



**The development of cycling in Sweden 1995-2014**   **Summary**  
**Report 2015:14**



**The development of cycling in Sweden 1995-2014** **Summary**  
**Report 2015:14**

**Transport Analysis**

Address: Torsgatan 30

SE-113 21 Stockholm

Phone: 010 414 42 00

Fax: 010 414 42 10

E-mail: [trafikanalys@trafa.se](mailto:trafikanalys@trafa.se)

Webaddress: [www.trafa.se](http://www.trafa.se)

Publisher: Brita Saxton

Publication date: 2015-06-30

# Summary

For a number of years there have been measurements showing an increase in bicycle use, particularly in urban centres. This report presents the results of cycling from the national travel surveys, which cover the entire population 6-84 years registered in Sweden. These results therefore provide a more general picture of the state of cycling and the development in different age groups, different travel purposes and in cities of different size. Bicycle use is reported both as total distance travelled in kilometres, and as the number of trips where part of the trip is made by bicycle (not necessarily the far distance).

Swedes bike on average 5.3 million kilometers per day, which is a decline of 16 percent since the mid-1990s. This marked decline occurred in all three types of municipalities, in all ages, travel purposes and both sexes. In terms of the number of trips, bicycle use has declined even more: from 2.8 million to 1.9 million bike trips per day (–34 percent). Meanwhile, the population has increased by 8 percent. Thus, the number of bicycle trips per capita has decreased by 38 percent.

Since the turn of the millennium, some recovery in bicycle use can be discerned in cities and larger towns with their suburban municipalities. The recovery is mainly driven by population growth, but also by the fact that all trips, regardless of travel, mode grow longer and longer.

Outside the major cities, where formerly most bicycle trips were made, the number of bicycle trips has almost halved. Now it is in "major cities with suburban municipalities" where most bicycle trips are made – 44 percent of the number of bicycle trips in the country. The development has partly to do with emigration and rising age outside the cities, and the corresponding immigration to cities and larger towns.

These trends seem to contradict the reports we receive about increased cycling, increased consumption of bicycle equipment and increased health awareness. This can be explained by the broader coverage of this study, but also in part by the relatively long time period we studied.

Children's and young adults' cycling has decreased by over 40 percent during the period, measured in distance traveled per inhabitant. This is also shown by the fact that the number of school trips by bike has become 48 percent fewer. This should be considered from a public health perspective, since travel habits are established early in life. For people over 45 years – even those over 65 years – there is instead a gradual return of distance traveled per inhabitant on bicycle, after an initial decline, to the levels of 1995–1998.

The average trip length by bicycle has increased by 31 per cent in the most recent surveys. Commuting by bicycle has on average become longer, which is a general trend that applies to both commutes and school trips regardless of mode of transport. For all other travel purposes – school, service and purchasing, and other – the *total* trip length by bicycle has declined. However, the total trip length has not fallen as much as the *number* of bicycle trips.

The share of bicycle trips made during the winter months has not changed significantly between the surveys, disregarding a measurement 2005/2006 which probably was abnormally low due to weather conditions.

The number of fatalities in road accidents involving bicycles has been declining the past 10 years, along with all fatalities in road accidents. However, the number of severely injured in bicycle accidents does not diminish at the same rate, and represent since some years the largest category among the severely injured, before those who travel by car (36 per cent in 2011). The risk of dying in a bicycle accident has more than halved in 15 years, and is now 12 fatalities per billion cycled kilometers.



Transport Analysis is a Swedish agency for transport policy analysis. We analyse and evaluate proposed and implemented measures within the sphere of transport policy. We are also responsible for official statistics in the transport and communication sectors. Transport Analysis was established in April 2010 with its head office in Stockholm and a branch office in Östersund.