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Cycle superhighways in Denmark's Capital Region releases world's first cycle highway account

A cycle superhighway in Denmark's Capital Region is a sure winner: On average a 23 % increase in cyclists, a single trip length of 11 km and 14 % of new cyclists who are former car drivers. The Danish Cycle Superhighway Collaboration between 27 municipalities and the Capital Region of Denmark releases its first cycle account, showing the major beneficial effects of developing bicycle infrastructures.

Since the first cycle superhighway opened in the Capital Region of Denmark in 2012, the Cycle Superhighway Collaboration has been busy expanding the route network and monitoring its effects. This year marks the 10th anniversary of the collaboration, with the results of what are now eight existing routes having been collected in the cycle superhighways first Bicycle Account.

A growing collaboration

In 2009 16 municipalities and the Capital Region of Denmark began working together to create cohesive and interconnected bicycle routes in the region to improve the infrastructure for commuters biking across municipal borders. Now, ten years later, eleven additional municipalities have joined. This makes the Cycle Superhighway Collaboration between 27 municipalities and the Capital Region the largest and most ambitious cross-municipal bicycle infrastructure collaboration in Denmark.

"Copenhagen initiated the Cycle Superhighway Collaboration after a report showed major potential in decreasing urban congestion by increasing the number of bike commuters entering and leaving Copenhagen. But in order to do that, we need to collaborate with the other municipalities in the region to improve the conditions for cycling. Copenhagen might be the world's most bicycle-friendly city, but that doesn't affect our ambition to continue to improve and expand – and maybe even one day be a part of the world's most bicycle-friendly *region*," says Ninna Hedeager Olsen, Mayor of Technical and Environmental Affairs at the City of Copenhagen.

23 % increase in cyclists

The total planned network of cycle superhighways consists of 45 routes. Currently, eight of the routes exist and eight more are in the making and will be launched in the coming years. The effects are clear. On average, upgrading cycle routes to cycle superhighways has resulted in a 23 % increase in cyclists, with 14% of the new cyclists previously having chosen a car. Furthermore, the average trip length on the cycle superhighways is 11 km.

"Commuting by bike is not just for people living in the cities – bike commuting is for everyone, everywhere. That's why suburban and rural municipalities also need to pay attention to the bike as a mode of transport. Nearly half of all Danish commuters have 10 km or less each way – shorter than the average trip length on the cycle superhighways. Considering this and the impressive results of the eight existing cycle superhighways, we see a great potential in investing in cycle infrastructure," says Tomas Breddam, Mayor of Roskilde, one of the latest municipalities to join the collaboration.

Time efficient daily exercise

The cycle superhighway bicycle account shows not only the positive direct effects of the routes, but also the indirect effects of the total network, and of commuting by bike in general. A socio-economic analysis of the cycle superhighway network estimates the project resulting in a socio-economic surplus of €765 million, making the project one of Denmark's most profitable infrastructure investments. The health benefits alone make up for €616 million of the socio-economic surplus.

“The continuous increase in physical inactivity is not only a growing health problem – it is also a very costly one. That is yet another reason for us to keep on improving conditions for bike commuters – both the existing and potential ones. We know that the main motivation for bike commuters, even on such long distances as 11 km each way, is the opportunity to turn their time spent on transportation into time spent on exercising and clearing their minds. In that perspective, biking to work is very time efficient and it works,” says Karsten Längerich, Mayor of Allerød.

The Cycle Superhighway Collaboration has been selected as one of the 100 city projects making the case for climate action in 2019 by the Cities100 Report. Already, cycling in the Capital Region saves the region what equals to 15.000 Danes' annual CO₂ emission.

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Learn more

Read more about the [cycle superhighways](#) or download an [English introduction](#)

See the [Cycle Superhighway Bicycle Account 2019](#)

Find [press photos from the cycle superhighways](#), photo credit: Cycle Superhighways of the Capital Region, Denmark.

Fact sheet

About the cycle superhighways in the Capital Region of Denmark

The cycle superhighways in the Capital Region of Denmark are regional, high quality cycling routes that connect rural and city areas across municipal borders. The network of cycle superhighways is made by 27 collaborating municipalities and the Capital Region. The aim is to make it easy, flexible and safe to cycle to and from work.

