

TERRITORIAL ANALYSIS – BLEKINGE

TARGET AREA | PP06 THE COUNTY ADMINISTRATIVE BOARD OF
BLEKINGE

About the Territorial Analysis

CycleRight is a four-year EU project that aims to combat climate change in the transport sector by promoting cycling. Ten partners from a total of seven different EU countries and two candidate countries will carry out activities linked to cycling together with various actors from Blekinge. The County Administrative Board (Länsstyrelsen Blekinge) is the unifying partner for the Blekinge region. The project results will be used in an upcoming revision of the regional climate and energy strategy of Blekinge.

The project CycleRight aims at improving cycling-related policies in the participating regions, specifically focusing on the topics of:

- urban cycling,
- regional networks,
- multimodality.

Furthermore, project activities assess the good practices identified in terms of their profile related to:

- climate resiliency,
- social inclusion / accessibility,
- safety.

In a nutshell, project activities focus on collecting cycling-related good practices. Project partners will experience in-person study visits, and channel the knowledge gained in their policy instruments, into their daily organizational operation.

The Territorial Analyses serve as a basis for this knowledge exchange process, so their main aim is to:

- present the regional background & current state of cycling,
- present the strategic background,
- to overview the results reached during the 2014–2020 programming period,
- to overview the current plans and results within the 2021–2027 period,
- conduct a SWOT analysis on the project topics,
- and based on these, to showcase potential good practices that will be shared during the study visits and/or in the Cycling Planning Guide that will be developed by the advisory partner, the European Cyclists' Federation (ECF) throughout the project.

Regional background

The region of Blekinge is located in the southeastern part of Sweden and consists of the municipalities of Karlskrona, Ronneby, Karlshamn, Olofström, and Sölvesborg. The largest urban areas are the central towns of these municipalities. The largest city is Karlskrona with 37,000 inhabitants, followed by Karlshamn with 20,000, Ronneby with 13,000, Sölvesborg with 9,000, and Olofström with 8,000 inhabitants. The total population of the region is approximately 160,000.

The distances in the region are relatively short, with about 30 kilometers between the main cities.

Cycling Infrastructure

There are developed or partially developed cycle paths between several of the main cities, see figure 1. The regional cycle route Sydstleden stretches from Växjö in the north to Simrishamn in the south, passing through Blekinge. In Blekinge, the route passes Karlshamn and Sölvesborg. The Banvallsleden from Karlshamn to Halmstad follows the same route as Sydstleden in Blekinge. The biosphere reserve Archipelago has created a cycle route (of existing paths) along the entire coast of Blekinge, see figure 2. This route is unmarked, with no signs to follow. The organization has an app with a map of the route. Eurovelo 10 also passes through Blekinge but is not marked either.

In total, there are 407.9 km of separated cycling infrastructure in Blekinge, according to Open Street Map processed by European Cyclist Federation. Of all the main roads in the region, 21.5% have separated cycle paths.

