

Danish Spaces

The transport sector currently accounts for approx. 25% of Denmark's CO2 emissions, and this figure is expected to rise in the years to come; and although in recent years there has been a reduction in toxic emissions from traffic, the problems with noise and pollution remain. Therefore it is crucial that the strategy we adopt for developing the traffic of the future, our infrastructure, our cityscapes and the way we preserve our environment, reflects the type of society we want.

How do we cultivate sustainable transportation?

Denmark is a country of islands. It is surrounded by water on all sides. In fact at no time can you be more than 50 kilometres away from the sea. Denmark's well developed infrastructure reflects this fact. The Danish government intends to take Denmark's transport policy in a green direction, without sacrificing the world class infrastructure that has made Denmark a leading nation in bridge construction and design.

The plan is to create a society in which economic growth and high mobility are combined with a better environment, higher priority for and better preservation of nature, reduced traffic noise and measures to combat climate change. Denmark's green transport policy has been formulated with the overall objective of improving mobility while at the same time reducing transport-related CO2 emissions. Green Transport Vision DK is a far-sighted, integrated plan for a green transport system with three fundamental components: adjustment of vehicle tax to greener vehicle levies, more and better public transport and new sustainable technologies. Green Transport Vision DK will realise a downturn in the rising CO2 parabola for the transport sector as we approach 2020.

Denmark, with its relatively short journey distances, is ideal for electric cars. Better Place is a strategically innovative electric car project that challenges the idea that everyone should own a car. Instead the focus is on leasing and sharing. While visiting Copenhagen you might also notice the new climate-friendly bus route – the electric powered City Cirkel buses. They operate in the centre of Copenhagen and have so far been a big success.

Why all the bicycles?

Denmark is a country of cyclists. With a 100-year old cycling tradition, the bicycle occupies a strong position as a means of transportation in Denmark. Nine out of ten Danes own a bicycle. Especially in cities, bicycles are the preferred means of transportation. In Copenhagen, for example, cyclists clock up around 1.18 million kilometres on Copenhagen's cycle paths every day. On average every Dane cycles 1.6 kilometers per day, and the bicycle is used by more than a third of people commuting to work and school. No other means of transportation combines fast and inexpensive transport with a desire for sustainable development and improvement of public health as the bicycle. Furthermore, in the major cities, the bicycle is often a faster means of transportation than the car.

The Danish bicycle culture has been nurtured by a holistic approach to transport policy and urban planning. Creating urban environments with a lot of bicycles is often seen as a means of creating

more lively and liveable urban centres. Cycling has therefore been an integral part of infrastructure development in cities and towns with continuous investments in cycle paths, cycle routes and cycle parking.

How do we ensure green growth?

85% of Danes live in cities. In recent years Danish architects and urban planners have focused on transforming our cityscapes by making them greener and more sustainable. The same thought is the driving force behind the preservation of Danish nature. Since the late 1980s the Ministry of Environment has focused on creating new wilderness areas and forests, and over the last eight years this effort has given Denmark nearly 23,850 hectares of new nature – an area equivalent to more than 37,000 football pitches. With a new political agreement on “green growth”, this figure will be 75,000 hectares by 2015.