

European town creating highways for cyclists

By Eleanor Beardsley, NPR

Every day, one-third of the people of Copenhagen ride their bikes to work or school. Collectively, they cycle more than 750,000 miles daily, enough to make it to the moon and back. And city officials want even more people to commute, and over longer distances.

So a network of 26 new bike routes, dubbed “the cycling superhighway,” is being built to link the surrounding suburbs to Copenhagen.

Lars Gaardhoj, an official with the Copenhagen capital region, says the routes will be straight and direct.

“It will be very fast for people who use their bike,” he says. “This is new because traditionally cycle paths have been placed where there is space for them and the cars didn’t run. So now the bike is going to challenge the car.”

The first highway, to the busy suburb of Albertslund some 10 miles outside the city, was completed in April.

To test it, I got a rental bike and went out for a ride.

One of the first things you learn about these bike lanes is that you have to move in fast. This is not leisurely biking – this is serious stuff in Copenhagen.

It’s a parallel world of transportation: You’ve got the cars on the roads and the people on their bikes. There are thousands and thousands of people on their bikes here in this city.

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