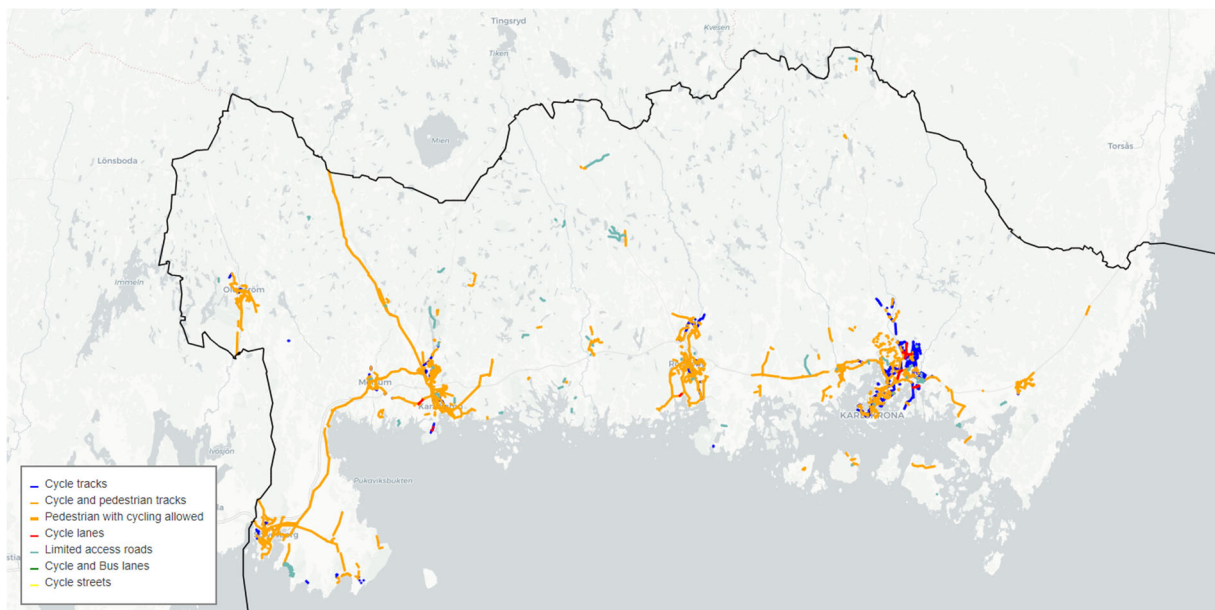


Figure 1. Map of the cycle paths in Blekinge, from: https://european-cyclists-federation.github.io/CycleRight/CycleRight_nuts_infra_type/Blekinge_lan_infra_type_map.html



Figure 2. Map of Blekinge with tourist attractions and the bicycle route marked out.

In the urban areas, there are networks of cycle paths that mainly consist of cycle and pedestrian tracks, see Figure 3-7. The cycle networks cover most of the urban areas. However, there are some missing links and the maps do not take into account the quality of the different sections.

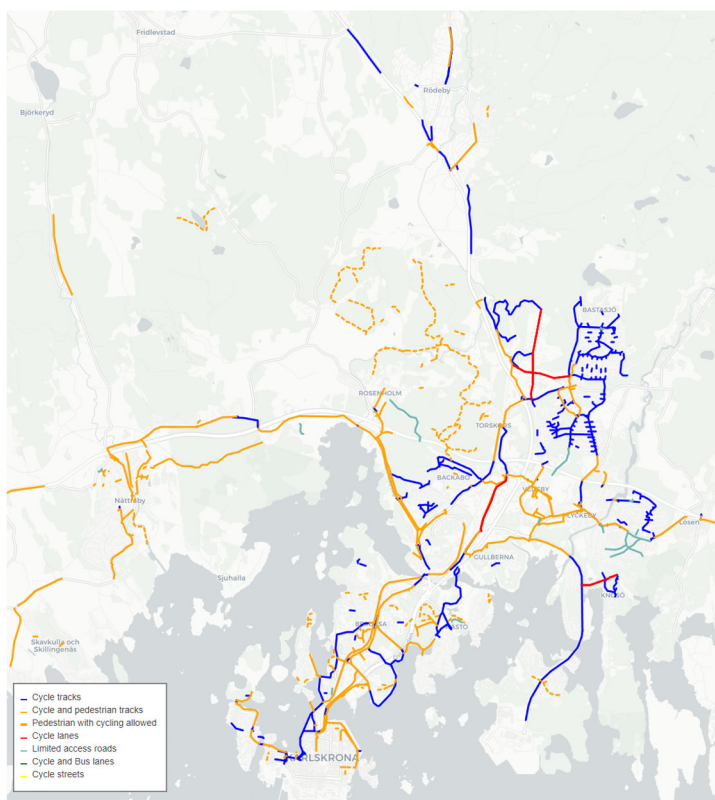


Figure 3. Cycle network in Karlskrona.

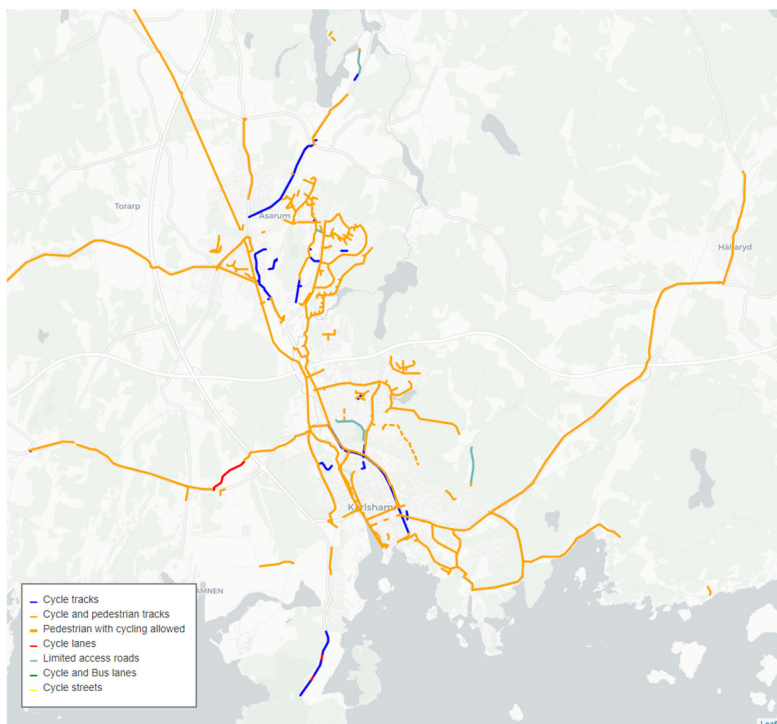


Figure 4. Cycle network in Karlshamn.

