



# Is An E-bike Right For You?

This month's article is submitted by Steve Allen, a long-time coalition member who, in October 2018, after extensive consideration and research, bought his first electric bike.

When I first became aware of the hype about e-bikes, the first thought that came to mind was that e-bikes are for those who are not able to cycle. On the heels of that incredibly narrow bias, came the thought that they were just too expensive. Like all new concepts, the more I was exposed to the idea and the more information I gathered the more enticing the concept of owning an e-bike became. It also became apparent that e-bikes are simply another in a broad range of cycling options.

Cyclists make their choice of bicycle based on cycling conditions from dry roads to muddy trails or from busy city streets to quiet open roads. Additionally, physical limitations may lead to non-conventional choices such as recumbent bicycles, tricycles and now, electric bikes.

Although I have ridden a bike for many years, for both recreational and transportation purposes, there were days when riding a conventional bike was not that appealing. Rainy days meant having to wear specialty clothing which still often resulted in getting wet from the inside out due to exertion and reduced breathability of outer wear. The ease of pedaling an e-bike means I can wear whatever clothes and shoes are appropriate for my destination. A top layer of heavy raingear doesn't result in my becoming overheated.



The author on his ebike. "No specialty gear required..."

When going to the grocery store on my conventional bike, a round trip of up to 30 km and a steady uphill on the way back, I was reluctant to buy lots of heavy items. With my commuter e-bike I think nothing of hauling 40 pounds.

I feel safer on an e-bike. At a speed of 30 km/hr, regardless of the cargo I may be carrying, I cycle with greater confidence in traffic congestion. A more upright riding position results in better visibility on the road. Since I don't need to overly exert myself, I take routes with less traffic that may be longer or have more hills to climb. The wide knobby tires provide a more stable footprint on wet or gravel coated roads. The disc brakes provide a more assured stopping distance than the rim brakes on my conventional bike.

I'm riding more than I have in previous years, especially in the winter months when I used to be more inclined to drive. My truck has been spending a lot more time in the driveway. The overall cost of owning a motor vehicle is estimated to be 50-55 cents per km driven. The reduction in driving costs may just pay for the e-bike.

Did I mention, it's also a lot of fun!

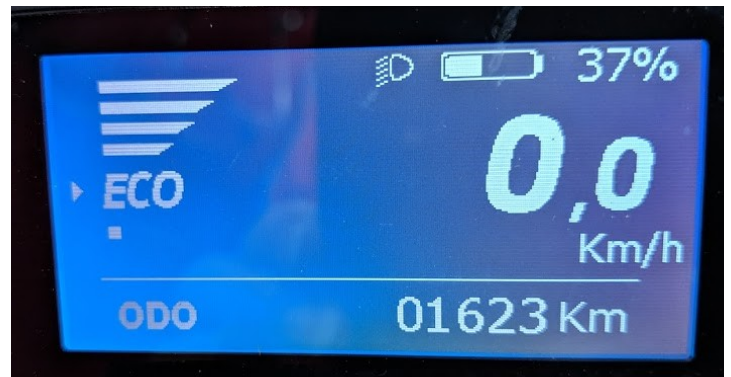
- Steve Allen

*"Five years ago due to nasty medical issues I was disappointed to find that I could no longer ride my regular bike. Imagine my excitement when I tried a e-Bike at a demo in Courtenay I needed no encouragement to go and buy my own at a store in Qualicum. I can now ride for recreation and to do errands and thoroughly enjoy being back on my bike."*

- Mike Harris



A more upright position and ability to haul 40lbs of groceries



Easy to gauge speed, power usage, when to charge up



E-bike battery

*"The hills have all become flat and the wind is always at my back."*

- Brian Schoneberg, ebike owner



Many of the aspects of owning an e-bike that Steve Allen mentioned in his article, have been noted in a recent study in the US, that showed that 55 % of cyclists riding a conventional bike reported daily or weekly activity and that this increased to 91% after the purchase of an electric bike. The survey showed that e-bike owners replaced 46% of their car commutes and 30% of their driving errands with their bike. It was apparent that in busy traffic conditions travel time is not much different than when using a car.

The study also highlighted the fact that many people feel safer on an e-bike than on a conventional bike. In fact, many respondents believed that e-bikes increase their safety while riding. Commonly cited reasons include: keeping up with traffic, quicker acceleration through dangerous intersections, taking longer routes to avoid busy roads, not losing concentration due to physical exertion, increased visibility, and even accelerating away from unsafe social situations.

Follow this link to review the study:

[Survey of Electric Bicycle Owners](#)

*"I have been riding my electric assist bike for 11 years. I now put more kms on my bike than my car. The e-bike takes the pain out of bike riding and just leaves the pleasure. I am now in my late 70's and can still ride up Ryan Road hill. The best advice I can offer anyone is to be sure the bicycle fits you and is comfortable to ride. The bike I have is an Electra Townie and it fits me very well. I rode it for 3 years before adding the electrical assist"* - Dave Hardie



Steve Allen on his ebike. "Hill? What hill?"

*"Sometimes when I want to do something outside I jump on my e-bike, because it is fun. I ride standard bikes too but my e-bike is the one I use most often for shopping, attending meetings or meeting up for a quick coffee with friends. It allows me to wear my regular clothes and shoes and arrive without being sweaty because I can determine how much effort I want to put into the ride. I ride my e-bike for transportation not exercise, but I still get some!"* - Sue Vince

## COMMUNITY EVENTS

Simon's Cycles is offering an opportunity for folks to ride Specialized Vado & Como model eBikes in their back parking lot at their store on Friday, April 5 from 11-3 pm .



**SUNDAY APRIL 14<sup>TH</sup> 12-3PM**

**★ COMMUNITY BIKE SWAP ★**

**ECOLE PUNTLEDGE PARK ELEMENTARY**

