

Rolling Chocolates

If you take a look at the poster for today's demonstration, you can see all kinds of bikes. What you do not see on it is a handbike, a wheelchair bike.

Hello, my name is Markus Bucher and I am the chairman of the wheelchair sports department of the SG Heidelberg- Kirchheim, the Rolling Chocolates. Unlike my sports colleagues, I get out of my sports wheelchair after training. I then continue on foot or by bike, but 80 percent of our athletes switch to everyday wheelchairs.

For many of my sports teammates, the only way to train their endurance is to ride a handcycle or a freewheel bike, but where?

For some of my teammates, the free wheel bike is the only chance they have to travel further distances without relying on a transport service or rideshare.

It is the only chance I have to decide for myself when to go shopping or when to meet friends.

It is a piece of freedom.

Unfortunately, this freedom all too often ends at a car that "just happens to be parked for a moment" on a bike lane.

Or in many cases this bike lane simply does not exist.

The alternative is then to switch onto the road, which is sometimes dangerous for me on a bicycle. With a wheelchair bike,

- much heavier,
- much wider
- much more inflexible

this is many times more dangerous.

That is why we need better paths for people travelling by bike or on foot or in a wheelchair.

Everyone, including people with disabilities, should be able to move around on protected and sufficiently wide paths with a good feeling.

We need an expanded network of bicycle routes, district centers that are redesigned to prioritize short distances by bike or on foot to help us make our Heidelberg more people-friendly.

Whether people are on foot, in wheelchairs, or on bicycles.

So when you look at the poster again later, think of a wheelchair or handbike on it, because we are part of it.