

## **Public Policy Movement on Cycling and Walking in Thailand**

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Walking and Cycling used to be a main mode of transport for majority population in Thailand. However, when more people could afford to buy car and the government has adopted a development strategy that gives priority to personal car in designing cities and infrastructures for transport, neglecting those for walking and cycling, many people has developed a habit to travel sedentarily even in short distance by motorized vehicles.

Promotion of walking and cycling in daily activities to enable the population to have sufficient physical activity is easy, convenient and best investment for health. It has a t least nine direct health benefits, such as reduction of overweight and obesity, heart diseases, diabetes, stroke and depression. Not putting pressure on bones and joints, it is aerobic exercise suitable for elderly people. Its promotion is thus good preparation for Thailand to become an aging society. Having sufficient physical activity would prevent the country from a loss of productivity which is at present an average of 1.8/day/person/year and can save national budget for public health, such as more than 100,000 million Bath per year the government is using to treat people with overweight and obesity.

Thailand Cycling Club has been working to promote cycling for health since 1991. Its Walking and Cycling Policy Advocacy Programme, began in 2011, conducts research to acquire scientific knowledge, and aerates communities and networks to promote walking and cycling as active travel and physical activity in daily activities. On December 19,2012, it succeeded in getting the 5<sup>th</sup> National Health Assembly to pass a resolution on Systems and infrastructure for Promotion of Walking and Cycling in Daily Activities which would be submitted for consideration of the government cabinet and concerned government agencies to put recommended to actions into practice.