – in all about 25 people – to develop a common view of the present situation.

Through the process of working together a number of inconsistencies have been identified, for example in the Environmental Goals and the Business and Employment Policy Programme. Through BUSTRIP's methodology a number of shortcomings have also been highlighted, in terms of knowledge base and public involvement.

At the end of April, the peer review team visited Örebro and will deliver their report before end of June. We will then be able to commence work on the development of our Sustainable Urban Transport Plan. A working group has already been formed and we are now in the process of identifying other stakeholders.

The city of Örebro will also take part in another UBC EnvCom lead EU project known as SUSTAINMENT, whose goal is to integrate the work being done on sustainable development in the local area. We will try to take advantage of this work in the production of our SUTP.

Finally, we have two pilot projects due to take off soon. One will look at the coordination of freight distribution in the city centre, the other at a more efficient public transport system.

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# Planning for sustainable urban transport

The key to cities making progress towards sustainable urban development and sustainable economic growth is to foster sustainable urban transport. The key to delivering sustainable urban transport lies in the process of transport planning, integrating environmental, social and economic concerns and meeting future needs.

One of the aims with the BUSTRIP project is to initiate, review and then implement Sustainable Urban Transport Plans (SUTP) in the participating cities. The goal of working with a SUTP is to systematically move towards more sustainable transport, with the SUTP acting as the guiding document for all transport planning in the city.

BUSTRIP is a pioneering project in the field of sustainable transport planning, aimed at developing best SUTP practices in Europe. During the project, successful examples of best practices from participating cities will be exchanged between the partner cities.

## **SUTP and its purpose**

The SUTP is a tool to work with mobility and transport in a sustainable way. It addresses public and private transport, motorised and non-motorised transport, moving and parked vehicles, as well as freight transport and logistics. These transport categories are dealt with in an integrated way. The SUTP should express a shared vision on the development of sustainable transport in the city and provide a strategy to systematically work towards this goal.

## **SUTPs in the BUSTRIP cities**

The starting point for the sustainable transport planning process is the findings from the peer-reviews. These results will guide the city to necessary measures and will also identify how far the city has come in its planning process. Some cities will start from the beginning and introduce a SUTP and others will revise, improve, and adapt an existing plan. Some cities with existing SUTPs will focus on updating and then implementing their plan through 'pilot actions'.

Effective cooperation between local stakeholders is central to the success of BUSTRIP. Each city is establishing an 'intersectoral working group' to engage and integrate various municipal stakeholders in SUT-planning, for example representatives from traffic and physical planning. The early establishment of this working group is essential to the success of the planning process. It allows its members to contribute to the plan and the success of other BUSTRIP work packages.

The expected outcomes after having introduced/ revised the SUTPs in the cities are:

- Improved planning structures for inter-sectoral planning of transport
- Common vision on urban transport goals and planning principles
- Established methods for stakeholder involvement
- An approved SUTP

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# Pilot actions kick-start the implementation of Sustainable Urban Transport Plans

Each BUSTRIP partner city will carry out Pilot actions as part of the project. These are necessary actions that must be taken to move towards achieving targets in their Sustainable Urban Transport Plans (SUTP). Carrying out the Pilot actions should lead to measurable improvements in the cities' urban transport and mobility situation. Each city is supported in their work on the pilot actions by the work package leader Chalmers University of Technology.

Although each city has specific targets for their pilot actions, they have the general purpose of raising awareness and improving understanding among stakeholders. The pilot actions have been chosen by each city based on local needs and opportunities. All are looking for concrete results that will convince stakeholders of the value of more sustainable forms of transport. These

hands-on improvements resulting from the pilot actions will be able to enable the cities to get support for increased investments for future actions and improvements.

To ensure the transnationality of the implementation, the pilot actions are grouped according to themes. During the project Chalmers will support cities in each theme group to share their problems and find solutions. The three theme groups are: 1) ITS, Public Transport and Clean Vehicles, 2) Intermodal transport systems and 3) Mobility management. Within each group there are cities with a wide range of experience of sustainable urban transport. The theme groups will facilitate exchange between cities that have developed their transport systems to different extents.

