Cite this article

Sousa N (2021)

Book review.

Proceedings of the Institution of Civil Engineers – Municipal Engineer **174(4)**: 251,
<https://doi.org/10.1680/jmuen.18.00041>

Book Review

Paper 1800041

ICE Publishing: All rights reserved

Book review

Designing for Cycle Traffic

J. Parkin. ICE Publishing, London, UK, 2018, ISBN 978-0-7277-6349-5, £65-00, 248 pp.

Does the saying 'Build it, and they will come' apply to cycling? Well, not quite. How to make it so is the topic of the 248 pages book *Designing for Cycle Traffic*, in which author John Parkin presents the state of the art on the ever-more important topic of how to cater for cycle traffic in urban and transport planning.

In an epoch when pollution, congestion and overall sustainability worries make it clear it is necessary to reverse the protagonism motor traffic has had in the last decades, this book is a timely contribution towards promoting active travel modes, of which cycling is perhaps the most versatile and efficient one.

The book presents a complete A–Z guide to help municipal planners, and anyone interested in the topic, in all the issues relating to creating and maintaining an appropriate infrastructure for cycling. Starting from inception and principles, going through cycle tracks and intersections, and finishing with end journey and innovation, it is all there. The author integrates in one major work the knowledge gathered from decades of research and international best practices from countries that have implemented successful cycle-friendly policies. I only miss a chapter on how to deal with the cycling challenges of hilly cities, although this is arguably becoming less of a problem due to the appearance of electrically assisted cycles.

The first four chapters lay down general design principles, both for routes and networks, taking into account the specificities of cycles and the status

quo. Detailed guidelines on how to operationalise those principles along carriageways, intersections and crossings are then presented in Chapters 5–11, in a systematic manner. Chapter 12 deals with journey end infrastructure and the final three chapters concern auditing and prospects for the future.

All the book sources are very up to date and, not only that, it also highlights avenues for future research on subjects that still require close attention from scholars and practitioners.

Many key points are made throughout the book that summarise the accumulated knowledge. Simple, yet extremely important conclusions are presented, such as – for example that the cycling environment has to be attractive and comfortable or that cycling networks have to be purposeful and connect sources of cycle traffic to attractors, as recreation is not *per se* enough to foster cycling. Another important point the book makes is that cycle traffic should neither be mixed with (slower) pedestrian traffic, an error often made by many planners, nor with (faster) motor traffic. These and many other pointers are given as principal and practical guidelines for thinking the cycling infrastructure.

Just as quick as the automobile for the majority of city trips and with far less parking woes, cycling is bound to appeal to urban citizens all across the world, as it already does in many countries which adopted cycle-friendly policies. With this book available, there can be no excuse now for municipal planners to disregard or mishandle the cycle transport mode. In short, 'Build it right, and they will come'!

Nuno Sousa