

Vision (Larissa)

We wish for a people-friendly city.

We wish for a city

in which there is a lot of space for everyone,

in which there are many green spaces and places where people like to stay and come together

- places with benches and playgrounds where children can play

- places where music is made and cabaret artists perform.

In this city

people feel safe, at home and that they belong.

They notice each other and greet each other on the street.

In our dream city

neighbors know and trust each other.

In good weather, life takes place on the street:

Children play in the street, adults sit down with a chair and a table to read and talk to neighbors who are walking or cycling by.

People have the opportunity to do their shopping in their neighborhood - and they like to do it because they meet acquaintances there, because they know the salespeople in the stores, and so shopping is more than just exchanging goods for money.

In this city

it is so quiet, even on main roads, that people can talk to each other without shouting at each other.

The typical sounds of the city are people's voices, passing streetcars, suburban trains or buses, music and also birdsong.

Here the air is clean and the view from the window falls on trees and people.

Our dream city

is a city of diversity and togetherness,

it is not a dormitory town, but a city where people really live.

[Transition to bicycle traffic]

...and what does all this have to do with bicycle traffic?

An urban transport structure that focuses on the most vulnerable and promotes a comprehensive and convenient combination of public transport, cycling and walking invests in a livable, child-friendly and climate-friendly city.

The Bicycle Referendum puts its focus on the bicycle as a means of transport, as it combines many advantages for us quickly and cost-effectively.

How is traffic planning currently done?

To this day, cities are planned with a focus on making the use of the car as attractive and comfortable as possible.

Public space is asphalted and sealed to serve as car streets or parking lots.

At this point, a few numbers:

Since the 1950s, the population has grown by about 30%, and the number of cars in Germany has increased 60-fold in the same period.

Quite banal: we lack the space to rely on the car as an individual means of transportation in cities. Not everyone can have their own car parked in front of their door. In Heidelberg alone, the population will grow by another 25,000 people by 2035.

(Dominic)

In the 1970s, it was first questioned whether the car was really the best means of transportation. Not only were the roads congested and the air bad, but there were increasing numbers of deaths and serious injuries - including many children - as victims of collisions with cars.

Unlike the Netherlands, Germany's response to the situation was not a relative move away from cars, but technological developments, such as better car safety systems. The number of fatalities caused by cars has fallen steadily since then, but even today we read time and again in the press about children and cyclists who have been run over by a truck or hit by a car because they were simply overlooked. We therefore call for a reconstruction of the traffic infrastructure. By reconstructing intersections according to the Dutch model, we are taking a real step towards "Vision Zero", which calls for no more deaths and serious injuries in traffic.

Necessary changes

But not only the safety aspect is an important concern of the Bicycle Referendum.

In view of the climate crisis, even the Federal Constitutional Court in Karlsruhe has now confirmed that the climate protection measures taken so far by the federal government and local authorities

are not sufficient and will result in the young generation and all future generations having to pay for the ecological damage we are causing.

- Let's hear it for the *Deutsche Umwelthilfe* and Fridays for Future, who made this possible.
(pause)

Despite its sustainability awards and its climate protection action plan, the city of Heidelberg is also not doing enough to live up to its responsibility towards climate protection.

The city basks in its Germany-wide reputation as the "green city." But when I walk through Bergheim, I have to look for a long time before I find greenery that I can enjoy without noise or exhaust fumes.

Heidelberg's flagship district, Bahnstadt, has also missed out on a lot. True, there is space for recreation on the promenade. But bicycle and pedestrian traffic have been so closely combined that parents are afraid their children will be knocked down - and cyclists have to be extremely vigilant; they worry that someone will run in front of their bike. In addition, so many surfaces have been sealed in this part of the city that it heats up in the summer to such an extent that the squares are hardly walkable.

In addition, the streets are lined with parked cars that are only moved for an hour a day on average and otherwise consume space that could otherwise be available to people.

Apart from its enormous land consumption, private motorized transport accounts for a considerable proportion of all CO2 emissions. This means that without a mobility turnaround, the necessary climate protection targets cannot be achieved. However, this can only succeed if public transport, cycling and walking are developed into attractive and realistic options for getting around.

