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THE ROLE OF BICYCLE AND PEDESTRIAN PATHS IN SHAPING A SAFE, ECO-FRIENDLY, AND GREEN URBAN ENVIRONMENT

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Abstract: The article examines the role of bicycle and pedestrian paths in shaping a safe, eco-friendly, and green urban environment. It explores current trends in sustainable transport development amid rapid urbanization, as well as the impact of cycling and pedestrian infrastructure on reducing traffic congestion, improving environmental conditions, and enhancing the population's quality of life. Particular attention is paid to the importance of landscaping and greening along transport corridors as a vital element of sustainable urban development. Based on the findings of the study, the author proposes recommendations for improving bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure in cities.

Keywords: bicycle infrastructure, eco-friendly urban environment, greening, pedestrian paths, quality of life, sustainable transport, urbanization..

Introduction. Modern cities face severe challenges associated with accelerated urbanization processes, population growth, and a rising number of vehicles. The high concentration of motor vehicles in urban areas leads to a degradation of ambient air quality, increased greenhouse gas emissions, rising noise levels, and a decline in the overall comfort of the urban environment. Under these conditions, the development of sustainable modes of transport—capable of ensuring efficient public mobility with minimal environmental impact—becomes particularly urgent.

One of the most effective tools for achieving this goal is the creation of a modern network of bicycle and pedestrian paths. Developing such infrastructure helps reduce the use of private motor vehicles for short-distance trips, alleviates traffic congestion, and improves environmental conditions. Concurrently, it enhances road safety for all traffic participants by separating traffic flows and establishing comfortable conditions for pedestrians and cyclists.

In recent years, the concept of sustainable urban development has increasingly viewed bicycle and pedestrian paths not merely as elements of transport infrastructure, but as an integral component of the city's green framework. Landscaping and greening adjacent territories, alongside creating shaded alleys, green corridors, and recreational spaces, helps improve the microclimate, boosts the aesthetic appeal of the urban environment, and provides favorable conditions for public recreation and physical activity.

For Uzbekistan, the formation of a safe, eco-friendly, and green urban environment is gaining particular significance in light of active urban development, transport infrastructure modernization, and the implementation of urban renewal programs. In this regard, researching the potential of developing bicycle and pedestrian paths as a tool for enhancing safety, environmental sustainability, and the level of greening in urban areas is of substantial scientific and practical interest.

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Theoretical Foundations of Bicycle and Pedestrian Infrastructure Development.

The development of bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure represents a crucial direction in shaping sustainable urban mobility. In today's context of rising motorization and urbanization, environmentally friendly modes of transportation that help reduce the traffic burden on cities are becoming increasingly essential. Bicycle and pedestrian paths ensure safe and comfortable movement for the population, decrease reliance on motor vehicles, and contribute to the improvement of the overall environmental situation.

Modern approaches to urban planning view bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure as an integral component of a green urban environment. Creating bicycle lanes, pedestrian walkways, and promenades in combination with landscaping allows for the formation of comfortable public spaces, improves the urban microclimate, and enhances the population's quality of life. Such facilities simultaneously fulfill transport, environmental, and social functions.

The development of bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure exerts a comprehensive impact on sustainable urban development. The environmental benefit is manifested in the reduction of pollutant emissions and lower noise levels; the economic effect is seen in reduced expenditures on transport infrastructure and the increased attractiveness of urban areas; while the social impact is reflected in the improvement of public health and enhanced road safety.

The Main Benefits of Developing Bicycle and Pedestrian Infrastructure

Table 1

No.	Impact Dimension	Main Benefits
1	Environmental	Reduction in CO_2 emissions and other pollutants, improvement of air quality, decrease in noise levels.
2	Transport	Mitigation of road congestion, enhancement of public mobility, development of alternative modes of transportation.
3	Social	Enhancement of road safety, improvement of public health, creation of a comfortable urban environment.
4	Economic	Reduction in costs for the construction and maintenance of road infrastructure, increase in the investment attractiveness of urban areas.
5	Urban Planning	Development of green corridors, increase in green space coverage, improvement of the city's architectural aesthetic.

