

Bicycle policy and citizens' participation:

Civil society as driving force behind a legislative initiative to secure the implementation of bicycle infrastructure in Berlin.



The Volksentscheid Fahrrad (VEF)
-Berlin's Bicycle Referendum-

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Starting point: Berlin 2015 at a Point of Change



- Political stagnation
- Fast growing city
- 20,000 more cars every year
- Cycling growth of up to 25% p.a.
- 90% of Berlin's Cycleways are not child-friendly (safe)
- Cyclist killed every three weeks
- 85% of all accidents are caused by car/lorry/bus drivers
- 92% of all heavily injured in Berlin's traffic accidents (with bikers involved) are cyclists => it's the infrastructure

... but upcoming Berlin State Elections in September 2016

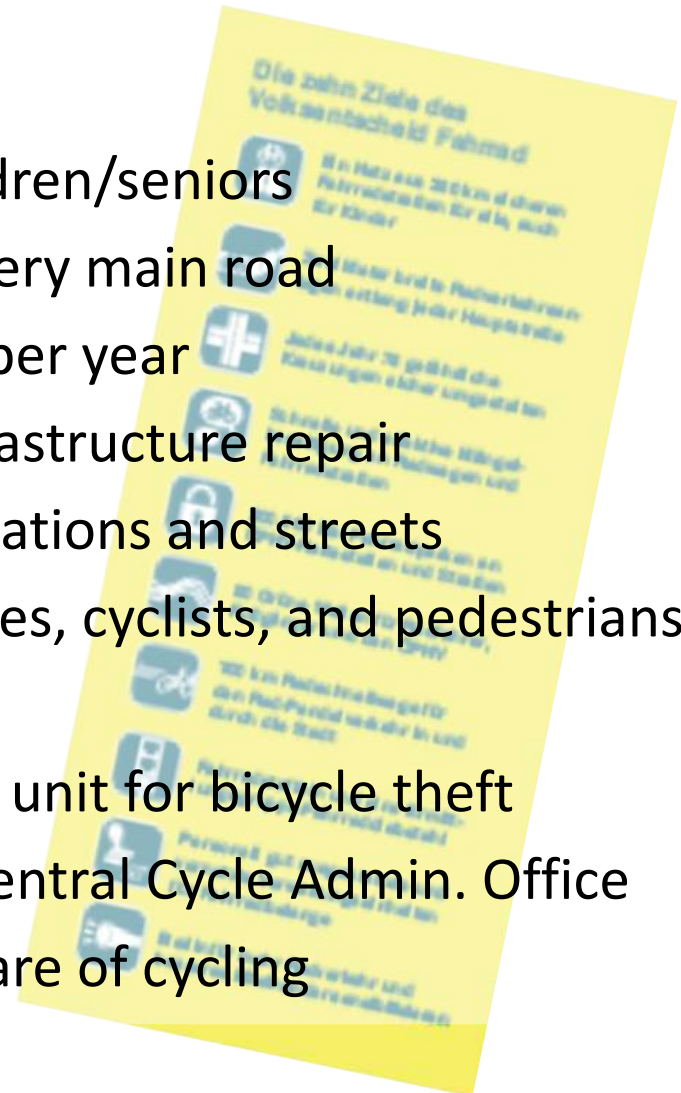
Vision and objectives: Why a Bicycle Referendum?



... to legally secure (in legislation) that appropriate bicycle infrastructure will become reality by 2025.

The 10 Goals of the Berlin Bicycle Bill:

1. 350 km of new cycle streets, also for children/seniors
2. 2m wide safe cycling infrastructure on every main road
3. 25 dangerous intersections 'neutralized' per year
4. Transparent, immediate and efficient infrastructure repair
5. 200.000 bicycle parking spots at transit stations and streets
6. 50 Green Waves (at traffic lights) for busses, cyclists, and pedestrians
7. 100km Bicycle Highways for commuters
8. Bicycle police units (on bikes) and Special unit for bicycle theft
9. Planners in city/district administration; Central Cycle Admin. Office
10. PR for accommodating higher modal share of cycling



