

## **STELLENBOSCH CYCLING**

## COMMENTS: Stellenbosch Fietsry/Cycling

- NMT TRANSPORT POLICY AND MASTER PLAN

### GENERAL COMMENTS

Stellenbosch Fietsry/Cycling, in broad terms, welcomes and underwrites the content of the above-mentioned documents. There are some secondary reservations regarding specific projects in the NMT Masterplan. These will be highlighted and commented on later.

Stellenbosch Fietsry/Cycling, however, is frustrated and not at all happy with the progress over the past years made to improve facilitation of NMT and more specifically the cycling component. In our view the reason for this does not lie with a lack of or good policies and plans. Stellenbosch Municipality has already in 2015 had an excellent Cycle plan drawn up. The cost to have the plan drawn up was in the order of R500 000,00! This Plan has now for all practical purposes over the past 6 years been gathering dust on a shelf somewhere. Very few, if any, of the proposals in the plan were executed.

New and reviewed draft NMT policies and plans have now been drawn up and are now tabled for comment.

The lack and/or insufficient progress in the facilitation of NMT does not lie with the plans but rather with the lack in political vision and will of the Council and its officials. As correctly mentioned in the draft policy and plans, Stellenbosch is ideally positioned to become a model town in South Africa in terms of NMT and cycling. Stellenbosch also has a serious vehicle congestion problem as highlighted in the draft Roads Master plan. Numerous current examples of progressive towns and cities all over the world reflect the success of promoting NMT and cycling to help resolve vehicle congestion and encourage motorists to leave their cars at home. Other positive elements of promoting NMT include improved quality of life by increasing active mobility, calmer traffic that further favours the safety of the most vulnerable groups and a decrease in accidents, improved air quality, decreased emission and low-carbon economy and the advancement of economic equality and greater autonomy.

Council's approach currently seems to provide less than the minimum for existing needs for cycling. Instead, it should aggressively invest in infrastructure and other means to make cycling safer and easier to increase the cycling share of transport. Safety or rather the lack of safety is the primary reasons why more people do not cycle or do not want their children to cycle on public roads and to school. Vehicle congestion at schools remains one of the major headaches.

By having the new NMT Policy and Plan drawn up and by approving them Council talks the talk. The meagre budgets allocated to implement these plans do, however, not walk the walk. Not by far! Stellenbosch Fietsry/Cycling and other parties have for some time been

requesting firm financial commitments from Council towards the systematic implementation of the 2015 cycle plan, but to no avail.

Stellenbosch Fietsry/Cycling would like to suggest that Council commits itself in the policy and the masterplan to provide an ongoing long-term budget to implement the NMT plan's essential and desirable cycling projects over the next 6 years. This will require only a nominal portion of the total roads transport budget of the Municipality. If no action is taken to implement the new, revised second plan, the cost of drawing up these plans is a waste of time and money and is fruitless expenditure.

It is also Stellenbosch Fietsry/Cycling's view that existing NMT and cycling infrastructure are not properly maintained. Proper maintenance makes for safer use but also in the long term brings major savings in terms of capital projects by extending the life cycle of infrastructure. This point also applies to NMT infrastructure along Provincial roads within the jurisdiction area of the Municipality. Stellenbosch Municipality should, as agent-representative of its inhabitants, take the lead to ensure that this is achieved through good interdepartmental cooperation and agreements.

**Waar daar 'n wil is, is daar 'n weg!**

## **COMMENTS RELATING SPECIFICALLY TO THE NMT POLICY DOCUMENT**

Section 3. First Strategic Objective. *Connect the outlying communities with the CBD in a safe and attractive manner and improve safety, access to opportunities and the dignity of these communities.*

Stellenbosch Fietsry/Cycling agrees in principle. We are, however, concerned about the specific examples muted. Pedestrian and Cycle bridges are awfully expensive and are often not well used. Personal safety is always a concern with pedestrian bridges and with subways. The question here is, "Is this good value for money" especially when budgets are constrained. The bridges crossing the rails should be put on ice until Metrorail is again functional. To fix the current vandalised railway infrastructure that stretches over kilometres of line will not happen soon and will cost millions of rands. It is quite possible that the section serving Stellenbosch may never again come in use.

In terms of value for money and limited budgets consideration should be given to only gravel surface pavements and cycling paths. Hard surfacing with tarmac, concrete or paving is not necessary in the lower use situations.

### **Section 6. NMT POLICIES**

Far more emphasis needs to put on speed reduction in the CBD, residential areas and routes frequently used by pedestrians and cyclists. A blanket general reduced speed limit for such areas (for example 30 kph) is proposed. This can be backed up by the increased use of various other traffic calming measures, for example speed bumps, raised/elevated pedestrian and cycle crossings etc., where necessary.

Section 6.6 (in particular the third paragraph).

Stellenbosch Municipality's engagement in this regard is clearly not adequate. When looking at the latest provincial infrastructure additions within the Stellenbosch area of jurisdiction it is clear these interventions are managed typically to favour the needs of motorised vehicles at the expense of pedestrian and cyclists. The Municipality should find ways to address this shortcoming to better ensure NMT and cycle user's safety and needs.

## **NMT MASTER PLAN**

The Municipality should commit itself to a detailed execution plan of the Master Plan.