



This document was written to convince the Danish politicians to invest in better bicycle infrastructure. For the first time the Danish Cyclist Federation joined forces with national health NGOs and Danish Consumer Council.

In January 2009 the politicians agreed to invest 135 million euro in national funding for cycling initiatives over a period of 5 years. We consider this a great success. The year before there was no national funding for this!

Transport policy and health – killing two birds with one stone

By having more Danes choose the bicycle as a means of transport we may contribute to solving some of the greatest economic problems that we are facing in society today: Crowded roads, inactivity and growing obesity. Danes cycle a lot, but cycling on the national level has decreased by 30% over the last 15 years. This should be changed.

Soon political negotiations for a five-year investment plan for future infrastructure in transport in Denmark will start. In this connection, the Danish Cancer Society, the Danish Cyclist Federation, the Danish Consumer Council, the Danish Heart Foundation, the Danish Diabetes Association and the Danish Medical Association all agreed on requesting substantial investments in better conditions for the cyclists. This will encourage more people to cycle and thereby increase the Danes' level of physical activity, which is of great importance to public health.

Background

The Danish National Board of Health estimates that 30-40% of adult Danes are inactive¹. Almost 4,500 deaths, 100,000 hospital admissions and 3.1 million working days are lost annually through illnesses related to physical inactivity². Danish research shows that cyclists have 30% less risk of dying too early compared to those who do not cycle^{3,4}. The greatest positive health effect is seen when inactive people become active at least ½ hour per day. We know that the majority of all short trips are by car⁵ – for which reason short bicycle trips are an obvious possibility. On this background we see a great potential for public health in making it more attractive for Danes to choose the bicycle for local trips of less than 5 kilometres.

From 1999 to 2002, the City of Odense chose to carry out a targeted effort to promote cycling, which resulted in the cycling traffic increasing by 20%. More than half of the new bicycle trips in Odense replaced the use of cars, which also led to less congestion on the roads for the other car drivers. Odense found health savings of approx. 33 million DKK, which more than offset the total costs of the effort of 20 million DKK⁶. Economic analyses from the United Kingdom show that, such investments results in health gains worth 2-7 times the invested amount⁷, whereas similar calculations from Norway⁸ show a gain of at least a factor of 3.

Not only Odense experiences progress in bicycle use. Copenhagen and Frederiksberg are also examples of cities that invest in better conditions for cyclists and thereby make more people choose the bicycle. The decrease in cycling on the national level may and must be changed by a national and more targeted effort.

Vision

Denmark will be the best bicycle country in the world. By means of a massive and targeted effort in 20 Danish cities, Denmark can surpass The Netherlands. This effort will benefit more than 1 million Danes. Today 24% of trips less than 5 kilometres are on bicycle; in the Netherlands it is 37%⁹. Our vision is that at least 37% of all trips less than 5 kilometres in Denmark will be on bikes in 2014.

Objective

That the Government and the municipalities together invest at least 400 million DKK annually over the next five years in making cities more friendly for bicycle transport based on the experience from Odense and other bicycle cities.

The proposal of the organisations for the transport investment plan:

Bicycle friendly cities

Municipalities with a politically passed multiannual plan for development of cyclism can apply for financial support from the Danish Ministry of Transport to develop their **Bicycle friendly city**. Municipalities may apply for up to 50 % of the expenses related to infrastructure and other projects promoting cycling. Cycling must be made more attractive than car transport, e.g. by increasing the passage by means of dedicated bicycle short cuts, linked traffic lights for cyclists, better bicycle parking facilities, focus on safety, better possibilities of combining bicycle with public transport, as well as service stations with, for example, bicycle pumps and drinking water. Two hundred million DKK should be reserved by the Government annually for this purpose. Three percent of the funds should be used for evaluation, research and communication.

**” More bicycle friendly cities can
make Denmark the leading bicycle nation worldwide.**

**We should cultivate and strengthen what we are
already good at – and be proud of it.** ”

Yours sincerely



Danish Diabetes Association
Allan Flyvbjerg, chairman



Kræftens Bekæmpelse

Danish Cancer Society
Frede Olsen, chairman



Danish Cyclist Federation
Claus S. Hansen, chairman



Danish Consumer Council
Camilla Hersom, chairman



Danish Medical Association
Jens Winther Jensen, chairman



Danish Heart Foundation
Peter Clemmensen, chairman

¹ Kiens, Bente et al (2007): Fysisk inaktivitet – konsekvenser og sammenhænge. Motions- og Ernæringsrådet. Physical Inactivity – Consequences and Connections. The Exercise and Nutrition Council. In Danish.

² Juel, Knud et al (2006): Risikofaktorer og folkesundhed i Danmark, Statens institut for Folkesundhed. Risk Factors and Public Health in Denmark. The National Institute of Public Health. In Danish.

³ Andersen, Lars Bo et al. (2000): All-Cause Mortality Associated With Physical Activity During Leisure Time, Work, Sports and Cycling to Work. Article published in Arch Intern Med/vol. 160, 2000

⁴ Matthews, Charles E. et al. (2007): Influence of Exercise, Walking, Cycling and Overall nonexercise Physical Activity on Mortality in Chinese Women. Published in American Journal of Epidemiology, vol. 165, No. 12

⁵ Magelund, Lykke (2001): Dovenskab og dårligt vejr. Transportrådets nyhedsbrev 3. TU data. Laziness and Bad Weather. Danish Transport Council, newsletter 3. Data from Investigations of Travel Activities. In Danish.

⁶ Troelsen, Jens et al (2004): Evaluering af Odense – Danmarks Nationale Cykelby. Evaluation of Odense – Denmark's National Bicycle City. In Danish.

⁷ Macdonald, Bruce (2007): Valuing the Benefits of Cycling. Report for Cycling England

⁸ Transportøkonomisk Institutt (2002): Gang- og sykkelvegnett i norske byer. TØI rapport 567. Institute of Transport Economics: Net of Pedestrian and Bicycle Paths in Norwegian Cities. TEI report 567. In Norwegian.

⁹ Pucher and Buehler (2008): Making Cycling Irresistible, Transport Reviews, vol. 28

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