Institutional context: Referendum

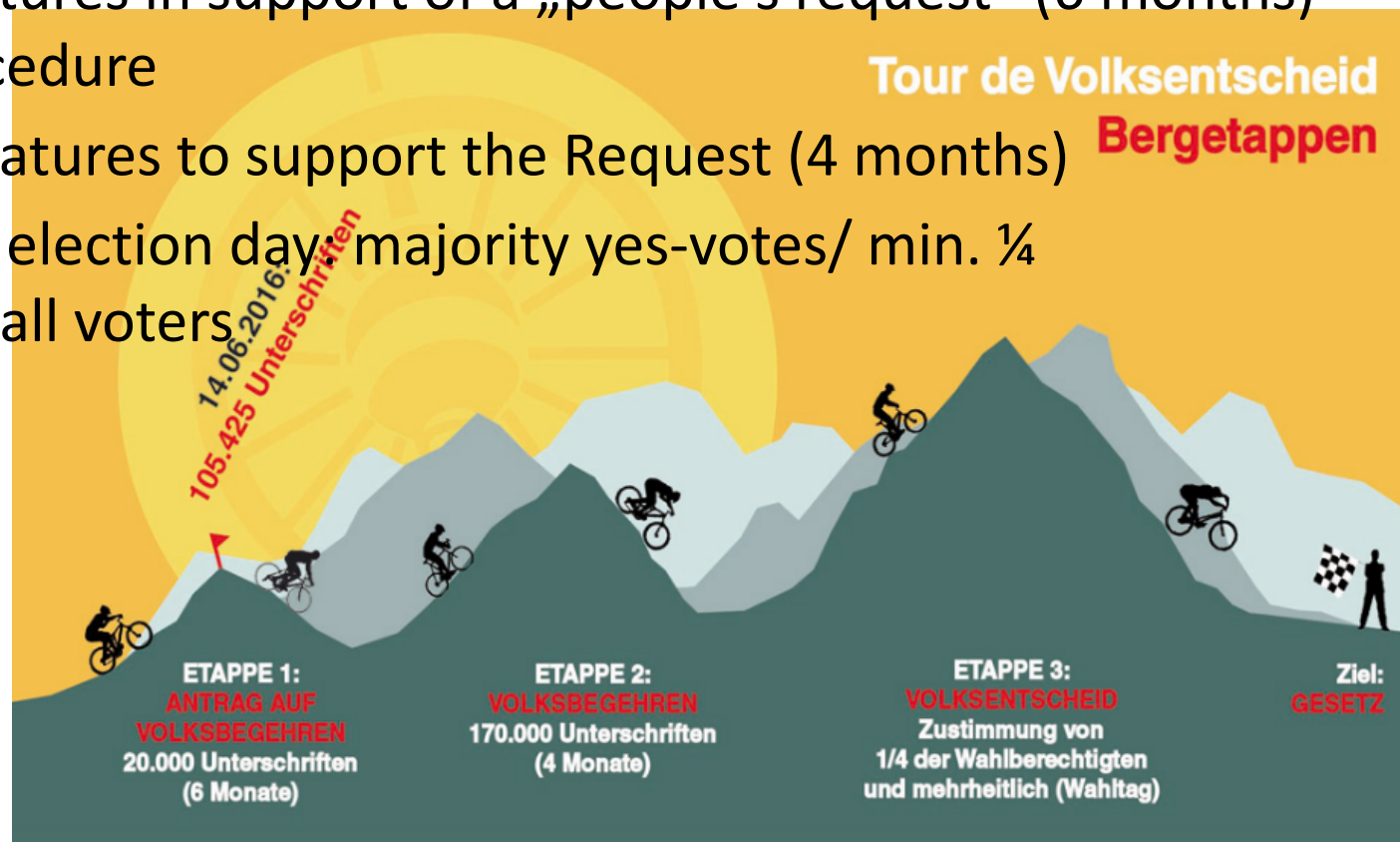
= element of direct democracy on state level



Citizens' initiative (registered in Berlin)

Three hurdles to request a law (process):

- (1) 20,000 signatures in support of a „people's request“ (6 months) to start the procedure
- (2) 170,000 signatures to support the Request (4 months)
- (3) Referendum election day: majority yes-votes/ min. $\frac{1}{4}$ participation of all voters



Approach I: Setting the Agenda – Making Cycling Newsworthy – Cyclists are Voters



Initiative of volunteers – donation funded - action based & confrontative: to shake up and make people re-think

105,000 signatures in 3,5 weeks: 1500 helpers, 250 shops ... no sleep



Requesting political responsibility for traffic deaths



Smog: Asthma Lazarett in front of City Hall

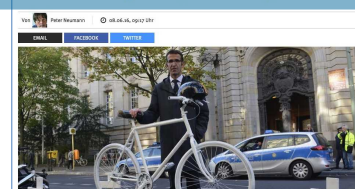


Advocate for the most vulnerable & precious – our children



Provocation as a major communication tool: „The Referendum goes down the drain“ - „The Minister Lied“ - „Sleepy heads in borough admin“ ...