Incidentally, the expansion of cycling cannot fail for lack of money. The federal government recently increased its funding once again. By 2023, 1.5 billion euros are to be paid to municipalities to promote cycling, and the green-black state government has also added to its current coalition agreement and wants to motivate municipalities to be bolder when it comes to promoting cycling.

So far, according to a study by the University of Kassel from 2019, Heidelberg spends six euros of its budget per year and person on cycling, for the car it is 240. If the demands of the Bicycle Referendum are implemented, we come to 19-32 euros per year and person, depending on the share of subsidies from Stuttgart and Berlin. The city must now boldly set its sights on the big goals: Traffic safety, quality of life and climate neutrality.

Benefits of the mobility turnaround (Anna)

With the traffic turnaround and the associated demands of the Bicycle Referendum, we can come a good deal closer to these goals.

A city that offers a bicycle network with sufficiently wide, continuous and safe paths also gets children and other insecure cyclists onto bicycles.

The more people switch to the space-saving bicycle, the more public space is available for green spaces, playgrounds, pedestrian areas and public places.

A traffic structure that relies on safe bicycle and pedestrian traffic and thus strengthens the attractiveness of non-motorized movement provides its urban population with less traffic noise and better air quality. It reduces CO2 emissions and shows responsibility towards future generations.

The redesigned transportation structure also encourages people to shop in their local area rather than driving to the mall across town.

This in turn strengthens local retail, communication and a sense of belonging in one's own neighborhood.

This is proven by examples such as Madrid, Barcelona and Vienna, where local retail sales have increased in car-free zones. For Madrid, for example, a study by the major bank Banco Bilbao Vizcaya found sales growth of 10 percent.

The 2019 Heidelberg Study found that 59% of people in Heidelberg would like to see more promotion of cycling.

In 2020, bicycles were the most used mode of transport within Heidelberg at 40%.

I could list many more benefits, but then we won't get on the bike today.

That is why I would like to conclude by asking for your signature and thus your support for the "Bicycle Referendum".

We from the *Radentscheid* have grown from a handful of people to about 30 active people since January 2021. Our alliance already includes 38 partners, among them Fridays for Future, the ADFC, the VCD, the BUND and many more.

At this point a big thank you to:

- Our organizers of the demonstration, first and foremost Penelope and Jonathan, who have been working towards this day for weeks, and all external helpers who helped us at short notice.
- To all the stewards and our alliance partners who really supported us. Among others the *Unverpackt* store "Mit Ohne", from which we were allowed to use the electricity.
- To all of you for being here today and cycling with us through the city.

But now to our demands of the Bicycle Referendum:

With our eight demands, we want to get the city of Heidelberg to do its duty now and significantly expand the cycling infrastructure in Heidelberg. Our demands are building blocks of a holistic cycling concept. In detail, we demand:

- The expansion of a continuous and safe network for everyday bicycle traffic.
- The reconstruction of dangerous intersections according to the Dutch model
- Model tests for a green wave for bicycles
- Regular maintenance and clearing of bikeplanes
- Additional calmed traffic zones with improved quality for spending time in every part of the city
- Promotion of safe, clean family mobility

- 8000 secure bicycle parking spaces by 2030
- Transparency of city policies through biannual reporting requirements and opportunities to participate

With your signature, we can submit a citizen petition to the city that, through a citizen referendum, requires the city to comply with the will of the city's residents for a livable, child-friendly, and climate-smart city.

Sign here and today at our information stands. All EU citizens over the age of 16 with their primary residence in Heidelberg can sign.

You can also take a signature list with you and bring it with 10 signatures to our collection points or send it to our P.O. Box.

You can find all the information on the homepage.

Follow us on Instagram, Facebook and Twitter and tell your friends and family about the Bicycle Referendum!

And if you want to actively participate in our group, write to mitmachen@radentscheid-heidelberg.de. Then I can invite you to our virtual weekly Monday plenary. All information about contacts and donations can be found on our homepage radentscheid-heidelberg.de.

And now back to our vision: We are about to roll through Heidelberg on closed roads with lots of space, without red lights, without noise or exhaust fumes, safe and in a child-friendly way.

So that everyone knows why we are doing this, I need your help. We will practice a few slogans so that everyone understands what we are about today:

Thank you and have fun cycling!