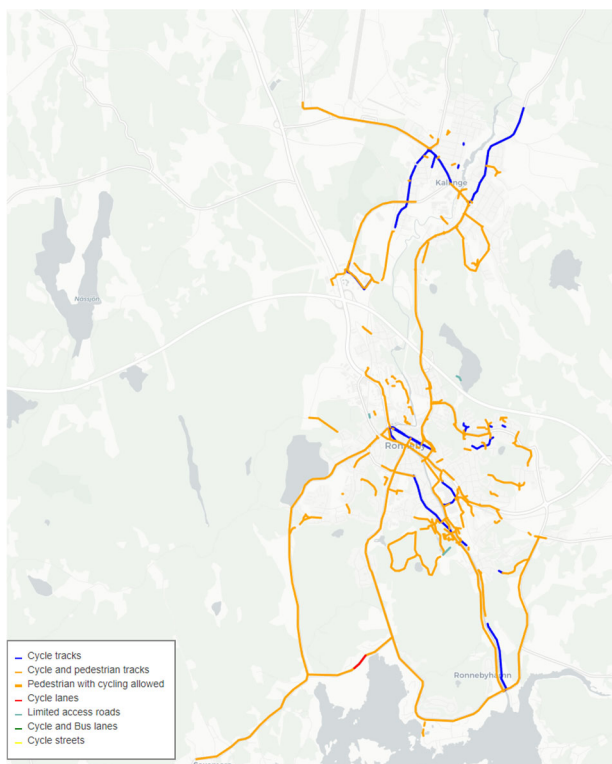


Figure 5. Cycle network in Ronneby.

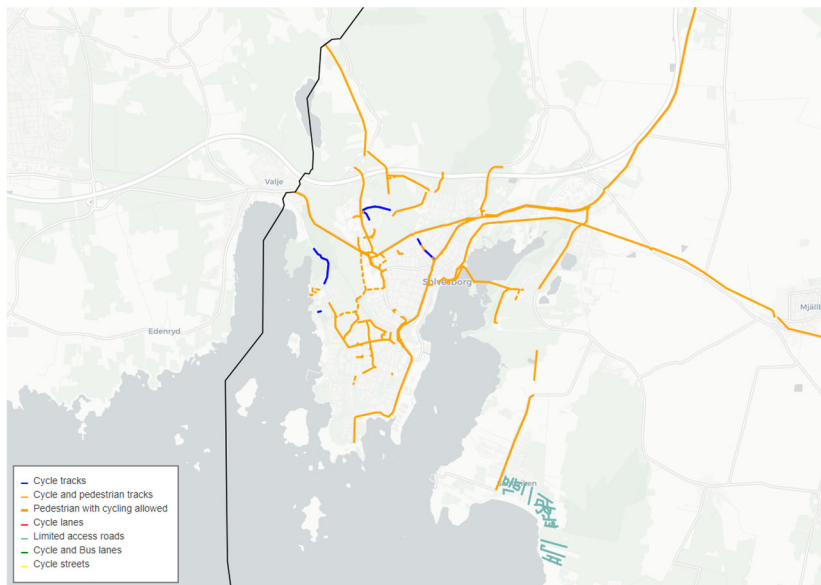


Figure 6. Cycle network in Sölvesborg.

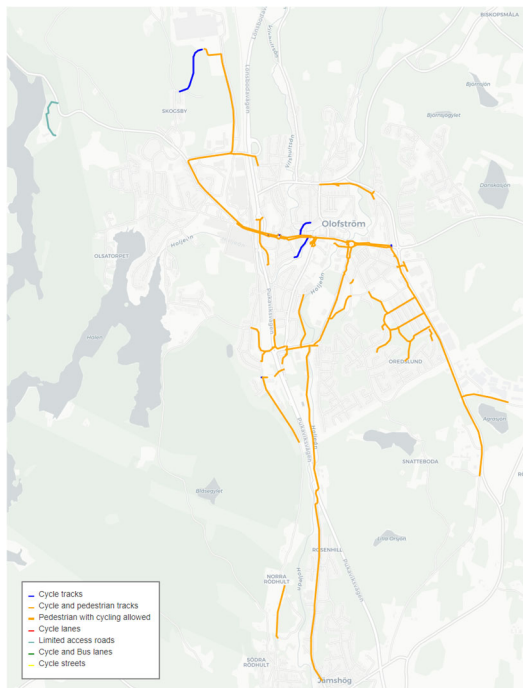


Figure 7. Cycle network in Olofström.