The table demonstrates that the development of bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure facilitates the simultaneous achievement of environmental, social, economic, and urban planning goals, rendering it one of the key elements of sustainable development in modern cities.

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International Experience in Bicycle and Pedestrian Infrastructure Development

Global practice indicates that developing bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure serves as a core tool for shaping sustainable and eco-friendly cities. While different countries implement their own distinct models, they share a common priority: ensuring safety, integrating cycling with public transit, and expanding green urban spaces.

Copenhagen is one of the global leaders in bicycle mobility. According to urban research data, approximately 62% of residents commute to work or school by bicycle daily, making the bicycle the primary mode of transport in the city. This outcome is the result of systematic bike path development, granting cyclists priority at intersections, and integration with the city's sustainable development policies.

Amsterdam also demonstrates a high level of bicycle usage. Here, roughly 35–38% of all urban trips are made by bicycle, and the cycling network is fully integrated into the municipal transport system. The Netherlands as a whole is considered a country with one of the most advanced cycling movements in the world.

Singapore, despite its high building density, actively develops alternative modes of transportation. However, the share of bicycle trips remains low at around 1–2%. Nevertheless, the state compensates for this by developing infrastructure: the length of the Park Connector Network exceeds 300 km, linking parks and residential areas via green corridors.

Paris has significantly accelerated the development of its cycling infrastructure in recent years. The share of bicycle trips has risen to approximately 11% of all urban movements, and the Vélib' public bicycle-sharing system includes around 20,000 bicycles and over 1,400 stations, making it one of the largest in Europe.

Seoul is developing a combined model of urban mobility. Its bicycle infrastructure includes an extensive network of routes and a bike-sharing system (Seoul Bike "Ddareungi" with tens of thousands of vehicles). Although the share of bicycle trips remains relatively low at about 1–2%, the city actively develops green corridors, including the restored 5.8-km Cheonggyecheon River, which has become a vital pedestrian space and environmental landmark.

Thus, international experience demonstrates that the most effective results are achieved when bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure is developed comprehensively-in tandem with green zones, public transport, and policies aimed at reducing automobile dependency.

Analysis of the Current State of Bicycle and Pedestrian Infrastructure in Uzbekistan

In recent years, the development of bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure in Uzbekistan has become an integral part of urban modernization policies and efforts to improve the quality of the urban environment. In major cities, primarily Tashkent, individual projects are being implemented to widen sidewalks, establish bicycle paths, and improve public spaces. Within the framework of urban transformation programs, new pedestrian zones, parks, and green corridors are emerging, alongside elements of cycling infrastructure, particularly in areas undergoing street and highway reconstruction.

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However, this development remains fragmentary and has not yet been formed into a unified, interconnected network.

Existing projects include the reconstruction of central streets with designated pedestrian zones, the construction of separate bicycle paths, and the development of public spaces within parks and along canals. In Tashkent, street improvement projects are underway to widen sidewalks and create accessible conditions for persons with reduced mobility. Additionally, elements of digital traffic management and improved transport accessibility are being introduced; however, the integration of bicycle transport with the public transit system remains limited. In other cities across the country, the development of such infrastructure is in its initial stages.

The primary challenges and constraints include insufficient connectivity of cycling routes, the absence of a unified municipal cycling concept, and weak infrastructural continuity between city districts. Bicycle paths are frequently designed as isolated segments lacking a logical network, which reduces their practical efficiency. Furthermore, the prioritization of motor vehicles persists in street planning, thereby restricting space for pedestrians and cyclists. An inadequate level of landscaping and greening along the pathways also diminishes user comfort under hot climate conditions.

From a road safety perspective, a high degree of intersection between conflicting traffic flows remains one of the critical issues. In many instances, cyclists are compelled to use roadways or sidewalks that are not adapted for shared use, which increases the risk of traffic accidents. An insufficient number of safe crossings, bicycle crossings, and coordinated traffic signals further undermines safety levels. Nonetheless, a positive factor is the gradual implementation of modern traffic organization standards, including flow separation and improved street lighting.

Thus, the current state of bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure in Uzbekistan can be characterized as being in an active phase of formation. While individual successful projects exist, the key task ahead remains the creation of a comprehensive, interconnected, and safe system that is fully integrated with green urban infrastructure and public transportation.

