



EcoMobility

PRIORITY FOR ECOMOBILITY IN OUR CITIES. A SERIES OF LOCAL STORIES

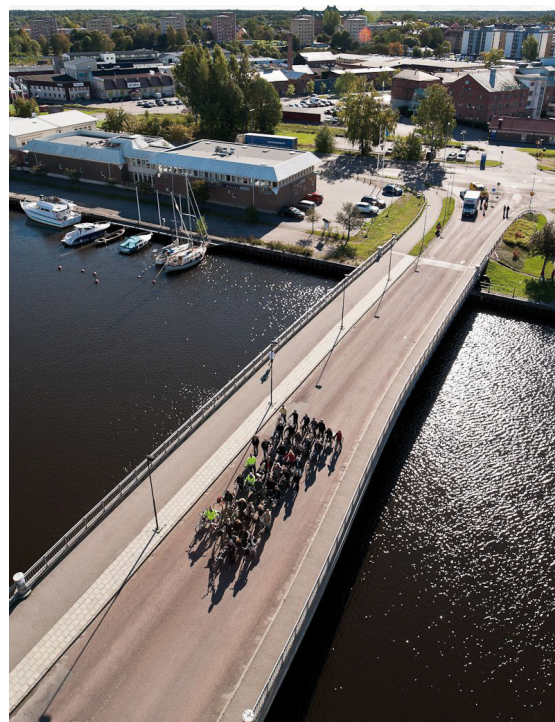
Gävle, Sweden

Smart choices require easy access – the challenge of making mobility management a part of everyday life

Summary: The entire trip, from door to door is an important issue for Gävle, the region and all of Sweden. The ability to travel comfortably and quickly, yet in an environmentally friendly way is important to travelers. In the Gävle area, this is an especially important issue because many of the inhabitants live in rural areas and/or commute long distances to cities in the region. City buses, commuter parking, bikes on the train, and other transportation solutions are essential to a well-functioning weekday.

Valuing sustainable mobility in Gävle

The Municipality of Gävle is focused on reducing local and global environmental impact from travel. The interest in this topic among politicians and senior officials is large and gives the issues weight. There are many in Gävle that think mobility management issues are important including, businesses, organizations, associations and educational associations, and they cooperate with the municipality. Collaboration is highly valued in the various projects that are under way, as the relationships that are created help to facilitate the long-term efforts for achieving the development of sustainable transportation in Gävle. The work will not only reduce impact on the climate, but will also provide improved health, increased safety, better air quality, noise reduction and more money in the end. It also has to do with streamlining the use of transportation and infrastructure. The purpose is to influence travel or transportation before it begins. Sustainable travel is a complement that allows new or existing technological solutions to be more effective. It can be seen as the software (knowledge, attitude and behavioral effects) that provides a better use of hardware (physical action).



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40 Bicycles on Gavele Bridge, taking up much less space than 40 cars would.

Biking – the perfect method of transportation

Biking as a method of transportation provides fast economic, environmental and health benefits. Gävle has long been known as a bike friendly city and in 1997 it received the award the Year's Biking City. Today, the city has over 200 km of bike paths and works continuously to make it even easier to travel by bicycle. A new bicycle plan for the entire municipality has been developed and each year a Bike Day is held in May together with businesses, organizations and associations. Other annual efforts to increase the interest in biking include Bicycle campaigns, competitions like the Gävle City Challenge, bike races, bicycle orienteering, bicycle pools, bike lanes and good facilities for dirt biking. The point is for people to choose the bicycle as a natural alternative, and by creating opportunities for enjoyment and new experiences it may also motivate people to increase their use of bikes in other contexts.

Influencing attitude and behavior change

In terms of mobility management, the city is successfully working with both small and large projects that affect public attitudes and motivate changes in behavior. The project called Hållbar VarDag, (Sustainable Everyday Living) gives 70 Gävle families the chance to change their behavior and habits in an environmentally friendly direction over the course of twelve months. Focus areas include energy, food, travel and recycling. Throughout the year, the families meet in both small and large groups where they are given the chance to develop within these areas. When it comes to travelling, they have daily opportunities to try out public transportation, take part in the Bike Challenge, receive training in Eco Driving and the opportunity to test the ISA, Intelligent Speed Adaption system, in their private cars. The project is carried out in cooperation with a number of activities within the municipality.

There are many students who are driven to school in Gävle. This phenomenon creates major problems for the traffic environment around the schools, as well as great uncertainty for the students who walk and bike. By making a school-commuting plan, schools in the municipality can improve road safety and encourage more walking and biking to school. Gävle also offers, on its website, all primary maps of schools and surrounding areas that highlight cycle routes, pedestrian crossings, etc. The idea is that schools should actively work with the map and add locations for safe drop-offs, bicycle racks, etc.

Together with partners, Gävle has also developed a Web-based climate account where the citizens of Gävle can find out what effect they are having on the environment and get tips on how to reduce the impact. By filling in consumption fields in areas such as travel, lodging, food, recycling and shopping, residents will be able to determine how much greenhouse gas they emit per year and what they can do to reduce their environmental impact.

Urban planning and the role of politicians in mobility management

Community planning includes guidelines for the development of housing, utilities, communications, infrastructure and the environment. General plans, county transportation plans and municipal transport plans lay the foundation for the direction in which society develops. Politicians in the municipality are largely in control of the direction in which businesses operate and the investments that are to be made. This process leaves room for officials to be creative.

During 2011, Gävle has been named the year's 'challenger municipality' in the traffic and environmental organization Gröna Bilister category 'best improvement among Swedish municipalities within the area of environmental travel and transportation'. Gävle also came in second place in the competition for the year's Electric Car Municipality 2011.



Gävle, Sweden

The City of Gävle is the oldest city in the Norrland area of Sweden and is home to approximately 95,000 inhabitants. Gävle is the capital city of Gävleborg County. The city has a density of 1,644 per km² squared and covers a total area of 42 km².

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