Conditions for multimodality

The region of Blekinge and the region's municipalities are working in several ways to facilitate the possibilities for multimodal travel, i.e. trips made by several different modes of transport, such as both cycling and public transport. In Blekinge, it is possible, free of charge, to bring your bike on all trains. Some archipelago boats also have space for bikes. However, it is not possible to reserve a place for your bike on either trains or boats and the space allocated for bikes is limited. Hence, there is no guarantee that the bike can be brought on the train.

At stations and major bus stops there are bike parking spaces, which in many cases are weather-protected. There are also some locations where you can park your bike in a locked area, such as at the bike boxes at Hattholmen in Karlskrona and the bike garage at Sölvesborg station.

Blekingetrafiken has rental bikes at the stations Karlskrona centralstation, Bergåsa station, Ronneby resecentrum, Karlshamn resecentrum, Karlshamn skärgårdsterminal and Sölvesborg resecentrum. The bikes are rented via an app. The minimum rental length is one hour, and there is no upper limit. To end the rental, the bike must be returned to the same station from which it was picked up.

Financing

Cycle paths in Sweden can be financed in several different ways. In urban areas, the municipality is usually responsible for building and maintaining the streets. Cycle paths and other measures aimed at making it easier to cycle are therefore financed by the municipalities. The municipalities have, however, the opportunity to apply for government co-financing for some cycling measures, which are financed through the regional transport plan (Länstransportplan).

Cycle paths between urban areas usually run along state roads and are often financed by the regional transport plan with municipal co-financing. Cycle paths along the European road network, such as the E22, are financed by the National Transport Infrastructure Plan (Nationell plan för transportinfrastruktur). The municipalities also have the possibility to build regional cycle paths without the process of going through regional or national transport plans, if they finance the construction themselves.

Strategic background

This chapter describes the strategic background for cycling in Blekinge.

Climate and energy strategy

To participate in the CycleRight project, the project partners must have strategic plans or policies at their disposal. As the County Administrative Board of Blekinge is the applicant, the result from the CycleRight project will be used to update the regional Climate and Energy Strategy.¹ The strategy has been written by the County Administrative Board in dialogue with the members of Klimatsamverkan (Climate Collaboration) Blekinge. The municipalities of Karlshamn, Karlskrona, Olofström and Ronneby support the strategy.

The climate and energy strategy was published in 2019 and has four focus areas:

- Reduced energy use,
- Renewable energy,
- Transport,
- Engage more people.

Regarding the focus area transport, there are three factors that are addressed:

- Traffic volume – total number of kilometres driven,
- How efficient the transport system is – which means of transport are used (e.g. the difference between bike and car) and how efficiently they are used (e.g. the filling rate of goods transport),
- Fuel consumption – depends primarily on the type of fuel, but also on the driving style.

In the chapter about an efficient transport system, an ambition is presented to increase cycling, and other sustainable modes of transport, at the expense of car journeys. The strategy proposes, for example, the introduction of low emission zones and parking fees as measures to opt out of the car in favour of the bike. Increasing the attractiveness of alternatives to the car is seen as a key to more sustainable travel. Spatial planning is also described as a tool for the transition to more sustainable transport. Community structures must be designed to promote walking, cycling and public transport, and these means of transport must be given higher priority in the street space.

The strategy states that conditions will be created to increase access to public transport by coordinating municipal planning with the region's public transport planning. The strategy also emphasises the importance of facilitating multimodality, e.g. by building good pedestrian and cycle paths in connection with public transport.

Regional development strategy

The strategic document Regional Development Strategy (Växtplats Blekinge) was adopted by Region Blekinge in February 2022.² This document has also been used as a basis for Blekinge's cycling plan.

The document is a joint roadmap to contribute to long-term sustainable development, growth and increased quality of life in the region.

