

Speed pedelecs on cycle superhighways – a dilemma of safety versus modal shift potential

Diana Skyum

Keywords: speed pedelecs, ebikes, infrastructure, safety, potential, modal shift

In Denmark, speed pedelecs have been allowed on cycle paths since July 2018 as a pilot scheme. A speed pedelec is an e-bike that provides motor assistance up to 45 km/h. This makes them attractive to commuters with longer commutes who wouldn't normally bike or commuters who just want to shorten their travel time by bike. The speed pedelec is fast, and this is both its strength and its weakness. Where can a speed pedelec reach its full potential and still be safe for the speed pedelist and other road users? And will the potential of the speed pedelec outweigh the safety and security challenges, the speed pedelecs is assumed to cause?

The Cycle Superhighway Collaboration in the Capital Region of Denmark had a mapping made of the conditions for riding speed pedelecs on the cycle superhighways, to learn more about the possible challenges and potentials of speed pedelecs on cycle tracks. While the cycle superhighways are often perceived as the routes most adapted to speed pedelecs, the mapping showed that only 8 % of the existing cycle superhighway network is fit to accommodate the speed pedelecs full potential in a safe and secure way - and actually only 6 % if you take into account the number of cyclists on the network.

The conclusions from the mapping suggest that in order to make the pilot scheme permanent, a physical upgrade of the cycle superhighways is needed. But other actions must be taken too. Behavioral and regulative measures are needed on both a state level and municipal level.

At ICSC 2020 the results and conclusions of the mapping will be presented along with the proposed actions necessary or possible to accommodate the growing number of speed pedelecs on the cycle tracks while securing a safe and secure infrastructure for all users.