



SUSTAINABLE

TRAVEL

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In a government directive of 2002, the Swedish Road Administration (SRA) was given the task of establishing a national plan for the road transport system, 2004-2015. Part of the plan is a programme to direct the demand for transport towards travel that is sustainable for both people and the environment.

“Sustainable Travel” is the umbrella name for all work carried out at the SRA to achieve more efficient, and more sustainable human transport in the long term.

The aim is to develop a programme and action plans together with companies, municipal councils, public transport authorities and organisations and to then implement projects which change attitudes and travel habits.

Ingemar Skogö
Director-General
Swedish Road Administration (SRA)

What is "Sustainable Travel"?

Reviewing one's travel habits is a good investment, not just economically. People who cycle and walk do not release any emissions, do not need to pay any parking fees and most importantly, feel better for it.

If nothing is done, road traffic in Sweden is expected to increase by two per cent per annum over the next five years. Increased road traffic is not only risking being synonymous with more emissions, noise, accidents and increased congestion but is also a potential public health issue - if more people choose to drive than walk or cycle.

Therefore, it is important to establish a new way of thinking about our travel. Long term sustainable travel requires simpler, safer and more attractive alternatives to using the car - especially with a view to single vehicle occupancy which accounts for the vast majority of all car journeys. "Sustainable Travel" is a way to actively counteract the increase in these journeys. We will achieve this by improving the conditions for walking, cycling and public transport on a broad front and create opportunities for using the car more effectively.

"Sustainable Travel" is not about admonishments, restrictions or rules. It is about working together to create strong cooperation between the various players, and it is intended to provide inspiration and encouragement through focusing on the areas where there are alternatives to the car. Quite simply, it is a collection of practical suggestions for concrete ways to change travel habits and attitudes to travel so that everyone will benefit.

About 30% of the adult population are entirely physically inactive both at work and in their spare time. At the same time, their brain is working at full speed, which often leads to stress. Unfortunately, the more stressed we are, the less we engage in physical activity.



Both people and the environment gain from a new way of thinking about how we travel.

You and us - positive thoughts working in harmony

We're taking several steps in the right direction

The SRA is involved in a wide range of activities. Common to them all is that they fall under the work strategy that we call the four-step principle - a principle where each step covers different aspects and stages in the development of transportation and our roads.

Step 1 Actions that can affect the transport need and the chosen mode of transportation

Step 2 Actions that provide more efficient use of the existing road network and vehicles

Step 3 Minor reconstruction works

Step 4 New construction and major reconstruction works

"Sustainable Travel" is aimed primarily at the first two steps. This includes influencing attitudes while pointing out and propagating for other travel choices.

With you we can move ahead

We consider it important to maintain an ongoing discussion about how travel can be optimised as far as possible. From our previous experience in influencing attitudes we have found that even small changes can have positive effects in the long term.

Therefore, we believe in collaboration, where we at the SRA will contribute knowledge, commitment and methods for working together with a view to developing and implementing ideas and initiatives for "Sustainable Travel". It is our ambition that you as a working partner will receive the greatest possible acknowledgement for your contribution.



It's more comfortable to sleep in your own bed – a telephone conference can replace another lonely night in a hotel.



Habits are powerful. But habits can be changed. At least in stages. Use alternatives when you can – take the car when you must.

Different ways of moving towards the goal

The popular view is that alternative means of transport are all very well but fail to meet the mark compared to the comfort of car travel. Our work is based on showing that there are many benefits in choosing alternatives - not through a complete transition, but when it is appropriate. All in line with the motto: "Use an alternative when you can, take the car when you must".

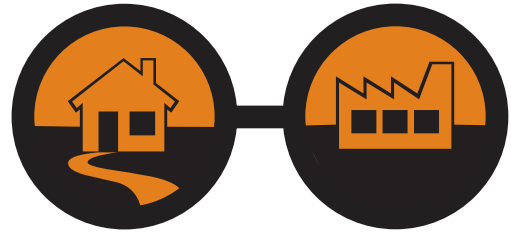
The tool kit to help us reduce the need to use cars contains such classic alternatives as walking, cycling and using public transport, along with ways of making travel more efficient, like carpooling and car sharing. Last but not least are the ways to save travelling at all, through other solutions for communication, such as virtual meetings and teleworking.