The strategy has four areas of development:

¹ <https://www.klimatsamverkanblekinge.se/klimat-och-energi/klimat-och-energistrategi/>

² <https://regionblekinge.se/download/18.62e4ef9517f448628856962b/1648199178185/V%C3%A4xtplats%20Blekinge%20-%20regional%20utvecklingsstrategi%202022.pdf>

- Sustainable urban planning,
- High quality of life,
- Skills supply,
- Growing business community.

Under the development area "Sustainable Urban Planning" there is a section on "Efficient and Sustainable Transport System", which states that it will become easier to combine cycling and walking with trains, buses and carpooling. The strategy concludes that this requires well-developed pedestrian and cycle paths, expanded bus and train networks, and attractive points of interchange.

When new housing and business areas emerge, or existing areas are developed, the need for cycle paths, public transport and attractive points of interchange needs to be taken into account and planned in a coordinated manner, according to the development strategy.

Regional Cycle Plan

The Regional Cycle Plan for Blekinge 2024-2033³, was adopted in June 2024 by the Regional Development Board (Regionala utvecklingsnämnden). The plan originates from the previously written Regional Cycling Strategy for Blekinge 2018-2029.

The cycle plan aims to promote cycling in the region by creating long term conditions for the planning of cycling infrastructure. The plan contains four strategic focus areas with associated set goals for how the regions actors can jointly promote cycling:

- Cycling infrastructure – focus on the expansion of pedestrian and cycle paths in the region,
- Multimodality – joint planning between cycle paths and public transport and safe bicycle parking,
- Cycle tourism – ambition to develop a national cycle route,
- Mobility management – how actors in the region can encourage more cycling.

In the plan, missing links in the regional bicycle network in Blekinge have been pointed out. These missing links are presented in maps, see figure 8. The various routes have been prioritised in three groups: priority 1, priority 2 and others, see Figure 1. A proposal for a new coastal route is also described in the document.

³<https://regionblekinge.se/download/18.7b77969f1900c46d9065e3a0/1719318836340/Regional%20cykelplan%20f%C3%B6r%20Blekinge%202024-2033.pdf>

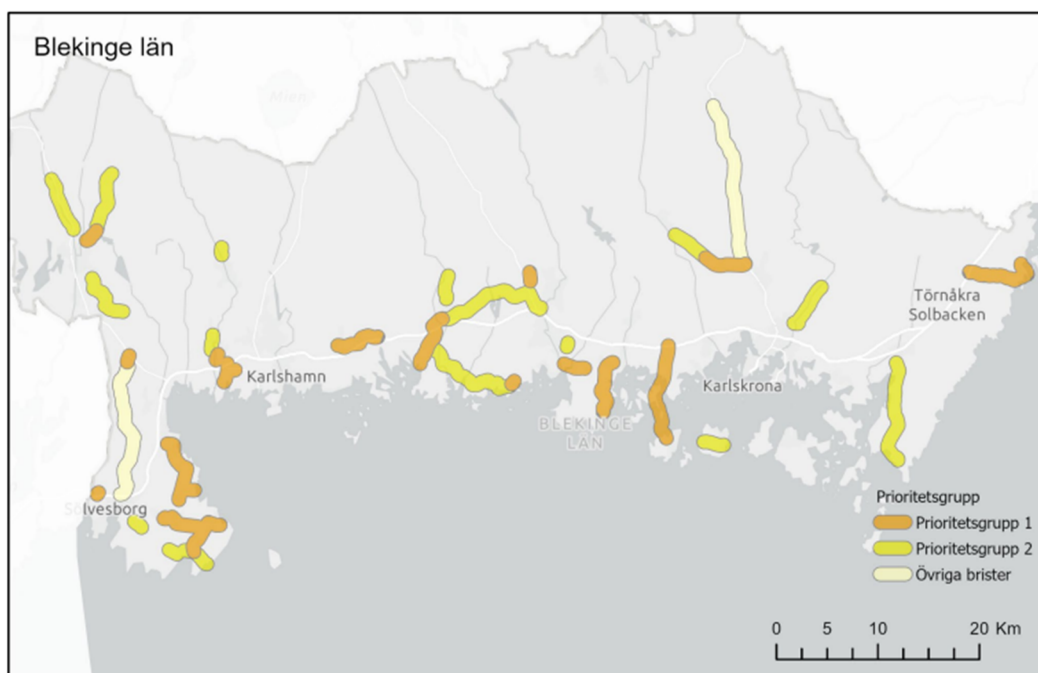


Figure 8. Missing links in the regional cycling network.

