Is (bicycle) history useful for (bicycle) policy?

In the Cycling Cities project cycling in urban environments and regions is studied in a long-term perspective. It is argued that historical knowledge of bicycle use, culture and policy is useful to contemporary bicycle policy makers. But is that the case? And if so, how? Do policymakers benefit from historical knowledge and the five-factor analysis (landscape, social action, mobility alternatives, policy, and image) of the Cycling Cities project?

In this online session historians and policymakers reflect on and discuss the usefulness of a long-term perspective for cycling policy. How do historians legitimize their work towards policymakers? How do policy makers use historical information for their work? What knowledge and expertise do historians provide and what knowledge do policymakers need? Is that knowledge useful for new policy? If so, which (translation) steps must be taken to make it useful? How should historical knowledge be provided? These and other questions are central to the session.

Design: A limited number of historians and policymakers is invited to participate (others can join of course). Ideally policy makers join who have experience with the Cycling Cities project while others have not. Interesting is the question why someone chose to participate in the Cycling Cities project at the time. They can reflect on their experiences / examples of impact (or not!) on policy. On the other hand, the visions of policymakers whose cycling history has not been studied are also interesting (at least not in the context of Cycling Cities). Do they use other historical input? Or don't they see the point of a long-term perspective? Or do other factors (eg costs or lack of political-administrative support) explain why history is absent?

A few weeks before the session, the participating historians / policymakers are presented with two questions or statements to prepare themselves.

The session opens with a short introduction (approx. 5 min.) by the chairman. Hereafter the use of history for (bicycle) policy is discussed, guided by the questions / statements and with participation of the public.

The aim is to link the often academic-theoretical legitimacy of professional historians with the professional practice of policy makers who are primarily oriented towards the future.