

Encouraging Halmstad drivers to use e-bikes (Sweden)



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City:
Halmstad

Region:
Northern Europe

Country:
Sweden

Topic:
Walking and cycling
Mobility management

In brief

Four hundred committed car users in Halmstad, Sweden, got the opportunity to borrow an electric bike for a period of time during 2014 and 2015 through the municipality. Together, they cycled more than 180 000 km, and helped the city to avoid a lot of emissions, noise and traffic jams.

Context

Halmstad municipality has around 95 000 inhabitants and is the largest city in the region. Halmstad municipality has 270 km of cycle paths, of which 47 km consists of nine 'super' cycle paths that radiate into the city centre. The city is located on the Swedish west coast which means that it often gets windy. The 2012 travel survey showed that 59 per cent of the travels in Halmstad are done by car, 19 per cent on bicycles, 9 per cent by bus, 9 per cent on foot and 2 per cent using other forms of [mobility](#).

In action

The e-cyclist project was aimed at avid car users who wanted to start cycling. Participants were given a bike and helmet to borrow for a period of time. Some 100 people participated in the 2014 project and 300 people in the 2015 project. The participants received health coaching via a blog and a health expert, and also contributed on a joint internet forum. The computer display on the bikes recorded the kilometres and the cyclist who had cycled the most was then voted as Cyclist of the Month and Cyclist of the Year.

Results

The 2014 project lasted between April and October. Many became real bike enthusiasts during the project and together they cycled 83 000 km, equivalent to travelling more than twice around the world. The person who cycled the most travelled 5 500 km in 6 months and was given a bike. More than 80 per cent of participants said at the end of the project that they would continue cycling on a daily basis instead of taking the car.

In the following year after the end of the project, half of the participants had continued to bike at least 3 days a week. After just a few weeks the e-bikers from 2014 realised that e-biking suited them. The project for 2015 was therefore further developed to 100 e-bikes on loan over three periods of 2 months each: spring, summer and autumn. This allowed more

people to give it a go.

Together, the 300 participants in the 2015 project cycled over 97 000 km, and helped the city to avoid a lot of emissions, noise and traffic jams. The participants had the opportunity to buy the bike after the project, and one-third of them did so. As in the 2014 project, more than 80 per cent of participants said at the end of the project that they would continue cycling on a daily basis instead of taking the car. Also, 70 per cent said they thought they had influenced other people to start cycling.

Challenges, opportunities and transferability

The whole e-cyclist concept is transferable. Every city could copy the concept with a number of electrical bikes that is realistic. So if you want people to start changing habits this is an effective way. To try a new behaviour together with a group and having a coach is much easier and more interesting and fun than just start on your own. And it is very contagious too. The challenge is time. The project takes time and you need to have people in your organisation that have the time (and money).

In Depth

- [Halmstad's website section on e-cycling](#) (in Swedish)

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