The final chapter of the plan deals with the actual implementation of the plan. The measures in the plan will be investigated in „choice of measures” studies (ÅVS) and the region will regularly follow up on the cycling development in a report. Region Blekinge will also be in charge of in-depth studies of the planned coastal route. A transport infrastructure group will be established with representatives from Region Blekinge, the regions five municipalities, the Swedish Transport Administration and the County Administrative Board, with the aim of creating a regional forum for information exchange and discussions about Blekinge's transport infrastructure, with a focus on the regional transport plan and the national transport plan. Cycling issues will be included in the groups tasks.

Municipal cycling strategies

Karlskrona municipality has developed its own cycling strategy that sets the direction for cycling development until 2030.⁴ The document contains a description of the positive aspects of investing in increased cycling, the current state of cycling in Karlskrona, goals and vision, and descriptions of how these goals will be achieved. The municipality's goal is that 30 percent of the municipality's residents should cycle to their work or education all year round by 2030, that 75 percent of residents should think that Karlskrona is a good cycle municipality and that the risk of a cyclist being injured in traffic should be halved compared to year 2021.

The strategy also describes how the municipality will follow up on the work of improving the conditions for cycling and it presents a number of concrete measures to promote cycling.

Sölvesborg municipality also has the ambition to adopt a new cycle plan in the autumn of 2024.

⁴<https://www.karlskrona.se/samhallsplanering-och-trafik/att-resa-till-fr%c3%a5n-och-inom-karlskrona/cykla-i-karlskrona/karlskronas-cykelstrategi/>

Overview of the results reached during the 2014–2020 programming period

During the previous programming period, the following measures were implemented regarding promoting cycling in the region:

- The Regional Cycling Strategy for Blekinge 2018-2029 was developed (2017),
- The County Administrative Board's Climate and Energy Strategy (2019) was developed.

Overview of the current plans and results within the 2021–2027 period

During the current programming period, the following strategic works have been carried out or are planned to be implemented:

- Revised climate and energy strategy,
- Regional Cycle Plan 2024-2033 adopted in 2024,
- Sweden signs the EU Bicycle Declaration in April 2024,
- Regional development strategy was adopted in 2022.

During the period, an expansion of the regional bicycle network is also underway. The following measures are planned or under construction:

- Lörbyvägen between Sockenvägen and Kyrkvägen. Planning is underway as a municipal measure. (Sölvesborg Municipality),
- Mörrum – Vekerum. Completed. (Karlshamn Municipality),
- Vierydsvägen, Saxemara (Ronneby municipality),
- Gärestadsvägen between Hamnvägen and E22 and further measures at Nättraby along the E22. Road plan work is ongoing (Ronneby and Karlskrona municipalities),
- Between Lösen and Jämjö. Construction in progress (Karlskrona municipality).

The municipalities are also working on expanding the urban cycle networks.

SWOT analysis

On Wednesday 21 August, a SWOT analysis of the situation for cycling in Blekinge was carried out during a workshop. Representatives from Karlskrona Municipality, Sölvesborg Municipality, Karlshamn Municipality, Olofström Municipality, Ronneby Municipality, County Administrative Board of Blekinge, Blekinge Institute of Technology, Visit Blekinge, Blekinge Archipelago, Energy Agency Southern Sweden, and the Swedish Transport Administration participated in the workshop.

The aim was to identify strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats in both the cycling strategy and organizational work as well as the infrastructure conditions in the form of, for example, cycle paths and bicycle parking.

The workshop was divided into the three themes of the project:

- Urban cycling,
- Regional networks,
- Multimodality.

Regarding urban cycling, it emerged that Blekinge's strengths are mainly that there are fairly well-developed cycle networks in the urban areas and the distances in the urban areas are short. Weaknesses for urban cycling is the standard of cycling infrastructure, e.g. in the form of a high proportion of combined pedestrian and cycle paths and few safe crossings. The fact that there are many actors, such as companies, who are interested in working for increased cycling, who can give the municipality a mandate to implement cycling promoting measures, was seen as a great opportunity. Another possibility is that there is an increased climate awareness among the public and politicians, which opens up greater opportunities to conduct cycling promoting work. Threats to bicycle development include the risk of bicycle theft and increasing speeds on cycle lanes due to electric scooters and electric bicycles.

Within the theme of regional cycling, the strengths are considered to be the fact that there are several designated trails in Blekinge, such as Sydstleden and Banvallsleden. They provide good conditions for recreational and tourist cycling. Among weaknesses, shortcomings in the regional network beyond the designated routes are pointed out. Identified opportunities include creating a national cycle route in the region, better coordination between municipalities, the Region and the Swedish Transport Administration, and that tourist cycling continues to increase in popularity. Threats to the development of the regional networks are that it is expensive to build new cycle paths, a fragmented road maintenance responsibility, and a lack of legislation for land access to build cycle paths.