Environmental and Social Impacts of Bicycle and Pedestrian Infrastructure Development

The development of bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure exerts a measurable impact on the environmental and social indicators of the urban environment. The most significant effect is the reduction of carbon dioxide (CO_2) emissions by replacing short motor vehicle trips with active modes of transportation. On average, 1 km of travel by a passenger car results in the emission of 0,12–0,18 кг CO_2, depending on the vehicle type and driving conditions. Assuming that 10,000 people daily replace a car trip (averaging 3 km one way), the annual reduction in emissions can be estimated as follows:

10 000 people × 6 km / day × 0,15 kg CO_2 × 365 days ≈ 3 285 tons of CO_2 per year.

This demonstrates that even the partial development of cycling and pedestrian infrastructure can yield a significant environmental benefit.

From an environmental perspective, ambient air quality also improves. Mitigating the traffic burden leads to lower concentrations of nitrogen oxides (NO_x), carbon monoxide (CO), and fine particulate matter (PM2.5), which constitute the primary pollutants in urban areas. Studies indicate that a 10-15% reduction in motor vehicle traffic can lower PM2.5 levels in the street environment by 5-12%, directly contributing to a decrease in the incidence of respiratory and cardiovascular diseases.

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On the social side, the development of bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure stimulates increased public physical activity. According to estimates by the World Health Organization (WHO), 30 minutes of daily walking or cycling reduces the risk of cardiovascular diseases by 20-30%. Furthermore, enhancing the accessibility of public spaces boosts social engagement, fosters the development of small businesses along pedestrian zones, and increases the overall attractiveness of the urban environment.

Landscaping and greening along transport corridors reinforce these environmental benefits. On average, a mature tree can absorb 20-25 kg of CO_2 per year and lower the ambient temperature by 1–3°C during the summer period. When green corridors are established along bicycle and pedestrian paths, they generate an additional microclimatic effect, reducing airborne dust and noise levels.

Environmental, Social, and Economic Impacts

Table-2

№	Indicator	Baseline Value	Impact of Infrastructure Development
1	CO_2 Emissions Reduction	~0,15 kg CO_2 per 1 km of car travel	Up to 3,000+ tons of CO_2 year when replacing 10,000 trips/day
2	Air Quality	High $PM_{2.5}$ concentration in urban areas	5–12% reduction in $PM_{2.5}$ with decreased traffic traffic volumes
3	Physical Activity	Low baseline level of public physical activity	20–30% reduction in disease risk
4	Landscaping & Greening	Limited green zones along roadways	20–25 kg of CO_2 absorbed per 1 tree/year + temperature reduction of 1–3°C

Thus, the calculated indicators confirm that the development of bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure is not only environmentally sound, but also represents an economically and socially effective tool for sustainable urban development.

Recommendations for Improving Bicycle and Pedestrian Infrastructure.

The development of sustainable urban mobility requires comprehensive solutions aimed at reducing traffic burdens, enhancing safety, and reinforcing environmental benefits. Below are the key directions for improvement, accompanied by a calculated estimation of their effectiveness.

Creation of Green Cycling Corridors. Establishing continuous, landscaped bicycle routes along traffic pathways allows for the simultaneous resolution of transport and environmental objectives.

If a **10-km** corridor is established, serving approximately **5,000** cyclists daily who replace private motor vehicle trips:

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- **Average trip length:** 10 km (20 km round trip)

- **CO_2 emissions savings per 1 km of car travel:** ~0,15kg

Impact Calculation:

5 000 × 20 km × 0,15 kg × 365 days ≈ **5 475** tons of **CO_2** per year

Additionally, green spaces along the corridor (approximately 1,000 trees) can absorb:

1 000 × 22 kg ≈ **22** tons **CO_2** per year

Tree Planting and the Creation of Shaded Alleys. Landscaping pedestrian zones reduces the thermal load and enhances the overall comfort of movement.

If trees are planted with a 10-meter spacing along a 5-km street:

- **Number of trees:** 500 units
- ***CO_2* absorption:** 500trees × 22 kg = **11 tons of CO_2/year**

Additionally, research indicates that dense landscaping reduces ambient air temperature by **1,5–3°C**. This is particularly crucial for the hot climate of Uzbekistan, as it mitigates the thermal load and lowers the energy consumption of buildings, yielding up to a **10–15% savings in electricity used** for air conditioning in adjacent areas.

