



EURO  
CITIES



## Cycle Super Highways

# Making cyclists a priority

With 35% of commuters in Copenhagen already choosing to travel by bike, the city decided to collaborate with 21 neighbouring municipalities and the Capital Region of Denmark to develop a network of cycle super highways to encourage even more residents to cycle to work.

## Cycling culture

Cycling is already a popular mode of travel in Copenhagen, especially for shorter distance commutes. When residents need to travel distances of less than 5km, 59% are choosing to cycle. But that figure drops to just 20% when those distances are longer than 5km. With the introduction of a fast and convenient network of cycle super highways, the city is hoping to see a 30% rise in cyclists commuting to work.

London has already introduced a similar programme and experienced a 200% rise in cyclists, but was coming from a different starting point. With many Copenhageners already keen cyclists, the city believes it can capitalise on this and make cycling a more appealing alternative to the private car or public transport.

The economic, environmental and health benefits are clear: for every 10km someone chooses to travel by bike rather than by car, CO<sub>2</sub> emissions are reduced by 1.6kg and DKK55 (€7.40) is saved in health costs. According to Copenhagen's research, new cyclists cite speed, convenience, health, cost and feeling good as reasons to take up cycling.



The best thing is just to get out there and cycle. When you finally get off work and the sun is shining, nothing beats getting on your bike and cycling home. And the path itself has been a positive experience. The infrastructure has been noticeably improved on the route, including new traffic lights, so all in all the paths have become more cyclist friendly.

*Henrik Wulff, commuter using the Farum cycling route*

cities in action

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where: Copenhagen, Denmark  
what: mobility, environment  
when: 2009-2013

## Extensive network

The Capital Region of Denmark joined forces with the other municipalities in 2009 to develop a network of 28 cycle super highways to eventually cover 494km. The project is continually expanding; six further municipalities joined in 2012 with an ultimate goal to cover the entire Copenhagen region, and possibly further afield.

To ensure a coherent brand and maintain momentum, the city set up a secretariat to oversee the project and manage its consistent identity. If a cycling super highway is to compete with a train or bus network, users expect clear signage, uniform quality of the route and adequate maintenance. The city uses a 'C' symbol to identify the super highways, which it hopes will achieve the same visibility as the 'M' for metro or its 'S' for trains.

## Prioritising cyclists

Making cycling the most appealing option means prioritising cyclists over other modes of transport. Where traditionally traffic planning has focused on cars, Copenhagen hopes to shift the focus to bikes. This means seeking out the best routes for bikes, not necessarily the same as car routes, which are often diverted out of built-up areas for reasons of safety, noise and pollution. Conversely, the cycle super highways are designed to pass through areas of population density, including by schools and business areas, ensuring the maximum reach for commuters, schoolchildren and residents.

The routes have given the city the chance to pilot new solutions, such as 'green waves' where traffic lights are adjusted for cyclists' speed and needs, meaning they can travel longer distances without having to stop, and priority is often given to cyclists at traffic lights, meaning they can set off up to 12 seconds before cars.

The city is focusing on maintenance of the routes, especially during the winter months when the city is conscientious about removing snow. To make the journey more comfortable, the super highways are equipped with footrests and bike pumps. The city is also making efforts to link the routes with public transport connections for multimodal

journeys, including the installation of bike ramps at stations and on vehicles. It is also testing solar-powered lighting to make the paths safer in the dark.

## Investing in infrastructure

The city has budgeted around DKK413 million (€55 million) for the cost of the network, which is funded by the municipalities, the region and the Danish Road Directorate.

It expects the benefits to far outweigh the initial investment, which in any case is significantly cheaper than building the same distance of metro or road, with estimated annual savings 7,000 tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub>; DKK300 million (€40m) in health costs; and a significant reduction in congestion around the city.



I enjoy using the cycle path where I can cycle fast without stopping at traffic lights. This minimises my travel time. There's also lovely nature you can enjoy along the route. On the right hand side you have the Hillerød highway, but on the left there are trees, lakes and lawns. During spring time here it has been great to watch the trees and flowers blossom. You don't get the same experience from a car.

**Ulla Knudsen,**  
*commuter on the Farum cycling route*