For multimodality, strengths are considered to be that it is possible to bring bicycles on trains, that there are locked parking facilities at some stations, and that it is possible to rent bicycles at most train stations in the region. The weaknesses include that it is not possible to reserve a space for bicycles on trains and boats, and that the space dedicated for bikes is limited. Another weakness is that there are few stations for Blekingetrafiken's rental bikes and that the bikes have to be returned to the same station as where it was picked up. As an opportunity, the region is planning to purchase buses with space for bicycles. The risk of bicycle theft at stations and bus stops was mentioned as threats, and that in several places in the countryside it can be unsafe to cycle to the nearest bus stop.

Table 1 shows a comprehensive list of the aspects that were highlighted at the workshop.

Table 1. Aspects discussed during the SWOT analysis.

Urban cycling	<p>Gathering of cycledata (Karlskrona).</p> <p>The municipality maintain the cycle paths.</p> <p>Municipal cycle plans (some municipalities).</p> <p>Small towns with short distances.</p> <p>Densely populated coast.</p> <p>A lot of pedestrian and bicycle paths have been built.</p> <p>It is possible to rent bikes at stations.</p> <p>Proximity to beautiful environments and experiences.</p> <p>Cycling against one-way traffic in Karlshamn.⁵</p> <p>30 km/h in Karlshamn city core.</p>	<p>Politicians not interested in bicycle development.</p> <p>Car travel is promoted, for example, by free parking.</p> <p>Missing cycling plans (some municipalities).</p> <p>Adopted cycling plans are not followed.</p> <p>Cycle data is not used.</p> <p>Winter road maintenance.</p> <p>Intersection design.</p> <p>Bike lanes almost never have priority at intersections.</p> <p>A large proportion of combined pedestrian and bicycle paths.</p> <p>Heavy use of cars for school trips.</p> <p>A large proportion of bicycle accidents on the municipal road network.</p> <p>Lack of secure parking.</p>	<p>Interest in cycling issues from other actors (Södra Cell, the county administrative board, etc) who give a mandate to work with the issues despite political disinterest.</p> <p>Increased climate awareness among the public and politicians.</p> <p>Building safe crossings.</p> <p>Grants for transition in environment/energy.</p>	<p>Urban sprawl.</p> <p>Divided responsibilities regarding cycle paths.</p> <p>Speeds on bike lanes have increased due to electric scooters and electric bikes.</p> <p>Bicycle theft.</p> <p>Car-dependent attitudes.</p>

⁵ <https://www.google.com/maps/@56.172183,14.8645816,3a,75y,250.59h,94.91t/data=!3m6!1e1!3m4!1sd5-TeyKAJ5DnulaD9UBO-A!2e0!7i16384!8i8192>

Regional network	<p>Short distances between urban areas and other destinations.</p> <p>There is to a large extent a regional bicycle network (e.g. ARK 56, Sydostleden, Banvallsleden).</p> <p>Interconnected urban areas.</p> <p>Regional funds are available for building cycle paths.</p> <p>Regional cycling strategy exists.</p> <p>Beautiful environments, destinations and experiences.</p> <p>Many bike rentals.</p>	<p>Regional funds allocated are not used.</p> <p>Littering of cycle lanes, lack of maintenance.</p> <p>Missing links in the regional cycle network.</p> <p>Unsafe.</p>	<p>Tourism.</p> <p>Summer cycle paths.</p> <p>Increased collaboration between the municipality, the region and the Swedish Transport Administration.</p> <p>Bicycle-related companies.</p> <p>Many people want to cycle, both residents and visitors.</p> <p>EU rules / national strategies that focus on cycling.</p> <p>Connecting to national cycle routes.</p> <p>Certification sustainable destination.</p>	<p>Regional boundaries.</p> <p>Politics.</p> <p>Many different actors make implementation difficult.</p> <p>Financing.</p> <p>Multiple actors responsible for the roads.</p> <p>Cycle paths are a low priority in relation to car roads.</p> <p>The costs of construction of the cycle network are high.</p> <p>There is no legislation for land access for building cycle paths.</p>
Multimodality	<p>Rental bikes at train stations.</p> <p>Possibility to bring bikes on the train, free of charge.</p> <p>Possibility to bring bikes on archipelago boats.</p> <p>Bike garage at stations.</p> <p>Cykelboxar hattholmen.</p>	<p>Cannot pre-book a place for a bike on the train/boat.</p> <p>Not allowed to bring a bike on the bus.</p> <p>Few places to leave rented bicycles (Blekingetrafiken).</p> <p>Changing modes of transport results in lower comfort.</p>	<p>More bike rentals.</p> <p>Awareness campaigns.</p> <p>New train models with more bike spaces.</p> <p>Mobility hubs.</p> <p>New buses with space for bikes.</p>	<p>Risk of theft at stations and busstops.</p> <p>The separation of local labour market regions limit developments.</p> <p>Poor conditions to cycle to bus stops in the countryside.</p>