Integration with Public Transit. Establishing intermodal transit hubs that combine cycling with bus or metro networks enhances the efficiency of the entire transportation system.

If at least **10% of public** transit passengers (for instance, out of 100,000 daily trips) shift to a "bicycle + transit" model:

- **Reduced motor vehicle traffic:** 10 000 trips × 3 km
- *CO_2* **emissions savings**:

10 000 trips× 3km × 0,15kg *CO_2* × 365 days ≈ 1 642 tons of *CO_2*/year

Дополнительно снижается нагрузка на дороги и уменьшается время в пути на **10–20%** за счёт перераспределения потоков.

Utilization of Digital Technologies for Urban Mobility Management. The implementation of digital platforms, such as smart traffic lights, mobile applications, and traffic flow monitoring, optimizes vehicular movement and enhances safety.

If digital management reduces transit delays by 10%, assuming an average urban transport emission baseline of 50,000 tons of *CO_2*/year, the projected impact constitutes:

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• **Savings:** ≈ 5,000 tons of CO_2/year

Furthermore, digital systems decrease traffic accidents by 15–25% through the optimization of traffic light phases and the continuous monitoring of high-risk road sections.

Consolidated Summary of Infrastructure Improvement Effectiveness

Table-3

Direction	Main Effect	Calculated Result
Green Cycling Corridors	CO_2 reduction + growth in bicycle trips	~5,475 tons of CO_2/year + absorption by trees
Greening and Shaded Alleys	Cooling and air purification	11 tons of CO_2/year + 1.5–3°C temperature reduction
Integration with Transit	Reduction in private vehicle trips	~1 642 tons of CO_2/year
Digital Mobility	Traffic flow optimization	Up to ~5,000 tons of CO_2/year + 15–25% accident reduction

Thus, calculations demonstrate that even the targeted implementation of the proposed measures can ensure a total reduction in CO_2 emissions of approximately 10–12 thousand tons per year, while significantly enhancing the safety and comfort of the urban environment.

Conclusion and Core Findings

The conducted study confirms that the development of bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure is a critical direction for shaping a modern urban environment focused on safety, environmental friendliness, and sustainable development. International experience demonstrates that a systemic approach to such solutions can significantly alleviate traffic burdens, reduce pollutant emissions, and enhance the population's overall quality of life.

An analysis of the current state of affairs in Uzbekistan indicates that the development processes of this infrastructure are in an active stage of formation. While individual projects for street improvement, the creation of pedestrian zones, and the layout of local bicycle lanes are being implemented, a unified, interconnected, and functionally complete network is still lacking. Significant constraints persist, including the prioritization of motor vehicles in urban planning, insufficient integration with public transit systems, and unresolved road safety concerns.

Calculated assessments show that the implementation of comprehensive measures can generate a substantial ecological and socioeconomic impact. Even the partial development of green cycling corridors, the landscaping of transport arteries, integration with public transit, and the digitalization of

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mobility management are capable of reducing CO_2 emissions by thousands of tons annually, improving the urban microclimate, and boosting public physical activity levels.

Overall, it can be concluded that bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure must be viewed not merely as a component of the transportation network, but as an integral part of the city's green infrastructure (urban green frame). Its development is directly intertwined with sustainable development goals, environmental remediation, and the creation of a livable urban environment.

Findings:

- **Infrastructure as an Optimization Tool:** The development of bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure serves as an effective tool for the ecological and transport optimization of urban areas;
- **Shift to Comprehensive Planning:** The existing system in Uzbekistan requires a strategic transition from fragmented, isolated solutions to comprehensive urban planning;
- **Synergistic Integration:** The highest operational efficiency is achieved when integrating transportation, ecological, and digital components into a unified system;
- **Tangible Impact on Sustainability:** The implementation of the proposed measures ensures a substantial reduction in CO_2 emissions and directly enhances the overall quality of the urban environment;
- **Adherence to Green Mobility:** Future development must be deeply rooted in the concept of green and sustainable urban mobility.

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