

E-BIKE FACTSHEET

What is an E-Bike?

E-bikes are human-powered bicycles with an assisting electric motor – a human-electric hybrid!

In BC, e-bikes must have functional human-powered pedals. They are regulated to have no more than a 500 watt motor up to 32km/hr speeds.

To operate an ebike in BC a person must be 16yrs or older and wear a bicycle helmet. However, a drivers licence, registration, or insurance are not required.

Why are they great?

Pedalling made easy - e-bikes make it easier to use a bike for long trips, for routes with steep hills, for wearing street instead of exercise clothes, and for hauling young children or cargo. But you chose the amount you want to pedal – so you can still get exercise!

There's an e-bike for everything - e-bikes are available in fat, cargo, commuter, recreational, hardtail, full-suspension mountain, and even performance road bike styles.

They can replace driving! – people often buy e-bikes as a way to reduce car trips or even to replace a car. Surveys find that e-bike owners replaced 50% of their car commutes and 30% of their driving errands

with e-bike rides. This way they can avoid traffic, parking and save money compared to the costs of a car, gas, insurance and maintenance.

They're climate friendly – personal vehicles are the largest single source of climate change causing greenhouse gas emissions in Saanich. Studies show that e-bikes replace more and longer car trips than regular bikes do, reducing more fossil fuel use than a regular bike. They require less energy and materials to build and use compared to cars and trucks, use less road space, reduce wear and tear on our roads and require less space for parking.



Photo credit: John Holland

"Cycling with my daughter to daycare and then to work is easy and practical with the electric assist, and my transportation is climate-friendly, too!" - Maggie Baynham



Where can I buy an E-Bike and how much do they cost?

Many local bike stores in the region sell and repair e-bikes and you can also order them online. Models start around \$1,600, with many in the \$3,000-\$4,000 range. They will require maintenance in the same way a regular bicycle does (e.g. brake pads, chains).

Incentives are available! - E-bikes are now PST exempt. The Province offers \$350-\$1,400 depending on individual income - see bcebikerebates.ca. There are also grants for businesses to buy cargo e-bikes for their fleets. See suvibc.ca. Your financial institution may also provide financing. For example, Vancity offers a Clean Air Vehicle Loan that includes e-bikes.



Things to consider when buying an E-Bike

Models - e-bikes come in many styles, but they will all help you to get out biking. Consider your typical trips (on roads or trails, hauling groceries or kids, etc.) and ask your local bike store what kind of e-bike and accessories (e.g. panniers for storage, child seats etc.) they'd recommend for you.

Charging - you can charge an e-bike anywhere you can find an electrical outlet, as no special equipment is required. And one charge will take you a long way. Depending on how you use your e-bike you may not need to charge every day that you ride. Current batteries generally last anywhere from 50 to 150km before they need a recharge.

Battery lifespan - depending on how you use them, e-bike batteries are estimated to last about 1,000 charges, or about 3-5 years for a typical rider. After that time, the battery loses performance and holds charge for a shorter time. At the end of their lifespan, be sure to recycle the battery properly (visit myrecyclopedia.ca for recycling information).

Safe parking and storage - buy good quality bike locks or a lock and chain so you can secure the frame and wheels of your e-bike, and be sure to lock it to a secure rack or other object when unattended. E-bikes can be used in the rain but should be stored in a dry place protected from the elements when charging.

Biking safely - consider taking a bike safety skills course. Some courses cover e-bikes specifically, and they will all help you build your confidence and savvy on the road. Visit bikesense.bc.ca for a list of bike safety instructors.

Getting Around

Saanich has more than 130km of bike routes and more are added each year as part of the Active Transportation Plan. To choose a route, use the [CRD's bike map](#), or select cycling as the travel mode when using Google maps or other online mapping tools.

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