Potential good practices identified

After the SWOT analysis was completed, the participants in the workshop focused on identifying potential good practices from Blekinge that may be interesting to share with other partners in the EU project CycleRight. The focus is at aspects within the categories of urban cycling, regional networks and multimodality. In addition to these categories, the good examples are also classified on the basis of the aspects of climate resilience, accessibility, safety and others.

See table below for a summary of the good practices identified from Blekinge.

Table 2. Potential good practices identified.

Main topics	Climate resiliency	Social inclusion / accessibility	Safety	N/A
Urban cycling	Winter maintenance with focus on equality.	Cycling without age in Karlshamn. ⁶ Couples cycling with the elderly in Karlskrona. ⁷ Tandem bikes in nursing homes Pedestrian and bike bridge in Sölvesborg. ⁸ Signage on the cycle path network.	Bike crossings (Cykelöverfart). Raised passage (upphöjda/genomgående passager). 30 km/h around schools. 30 km/h in central Karlshamn. „GCM-kantstöd”(a type of cheaper bikelane on the countryside).	Ambitious cycling strategies (Karlskrona aim to have at least 30% of residents cycling to school or work, all year around, by 2030).

⁶ <https://cyklingatanalder.se/kommuner-3/karlshamn/>

⁷ <https://sverigesradio.se/artikel/har-far-marianne-en-cykeltur-med-tavlingscyklisten-paula>

⁸ <https://sv.wikipedia.org/wiki/S%C3%B6lvesborgsbron>

Regional network			<p>Banvallsleden.⁹</p> <p>Sydostleden.¹⁰</p> <p>ARK 56 promoting cycling for recreation and tourist.¹¹</p> <p>Karlskrona runt.¹²</p> <p>Senior Friendly Bike Tours in Västra Blekinge.¹³</p> <p>Bräkneleden¹⁴</p>	A regional collaboration group for traffic issues.
Multimodality		<p>Rental bikes at stations.¹⁵</p> <p>Opportunities to bring bikes on trains and on buses for free.¹⁶</p>		
Other			<p>Participation in cycle-friendly workplace (Olofströmshus & Länsstyrelsen Blekinge).¹⁷</p>	<p>Funding and strategies.</p> <p>Lingonbacken Karlshamn.¹⁸</p> <p>Österslätts spontanpark (BMX).¹⁹</p> <p>Sölvesborg pumptrack.²⁰</p>

⁹ <https://www.banvallsleden.se/>

¹⁰ [Sydostleden \(sydostleden-sydostleden.se\)](https://sydostleden.se/sydostleden-sydostleden-sydostleden.se/)

¹¹ <https://ark56.se/>

¹² <https://www.karlskrona.se/nyheter-karlskrona-kommun/karlskrona-runt--din-nya-v%C3%A4g-till-den-b%C3%A4sta-cykelupplevelsen/>

¹³ <https://jamshog.org/course/cykla/>

¹⁴ https://ronneby.se/download/18.69efe6b5179a8c047ed7c24b/1622458390732/Etappkarta_Br%C3%A4kneleden_Web.pdf

¹⁵ <https://blekingetrafiken.se/reseinformation/hyrcyklar/>

¹⁶ <https://blekingetrafiken.se/kundservice/regler-och-villkor/resevillkor-for-kollektivtrafiken-i-sodra-sverige/>

¹⁷ <https://cykelvanligast.se/arets-cykelvanligaste-arbetsplatser-ar-utsedda/>

¹⁸ [Lingonbacken, Karlshamn Mountain Biking Trails | Trailforks](https://lingonbacken.se/karlshamn-mountain-biking-trails-trailforks/)

¹⁹ <https://www.karlshamn.se/uppleva-och-gora/fritid-for-barn-och-unga/ungikarlshamn/spontanidrottsplatser/#osterslatts-spontanpark>

²⁰ <https://solvesborg.se/uppleva-och-gora/lokaler-och-anlaggningar/pumptrack-och-flowtrail-.html>