Fahrrad-Volksbegehren „Der Senat lügt“



Approach II: The Bicycle Referendum goes local



In 2017, initiative spread out and established borough-based cyclefriendly networks. Following the approach of ,Netzwerk fahrradfreundliches Neukölln‘.

Networks operate in the same mode:

- Mobilising local citizens, enterprises, initiatives, schools etc.
- jointly and constructive for a better city (positive - not against anything)



Within the family of Networks:

- exchange of ideas, approaches, knowledge

Its members:

- participate in FahrRat
- follow Borough Assemblies (BVV)



Results: Output State Level – Senate of Berlin



Change in government => cycle friendly coalition (Sep 2016)

Legislative Framework => Berlin's Mobility Bill

- Senate jointly negotiated the new bill with NGO's and VEF (-May 2017) that includes all positions of the Referendum
- Bill expected to be adopted before Easter 2018

Budget for cycling infrastructure increased

- 2015 < 15 Million€ =>
2017 = 51 Million €/year + 20 Million start-package



The public discourse has evolved

- more pro-bicycle & about how public space is allocated
- The „right“ to free parking is unquestioned – parking on cycle- and bus lanes starts to become a public issue

But: Executive work of infrastructure planning & building at local level / boroughs of Berlin

Results: Output Borough Level – Tempelhof- Schöneberg

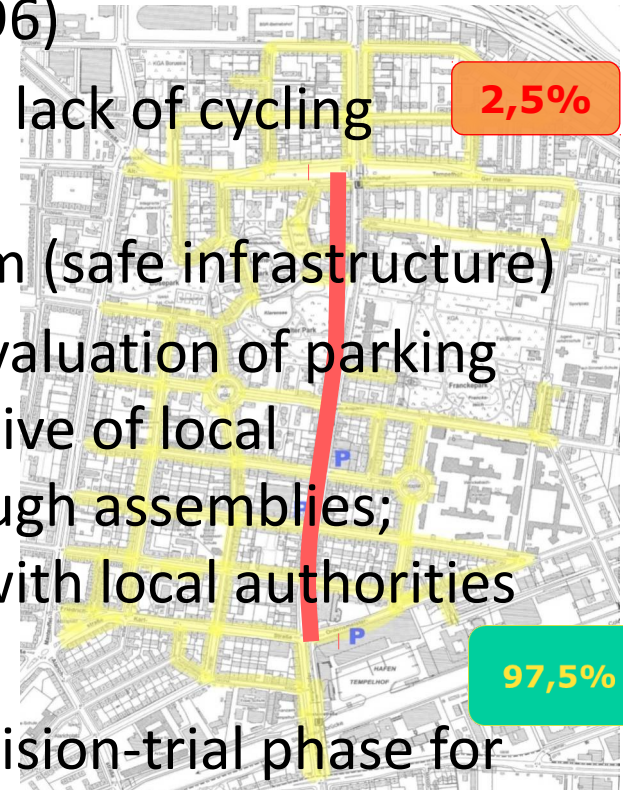
Local focus: tackling the ‚thick planks‘ first (B96)

= Main feeder road into city center w/ known lack of cycling infrastructure (>20 years)

=> No direct action taken to solve the problem (safe infrastructure)

Actions of the NFTS in 2017: Public Demos; Evaluation of parking situation; Survey among local shops w/ Initiative of local enterprises; Petitions/ public queries at borough assemblies; Visualisation of possible outcome; Meeting with local authorities (Mayor, Counsellor, Police, etc.)

Goal = safe infrastructure until 2019: BVV decision-trial phase for new infrastructure along B96 closing the gap - asap...



Lessons learned:

Berlin's Mobility Bill (due 12/2017) is not yet adopted:

- Prepare for hick-ups, delay and even sabotage from political friends and opponents.

B96:

- Latest speed limit trial phase of Senate (State level) blocks cycling infrastructure improvement for next 2 years and might delay planned infrastructure implementation at borough level.
- BVV (borough assembly) decisions not binding for administration. (FahrRat only consultative function to lower level committee)

=> Role of Civil society:

need for constant awareness / controll of admin work / pushing for speed-up procedures

Transfer:



To start a successful referendum: Ambitious timeline; clear goal; professional project management; clear messages – use facts and visualisation; teamwork: use the intelligence of the swarm-digital and analog- and keep it fun to attract volunteers; organise gatherings of signatures professionally.

Public opinion/ media: Mercilessly attack politics; stick to the point; demand political accountability for traffic victims/deaths

Local work: focus on solving concrete local problems together w/ administration; use your unique advantages to support but do not hesitate to pinpoint shortcomings.

Never doubt that a small group of passionate and motivated people can change the city...