For example, the city of Sundsvall in Northern Sweden will develop park and ride system to close up the distances in the scarcely populated region. They will show models to other BSR cities facing similar problems. The city of Gdynia, located in the metropolitan North coast region of Poland, will reduce the car traffic in the city centre by limiting the access to the main shopping road. On this road, which has recently been rebuilt, they are planning to only allow trolley bus traffic. Private cars will have to choose alternative routes for through traffic. The city of Pärnu will explore ways to use the public transport system more efficiently through increasing passenger information that makes services more understandable. This will improve the cycling infrastructure and the feasibility of using the redundant railway as a tram route and establishing a public river transport system.

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# PILOT ACTION in GÖTEBORG

## - MOBILITY COACHING

In 2002, Göteborg opened a Mobility Centre in the Lundby city district, a former industrial area now being redeveloped into a busy housing and business area. Lundby Mobility Centre informs households and companies in the area of alternatives to the private car such as car sharing, car pools, cycling, travel plans, public transport etc. The goal is to raise awareness and in the long run to reach a behavioural change towards more environmentally friendly means of transport.

Within BUSTRIP, Göteborg will develop the work of Lundby Mobility Centre further, by working with a new method called mobility coaching. In a few words mobility coaching is about making everyday car drivers change travel behaviour by providing them with individual support and coaching on how to make this change.

The interest for participating in the project has been impressive. Of the 260 people who showed interest in the project, 20 will

receive individual coaching from a professional coach and 70 will be involved in group-coaching. One big motivation for participating in the project is the health aspect, as all the participants are offered a physical test, and will fill in a travel diary so they can monitor the change during the project. The participants will have the opportunity to try out the public transport system and attend information meetings about changing behaviour and environmental friendly travel opportunities in Göteborg.

During and after the project, the participants will function as ambassadors for changing travel behaviour by sharing their personal experiences, support and give ideas on alternative travel ways.

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# BUSTRIP – Towards Sustainable Urban Transport

BUSTRIP (Baltic Urban Sustainable Transport Implementation and Planning) will provide practical solutions and tools for European cities and municipalities to deliver Sustainable Urban Transport. The 12 partner cities in the BUSTRIP project are the first in Europe to start preparing and implementing Sustainable Urban Transport Plans (SUTP). SUTP's are advocated in the European Commissions' Thematic Strategy on the Urban Environment (6th Environmental Action Plan). BUSTRIP is uniquely positioned to show European cities how to deliver sustainable transport whilst generating economic growth.

BUSTRIP will produce a SUTP toolbox of techniques, collecting all the learning experiences and best practices from the cities. The toolbox will assist European cities to understand SUTP and the opportunities available to move towards sustainable urban transport.

## **BUSTRIP is about sharing problems and solutions**

The fundamental idea of the BUSTRIP project is learning from other cities. This is done by peer reviewing. Each of the partner cities will receive a Peer review that will assist them in understanding their current progress towards Sustainable Urban Transport.

**Allen Creedy**, executive advisor to the BUSTRIP project, has been carrying out Peer review processes in EU for 15 years.

- It's about sharing our problems, and sharing our solutions. We cannot duck from the issues. He promises that from each Peer review the key finding will assist the city to accelerate their progress towards sustainable transport.

- For municipalities it's the best way of learning - constructive criticism from people who are dealing with the same problems in their own cities and finding their own solutions. Allen emphasises that Peer review is about collaboration between cities and municipalities and not about competition.

- There will always be surprises for the team and the host city. Something unexpected will always emerge!

The partner will use the findings of Peer review to prepare their new SUTPs and to revise existing plans; from this they will implement SUTP related pilot actions that will make tangible progress. All findings, experiences, Best practices and materials produced in the project will serve as the basis for the making of the project main outcome, the SUTP toolbox.



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# Project Steering Group



From left, Allen Creedy, Anna Granberg and Sakari Saarinen from UBC EnvCom, Sönke Behrends from Chalmers University of Technology and Michael Koucky and Jenny Siira from UBC TransCom during a PSG meeting in Parainen in June 2006. Top right, Maria Lindholm from Chalmers University of Technology and bottom right, Lisa Sundell from UBC TransCom. The Project Steering Group includes also Risto Veivo from UBC EnvCom and Magnus Blinge from Chalmers University of Technology.



**CHALMERS**

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# Project city partners