Results

- The Capital Region has **eight routes** or **167 kilometers of cycle superhighways** in 2019. By 2045 we will have more than **750 kilometers of cycle superhighways** spread out over approximately **45 routes**
- Every day, commuters on the cycle superhighways cycle **400.000 kilometers** – the same distance as 100 Tour de France races or ten times around the Earth.
- The average trip length on the cycle superhighways is **11 kilometers**.
- There is a **23 % average increase in cyclists** on the cycle superhighways when a route is upgraded to a cycle superhighway. Fourteen percent **of the new cyclists previously chose the car**.
- A socio-economic analysis of the cycle superhighways in the Capital Region of Denmark shows that cycle superhighways are **one of the most profitable infrastructure investments in Denmark**. The entire network of more than 750 kilometers and 45 routes will provide a socio-economic **surplus of €765 million**. The **health benefits make up for €615 million** of the socio-economic surplus. Read the socio-economic analysis (in Danish) [here](#).
- The most popular route is **the Farum-route**, which has a 68 % increase in cyclists and where 26 % of the new cyclists previously chose the car. The highest number of cyclists counted on the Farum-route on a weekday is 29.000, and the average trip length on the Farum-route is 14,7 km.

Meet the commuters

Commuting by bike is not always the fastest mode of transport, but for many bike commuters it is still the most **time efficient**. By biking to work travel time becomes their time for **daily exercise** and fresh air. In that way, they don't need to spend their spare time at the gym.

- Case: Watch the video with [Mie](#) who **commutes 22 kilometers** each way. She commutes on her electric cargo bike or her classic granny bike – depending on whether her kids bike on their own or sit in the cargo bike.
- Case: Watch the video with [Søren](#) who **commutes 15-25 kilometers** each way depending on the daily schedule. Søren's workplace has gradually become more bicycle friendly which makes it easier and almost a luxury for Søren to commute to work by bike.
- Case: Watch the video with [Bent and Holger](#) who both decided to **leave their cars** at home **and bike 7 and 13 kilometers respectively to work for one month**. They completed a health test before and after, and they experienced a respectively **3 and 4-year reduction in body age after just one month of bike commuting**.

The organisation

Traffic does not take municipal borders into consideration. If we want more people to bike to and from work, **municipalities must work together** to create cohesive and interconnected bicycle routes in the region.

- **27 municipalities and the Capital Region** of Denmark have joined forces to create interconnected cycle superhighways across the region.
- The Cycle Superhighway Collaboration is coordinated by the **Office for Cycle Superhighways**, which facilitates the collaboration between the municipalities and the region.
- Each **municipality is responsible for the planning, building and financing** of the routes. The routes are, however, **often co-financed by the state**.
- The **Office of Cycle Superhighways** that facilitates the collaboration **is funded by the municipalities and The Capital Region of Denmark**.
- To ensure a common plan on where and how to build the cycle superhighways, the municipalities have agreed on **a conceptual strategy** defining the **quality and criteria** for a cycle superhighway and a vision plan for **a fully developed network by 2045**.
- October 31st, 2019 the Cycle Superhighway Collaboration is arranging a **Mayoral Summit** where the **Danish Minister of Transport** will receive the Collaboration's recommendations for **improving cycle infrastructure and incentives for bike commuting nationally**.

Related facts

- Approximately **60 % of all resident commuter trips** in the Capital Region are **10 km or less**.
- **52 %** of households in the Capital Region **do not have a car**.
- **34 % of all commuter trips** in the Capital Region **are by bike**. Ten years ago it was 29 %.
- The **CO₂ emission derived from transportation** in a typical household in the Capital Region is **29 %**.
- **65 %** of the citizens in the Capital Region have **more than eight hours of sedentary activities** on a weekday.
- **26 % of the citizens** in the region **do not live up to the WHO's minimum recommendation for physical activity**. **75 %** of those have a desire to be more physically active.
- Every time you bike 1200 km you reduce the number of sick-days with one day.
- The bike contributes to attaining 11 of the 17 Sustainable Development Goals set by the UN.