Reviewer’s report

Title: Exploring bikeability in a metropolitan setting: stimulating and hindering factors in commuting route environments

Version: 1 Date: 23 September 2011

Reviewer: Benedicte Deforce

Reviewer’s report:

This is a very interesting study on a relatively new research topic. The paper is generally well written, although some parts are confusing or not focused enough.

Major Compulsory Revisions

• The background section is too long and should be shortened. P6 second paragraph and p7 second paragraph could be moved to the methods section. Last paragraph p6 and first paragraph p7 could be deleted since the authors refer to these studies in the discussion as well.
• The purpose of the study should be clearly mentioned at the end of the background section (cfr abstract)
• P8: first paragraph: the authors mention that they wanted to include a wide range of commuting behaviours. Why did the authors not investigate whether there were any differences in perceptions according to frequency of cycling to work? This would be an interesting research question.
• P10: second paragraph: line 1 is in contradiction with line 5: number of trips per MONTH versus average trip frequency per WEEK: please clarify
• P11 first paragraph: all this information about urban and suburban is very confusing, since only urban cyclists are included in the present study. Why did the authors decide to only include urban cyclists? It would be interesting to investigate the moderating effect of urban versus suburban. In addition, how was urban versus suburban defined?
• P12: first paragraph: please explain in the paper why “short and long” and “on the whole” were not used in the present study. I suppose the reason for not including “on the whole” is that this item is too general. But why was “short and long” not included?
• P12: second paragraph: why do the participants have to recall their experience of the last two weeks? What if they did not cycle to work during the last 2 weeks?
• P17: first paragraph discussion: the main results indicate that ..., be stimulating for bicycle commuting IN BICYCLE COMMUTERS: please be careful that results are only applicable to people who already actively commute by bike. Make sure you do this throughout the discussion (f.i.p 24 line 3-4 etc)
• P19: second paragraph: one variable of possible importance is route distance: why was “short and long” not included in the present study? Although this is
perceived distance, this could be an interesting variable to include.

- P27: first paragraph: This needs to be investigated in potential bicyclist before these results can be generalized. In fact, the lack of generalizability should be discussed as a limitation of the study.

- P27: second paragraph: this is in contradiction with what is mentioned in the introduction that different environmental factors might influence different physical activity behaviours and the need for more specific research. Since the discussion section is already very long, I suggest to delete this paragraph.

- P31: last sentence: I think it is too early to call this a sound basis for urban planning. Further research (in potential cyclists) is definitely needed.

Minor Essential Revisions

- Abstract: conclusions: The main results indicate that ... stimulating factors for bicycle commuting in inner urban BICYCLE COMMUTERS: please be careful that results are only applicable to people who already actively commute by bike.

- P6: second paragraph: It might be more informative to add some statistical values when describing the validity and reliability of ACRES.

- P7: second paragraph: what is viz?

- P9: line 2: cleaning instead of cleansing

- P9: second paragraph: “a reasonably good correspondence”: please add some statistics

- P11: second paragraph: it would be easier to follow this paragraph if reference to table 2 would be made at the beginning of this paragraph.

- P12: first paragraph: it is very confusing that traffic is an outcome variable in previous studies in the same sample and a predictor in the present study. Why mentioning predictor and outcome variables of previous studies in the same sample? It would be less confusing just focusing on the present study.

- P25: second paragraph, line 1 “were” instead of “ware”

Discretionary Revisions

- p4: second paragraph: Some studies suggest that environmental perceptions are more strongly related to PA behaviour compared to objective measures. It might be useful to refer to the following paper:


- P5: first paragraph: My suggestion would be to add the following to the last sentence in order to make your point more clear: “Thus, ... and the associated route environment is a specific environment ASSOCIATED WITH THIS SPECIFIC PA BEHAVIOUR.”

- P6: second paragraph, line 4-5: “consists... and”: this section of the sentence could be deleted (is repetition of sentence above)
• Is figure 3 necessary?
• Table 3: Please include the scale of all items in the legend (15 point: some negatively scored, some positively scored); without scale the interpretation of the means is confusing.

**Level of interest:** An article whose findings are important to those with closely related research interests

**Quality of written English:** Acceptable

**Statistical review:** No, the manuscript does not need to be seen by a statistician.

**Declaration of competing interests:**

I declare that I have no competing interests