

**SDG 9: BUILD RESILIENT INFRASTRUCTURE, PROMOTE INCLUSIVE AND SUSTAINABLE INDUSTRIALIZATION AND FOSTER INNOVATION**



**Industry, innovation and infrastructure** – three central and interdependent areas that underpin our economic coexistence: no infrastructure without innovation, no industry without infrastructure. This also applies to a more sustainable future. This will require equal access to infrastructure, and the use of clean technologies that lead to environmentally sound production.

**CYCLING AROUND WUPPERTAL**

**➔ WHAT ARE THE ACTIVITIES ALL ABOUT?**

Since 2014 the Nordbahntrasse in Wuppertal has been a route for pedestrians, cyclists and citizens enjoying leisure time. In this hilly city, the almost flat trail offers 100,000 people an alternative to car travel. At the same time, the conversion of the two disused railway lines made it possible to preserve important structures such as bridges, tunnels and viaducts.

**➔ WHAT HAS BEEN DONE SO FAR?**

Since 2006 a total of 22 kilometres of disused railway line have been reactivated as a pedestrian, cycling and recreational trail. Bridges and tunnels in particular required extensive restoration measures. Funding was applied for under EU, federal government and state government programmes, and donations were collected.

**➔ HOW WAS THIS IMPLEMENTED?**

In 2006 the citizens' association Wuppertalbewegung e. V. began pressing for a feasibility study on the conversion of the line. In 2009 the City Council of Wuppertal agreed to implementation of the project. Near the line the city has built cycle paths along many roads, and approved around 130 one-way streets in the opposite direction. The association itself collected donations of 3.3 million euros.

**➔ WHAT ARE THE NEXT STEPS?**

The route is very well accepted by the population. In the cyclist satisfaction test conducted by the ADFC (Germany's national cycling association) in 2014, Wuppertal was awarded the title of 'Catch-up City of the Year'. In 2016 it won second place in this category. The city is currently working on a new master plan for bicycle traffic. Citizens are also participating in the process. Promoting bicycle traffic is one of 13 key projects for the urban development strategy 'Wuppertal 2025'.



**Wuppertal** ➔ North Rhine-Westphalia



Population:  
**358,523**



Mayor:  
**Andreas Mucke**





## CITIZENS BUILD SUSTAINABLE INFRASTRUCTURE

**Infrastructure – that sounds like motorways, airports or power grids. The term actually means much more than that. Sustainable infrastructure includes renewable energy and innovative mobility strategies. Sustainability also means strategically developing old infrastructure that is no longer required so that it can be used in new ways. This is exactly what happened with the so-called Nordbahntrasse in Wuppertal.**

Along this disused railway line that leads through the city there is now a 22 kilometre-long path for pedestrians and cyclists with no puddles and virtually no junctions. A quantum leap for bicycle traffic, which used to occupy a niche due to the fact that Wuppertal is so hilly. Some 100,000 people live in the immediate catchment area of the path, who as a result now have an alternative to car travel. The Nordbahntrasse is sustainable infrastructure which at the same time contributes to a sustainable city (SDG 11) and climate action (SDG 13). The development of the line also made it possible to preserve important cultural structures such as viaducts, tunnels and bridges.

As part of the 'Rhine Line' between Düsseldorf and Dortmund decommissioned in 1999, the line remained in a state of disuse for a long time. Plans to convert it into a cycle path emerged early on, but the City of Wuppertal lacked the financial resources needed to fund this.

### CITIZENS' ASSOCIATION LAYS THE CORNERSTONE

The idea was not brought to life again until 2006, when 21 citizens founded the association Wuppertalbewegung e. V. The association put forward a feasibility study on the conversion of the line, and suggested applying for EU funding and collecting donations in order to finance the project. Their aim was to create a pedestrian, cycle and leisure route that would be independent of car traffic.

Carsten Gerhardt, First Chair of the association, says that initially there was no support from the municipality. 'We had to fight for years', he says. Campaigns to get people involved revealed that citizens were very interested. They cleared wood from around the line and cleaned up more than 70,000 square metres of land that could be used. In 2007 a first section of the cycle path about 100 metres long was unveiled for demonstration purposes.



The new route for pedestrians and cyclists also leads through old railway tunnels such as the Rotter Tunnel. (Photo: C. Mrozek)

The City Council responded by deciding to support the association. Funding applications were submitted to the EU and the federal state of North Rhine-Westphalia. The association collected donations of 3.3 million euros, and generated a further 12 million euros of funding. In 2010 Nordbahntrassen GmbH, the company founded by the association, began developing the first section. At the end of 2014 the entire line was opened to citizens. At the opening, the then Minister of Transport in North Rhine-Westphalia, Michael Groschek, said: 'The Nordbahntrasse is a superb example of successful civic engagement'. The achievements of the association and its supporters were indeed remarkable. By generating 2.5 million euros in cash donations, 0.8 million euros in contributions in kind, and personal contributions and labour market projects worth 1.6 million euros, the citizens' association made a significant contribution towards the financing and implementation of the project. The total costs of reactivating the Nordbahntrasse amount to around 30 million euros.

### IT IS WORTH THE EFFORT

Today the municipality and the association share responsibility for maintaining the path. According to Mr Gerhardt, cooperation now works very well. As he puts it, 'On fine days the path is almost too full, despite the fact that it is six metres wide. The municipality itself is currently working on a new participatory master plan for bicycle traffic. Promoting bicycle traffic is also one of 13 key projects for the urban development strategy 'Wuppertal 2025'. The aim is to make Wuppertal a bicycle city by 2025.

### INTERNET ADDRESS

[www.nordbahntrasse.de](http://www.nordbahntrasse.de)