

Summary:

# The potential for increased cycling in Norwegian cities and towns

The modal share of cycling in Norway is low in relation to many other countries in Europe – just 6 per cent of all trips are made by bicycle, as opposed to 12 per cent in Sweden, 17 per cent in Denmark and 29 per cent in The Netherlands. Experiences from cities in Sweden where cycling is high indicate that climate and topography alone cannot explain the low use of bicycles in Norway.

The potential for increasing cycling in Norwegian towns and cities is to be found primarily within short car trips. Half of all car trips (as car drivers) are shorter than 5 km.

One of the causes for the high use of cars for short trips is the fact that these trips are part of a longer trip chain, but where each trip element is short. It is estimated that some 25 per cent of all short car trips are part of a trip chain.

We have calculated the transfer potential for car trips of less than 5 km. These comprise a total of 46 per cent of all car trips. There is potential to transfer some *35 per cent of all short car trips* (as drivers) to walking or cycling. These trips *comprise 16 per cent of all car trips* which are made. This will mean an increase in pedestrian and cycle traffic of 37 per cent.

This potential could be increased somewhat if trips involving car passengers and public transport passengers are also included. The increase in pedestrian and cycle traffic could then be as great as 50 per cent. A certain amount of new cycle traffic can also be expected as a result of those who already cycle making *more* bicycle trips.

The calculated potential is very uncertain and more thorough evaluations will require new data regarding people's choice of transport mode.

In Norway a transfer of between 10 and 15 per cent of *all* car trips to walking or cycling may be realistic, depending on the measures which are implemented. The potential for transfer is greatest for trips to and from work and for leisure trips. Trips for shopping, trips for transporting children, and trips which are part of a longer trip chain are assumed to have less transfer potential. The greatest potential for transferring to cycling lies with those who vary their form of transport.

There is much to indicate that many people would use bicycles instead of the car for short trips if the conditions were improved. In order to achieve an increase in the use of bicycle, a targeted, energetic input for cycle traffic is required over a number of years. Experiences from other countries show that this can work. The more measures which are implemented, the greater the number of new cyclists. Even simple measures such as parking for bicycles, have great effects. It should also become possible to combine cycling and public transport.

There is a need for further research into cycling and the potential for changing from using the car for short trips to going on foot or by bicycle. Similarly, there is a need for knowledge of what is required to get people to cycle and what effects different measures have on cycling.