



Example 14                      **Construction of Barrier-Free Low-Floor and High-Floor Tram System**

City (country)                      **Cologne (Germany)**

good practice for people with ...	kind of vehicle	kind of measure/approach
... motor impairment ... visual impairment	tram	engineering/technology approach organisational/operational support

**Project description**

In 1991 the local public transport provider in Cologne, Germany, decided to develop a low-floor east-west oriented tram network. The process of establishing the low-floor system encompassed many different steps: New vehicles were ordered, mainly in the 1990s. Several stations and stops were reconstructed with Hermeskiller Platz as a particularly positive example. The tracks were rebuilt at this station, tactile paving was installed at the platform edge to give visually impaired people necessary information, and covered bike racks were built.

In December 2003 an expert inspection of the public transport network advised that the mixed use of low-floor and high-floor vehicles on the same line should be avoided. Low-floor vehicles should be concentrated on special lines whereas high-floor vehicles should be used on others. The platforms in the high-floor network should have a standard height of 90 centimetres. This advice was implemented in the following years and several stations were rebuilt. Additionally, new low-floor trams were ordered in 2004.

Upgrading an existing public transport system to barrier-free public transport is a long and expensive task. The local public transport provider in Cologne has already reached a high standard and will continue to improve the situation.

Source:  
 DER NAHVERKEHR 11/2005: Auf dem Weg zur Barrierefreiheit (de), pp. 26-33