



The busy streets of Copenhagen.



COPENHAGEN



In combatting climate change, cities are right on the frontline. **Frank Jensen**, Lord Mayor of Copenhagen since 2009, shares how the capital and most populous city of Denmark is leading the charge by investing in initiatives to enable half its residents to cycle every day by 2015, and to become the world's first carbon-neutral capital by 2025. The city also actively incorporates green solutions in its development, and as recognition for their efforts in this area, Copenhagen was elected European Green Capital in 2014.



More than half the world's population lives in cities, and cities discharge three-quarters of all CO₂ emissions. Mayors all over the world are responsible for more than just dealing with the effects of climate change; they hold the keys to preventing it from getting worse.

In Copenhagen, we face the dual challenge of a rapidly growing population and limited space to build. Intelligent urban planning is essential to prevent a massive increase in CO₂ emissions when the city's population is projected to grow 20% in 10 years.

The city of Copenhagen is rising to the challenge and taking it a step further: by 2015, half of Copenhageners will cycle every day. By 2025, Copenhagen will



be the world's first CO₂-neutral capital. Indeed, Copenhagen seems to be making good progress: CO₂ emissions are down 40% since 1995. The rest of the gains will be made by installing 100 new wind turbines, expanding the public transport system and converting power stations from fossil fuels to biomass.

Promoting cycling and walking also plays an important role in reaching these goals. Besides experimenting with more sustainable collective transport such as electric buses, the city's planners are working hard to make cycling the first choice for Copenhageners to get around the city.

01 & 02 Copenhagen's public transport system such as 02 the Copenhagen metro and 01 the Copenhagen electric buses provide Copenhageners with greener transportation options.



But how do you get people to choose the bike instead of the car in a country like Denmark, where the rainy months might be a motivation-killer? Through urban planning, bikes are made a convenient and fast alternative. Studies show that every time a cycle track is built on a road, 20% more cyclists and 10% fewer cars use that stretch. Currently, there are more than 450 kilometres of cycle tracks, cycle lanes, green cycle routes and cycle super-highways, and the network of cycle tracks is constantly being expanded.

The Copenhagen Cycle Track Priority Plan states the order in which almost 70 km of new cycle tracks and lanes will be built. With new bike lanes and projects such as cycle super-highways to the suburbs, cycling has been made a greater option over driving. For example, the *Cykelslangen*, or Bicycle Snake, is a new bicycle-bridge that makes it possible to cycle between two very busy parts of Copenhagen in no time and with a beautiful view of the harbour. It makes the cycle ride even more pleasant for the 11,500 Copenhageners who cross it every day to and from work or school.

01 The *Cykelslangen*, or Bicycle Snake, Copenhagen's newest cycling bridge.

02 An aerial view of Copenhagen.

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The result of these efforts is that, currently, 41% of Copenhageners cycle to work or school every day – each contributing to making Copenhagen greener and more liveable. This is an important investment in the future. Building up a bicycle infrastructure does more than just reduce CO₂ emissions and make more people cycle to work. It leads to improved individual health and lower medical costs, which can be measured at the bottomline.

Initiatives like these cannot be accomplished by a city council alone. They require a great deal of involvement by residents and partnerships with businesses. The focus on creating a city that is not just green and liveable but also has a vibrant economy has made Copenhagen the European Green Capital 2014. Sharing solutions among businesses, residents and other cities is the primary focus for the city in its year as the Green Capital.

The crucial role cities play in the effort to reduce CO₂ emissions needs to be acknowledged. By sharing best ideas and solutions, Copenhagen can go from great solutions locally to brilliant advances globally.

This is why Copenhagen is working with cities globally to find new sustainable solutions and share the ones the city already has in place. For instance, Copenhagen is deeply involved in the work of the global city network C40 to implement sustainable initiatives to help address climate change.

Besides being in the C40 Steering Committee representing 19 other innovative cities, Copenhagen is also leading the C40 Green Growth Network, which seeks to develop new ways of creating sustainable urban solutions combined

with economic growth. Such networks have paved the way for important collaborations. For instance, an agreement signed in 2014 with the city of Milan will see companies from Copenhagen offer green solutions to help the Italian city become more cyclist- and pedestrian-friendly.

Cities can resolve specific problems on the ground, and are responsible for putting strategy into action. With the experience required to tackle problems locally and globally, cities hold the keys to a sustainable future. In managing climate change, cities are truly right on the frontline.





Frank Jensen has been the Lord Mayor of Copenhagen since 2009. He strives to create an even more liveable city with room for everyone. He believes economic growth and environmental sustainability should go hand in hand. The incorporation of green solutions in Copenhagen's development is one of the reasons why Copenhagen was elected European Green Capital in 2014. Frank Jensen was President of Eurocities in 2010-2012 and has been a member of C40's Steering Committee since 2014.

01 A typical day on the streets of Copenhagen.