In certain cases, using a car is by far the best option and the obvious choice. However, we know that together with our working partners we can change travel habits, behaviour and attitudes if we adapt, combine and promote the alternatives within the different areas of "Sustainable Travel" in a suitable way.

Focus area: Commuting

Commuting characteristics

Commuting is the area with the highest single vehicle occupancy rate. 30% of these car journeys cover distances of less than 5 km, and both the route and travel time are routine. Single vehicle occupancy also places high demands on parking availability at places of work. These are characteristics that make commuting interesting for “Sustainable Travel” due to the good alternatives available. We know that relatively small changes can have a major influence on how commuters choose to travel and thereby achieve positive effects for the community, companies and individuals alike.



Possibilities

Given the high percentage of short commuting distances, it is often feasible to walk or cycle instead of using the car. Many employers around the country have already taken initiatives to encourage cycling to work. With great success.

There are also other alternatives for journeys to and from work that are a little longer. Thanks to the regularity in travel time and route involved, public transport or other means of communal travel can be used to some extent instead.

Another possibility is teleworking. The steady development in IT technology over the last few years has made this much easier. Already 250 000 people, which corresponds to 6% of the workforce in Sweden, telework at least one day a week. Developments in this area are still very interesting.

Positive effects

There are several advantages for the community in modified travel habits when commuting. Most are well known - such as better accessibility, less congestion and cleaner air. Add to that lower transport costs.

But there are also other benefits if more people choose to walk or cycle, car share or use public transport.

Among other things, the cost of parking spaces could be reduced. But perhaps most importantly of all, people in the work force will be healthier and feel better, resulting in a positive effect on the sick leave statistics.

Oxygen is necessary for both our muscles and brain

Physical activity promotes work efficiency, work motivation and general fitness. The following is an example. A completely healthy forty-year-old who does not exercise has a maximum oxygen absorption capacity of a little less than 2 litres/minute. A completely healthy forty-year-old who is active for approximately 30 minutes a day has a maximum oxygen absorption capacity of just over 3.5 litres/minute. The body quickly learns to be more effective.

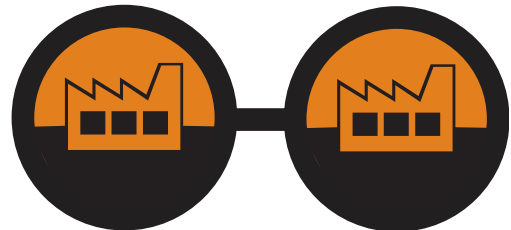
Focus area: Business trips

Some facts about business trips

Nearly 235 million business trips are undertaken in Sweden each year - all modes of travel included. 75% of these journeys are by car. As with commuting, there is usually only one person in the car. Although distances can vary, generally speaking some 60% of these trips are ten kilometres or less.

Statistics speak clearly - there is a great potential for changed and more efficient travel habits within the area of business trips.

Considering that nearly half of all travel in Sweden is work related, and that cars represent the predominant mode of transport, business trips are therefore an important and prioritised area within "Sustainable Travel".



Possibilities

Business trips are perhaps the clearest example of how some journeys must be made, while others could be coordinated and still others avoided altogether. There are at least four alternative means of communication that present great possibility for development.

1. Public transport. This is where the availability and frequency of service makes business travel possible.
2. Car pools for better planned trips. This is where a more efficient use of company vehicles saves money and the environment.
3. Virtual meetings. The majority of meetings could be replaced by their virtual counterparts without being at the expense of quality; e.g., telephone, video or on-line conferences.
4. Walking and cycling. Company bicycles are a good alternative where distances and weather conditions permit.

Positive effects

An effective and well proven instrument is to create new travel policies. There are substantial long-term cost savings to be made if these policies are applied well and consistently. Reviewing and choosing new alternatives can also have a goodwill effect and strengthen company image as an attractive and responsible employer.

