

Time to consider e-bikes

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Even those who don't care much for pedalling might want to check out the e-bike, which has the potential to revolutionize our transportation system, if we give it the chance it deserves.

E-bikes are great for elderly people who may not have the strength and stamina anymore to bike very far.

The technology can be used for tricycles for people with balance problems.

And an e-bike will enable a couple with different levels of physical fitness to enjoy a fun ride together.

Some people just like to take it easy, which is why they use the car for most of their trips. They might discover that the e-bike serves their needs.

Those who have to tackle hills or strong head winds on their commute need no longer worry about arriving at work soaked in sweat and perhaps not being able to take a shower.

Hot weather and having to wear a helmet also is less of a nuisance.

Even a commute of 20 or 30 km one way is quite feasible on an e-bike and certainly will become a more appealing and less stressful option as car congestion worsens on our roads.

The technology is also great for multi-day cycle tours, as well as to power cargo bikes that can be used for dropping off kids to school, larger-load grocery shopping, and deliveries.

By riding an e-bike, you save gas and bridge tolls.

Maybe it'll even enable some families to get rid of that second car, which means you'll save big, on insurance and car maintenance and repairs as well.

If you're paying for car parking now, you'll save on that, too, if you ride a bike.

It also provides a cheap form of exercise and you can skip the gym.

On an e-bike, the rider still needs to pedal, but gets a boost from the electric motor, and can go farther and faster without too much effort.

The bike has different settings, so that the rider can use as much or as little of his own power as he wants.

The range of an e-bike varies depending on the quality and size of the battery, battery age, the motor, road surface, weight, temperature, frequency of stops, wind and hills, but is said to be anywhere from 30 to 100 km.

Legally, e-bikes can only provide the boost up to 32 km/h, in order to be qualified a bicycle.

E-bikes can be more expensive than a regular bike. They range in price from under \$1,000 for an entry level e-bike to \$3,000 and up for high quality bikes.

Batteries will last about 1,000 charges, and will set you back several hundred dollars to replace.

About 90 per cent of e-bikes sold globally are sold in China, where some 200 million people ride them.

In the Netherlands, one in every five bikes sold is now an e-bike.

In Germany it's one in 10.

With a failed transit referendum here, mayors want to look at road pricing as a funding option. This will disadvantage the outlying communities, where drivers on average are more car dependent and face longer commutes.

There's another reason for you to ditch the car and get an e-bike.

Bike to Farms: Send an e-mail to me at jchow23708@yahoo.ca if you're interested in participating with HUB's upcoming Bike to Farms event on Sept. 6.

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