Better travel alternatives provide greater freedom of choice. And this freedom of choice enhances accessibility in the sense of a greater possibility to reach customers and business contacts. A strong public transport system also makes it easier to move around during one's spare time - which helps enrich the quality of life for all of us. A highly positive spin-off effect which is reflected back at work.

Car pools always provide access to new, safer cars with better environmental features.

Focus area: Travel to and from school and places of higher education

Brief overview of travel to and from school and higher education

About half of the total number of these car journeys are less than 5 km. In built-up areas, normally 80% of these are in fact less than 3 to 4 km.

The school run generates a large number of short journeys. This results in children not getting the necessary exercise while at the same time generating additional short journeys, considering that the driver usually continues on by car. In addition, short car trips to schools cause polluted emissions while jeopardising the safety of those children who cycle or walk to school beside the road.

At the higher education levels, there is a lot of car commuting by students who live close to their place of study - journeys for which there usually are suitable alternatives.

Common to both is that they fall within the framework of what "Sustainable Travel" is trying to achieve – smarter and safer travel – in order to become more intelligent.



Possibilities

The greatest opportunity for changing the mode of transport is to be found in built-up areas. From car to bicycle, walking or using public transport.

This is also where there is a chance to give children and youth better options for getting themselves to school, and also to initiate a dialogue between teachers, pupils and parents about the school route and how travel habits could be improved and changed. This collaboration between schools and parents could result in safer roads for younger pupils and be a model for sustainable travel. Good examples are the "Walk and cycle to school" and "Itinerant school buses" projects which have been set up around the country.

When the distance to places of study is slightly further, walking and cycling can be combined with public transport and car sharing. In these circumstances continued developments in the field of on-line distance courses via the Internet are of interest.

Positive effects

There have been some alarming reports warning that children have become much less physically active in recent years. Letting children cycle or walk to and from school under the supervision of an adult clearly provides both short and long term health benefits, and in many cases better academic results. Additionally, fewer cars in the vicinity of schools reduces the risk of traffic accidents and provides a better environment and cleaner air.

What is half an hour of physical activity worth?

Daily exercise is the key to good health. Improved muscular strength, fewer stress hormones, stronger immune defences - the results can be seen quickly. This means a greater number of concentrated pupils at school and more energetic, better motivated colleagues at work. The problem of getting enough exercise can be solved on the way to and from work or school...

Focus area: Travel in connection with sports and public events

Brief overview of travel in connection with sports and public events

Engaging in sports is extremely popular in Sweden. Major sports matches, like soccer, ice hockey and handball are also big crowd pullers.

The high level of interest in sports and the wide range of sports available leads to a significant amount of travel - for participants and fans alike. Other major public events such as concerts, shows, etc results in traffic congestion combined with extensive engine idling and parking problems. The negative impact on the environment is substantial and road safety is also unnecessarily jeopardised by this type of inefficient travel.

Projects are therefore underway in several parts of the country to improve traffic in connection with public events and make it more efficient in ways suited to local conditions. But there is still room for more initiatives...



Possibilities

Finding good solutions for better travel in conjunction with large events is one of the “easier” tasks within the focus areas of “Sustainable Travel”.

There are several very good examples of how to encourage the general public to park their cars and use alternative transport means. For example, it is possible to organise communal transport from collection points near the event, and from where many people would otherwise have driven themselves. One incentive is to include the transportation cost in the price of the ticket.

For those travelling to and from their own individual sports practice and matches there are also several alternatives available, depending on local circumstances. Appropriate ways to increase car-sharing, communal transport and more bike trips are examples of this.

Positive effects

There are several obvious advantages to reducing car traffic at public events. Less congestion, reduced accident risk, better air quality, better public health and lower travel costs.

Travelling as a group also promotes a sense of solidarity.



Studying and working is highly demanding. Walking to work or school improves both mental and physical agility.

Through communal effort we will produce sustainable travel

There is a lot to do in the field of "Sustainable Travel". We at the Swedish Road Administration are looking for partners at both the local and national level with whom we can work together to produce, develop and put our ideas into effect.

If you are interested in learning more about "Sustainable Travel" or about how you could benefit from working together with us, please do not hesitate to contact us at the following telephone number: +46 771 119 119.

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