The LARA | Photo source Alexander Kaula

MODULAR E-CARGO BIKE ALLOWS CUSTOMISATION

MOBILITY & TRANSPORT

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Spotted: One thing the pandemic has made clear is the importance of encouraging people to get out of their cars and use other means of transport. Solutions like low traffic zones are being used in a number of places to reduce through traffic in neighbourhoods and encourage people to walk and bike to local errands. In order to make the move to biking more effective, designers have begun developing e-cargo bikes. One of the latest is the LARA, by designer Alexander Kaula.

Like other e-cargo bikes, the LARA has a longer wheelbase than standard bikes but also includes a number of innovative features designed to make the bike more versatile. It is constructed on a single frame that includes “intelligent ports” to allow modules to be added for customisation. For example, riders can attach differently-shaped transport containers, child seats, or extra batteries for increasing the bike’s range.

The port automatically detects the modules and passes this information to an onboard computer. LARA is fitted with a small onboard display that shows the maximum payload, battery status, and maps for navigation. It is driven by a “carbon belt” positioned inside the rear wheel rim to lend a sleek appearance.

Kaula describes the thinking behind the project as making it easier to use bikes for more everyday trips. He points out that, “If you have large and heavy goods to transport – you can’t make any progress with a normal bicycle...The company Larry vs. Harry from Copenhagen made the cargo bike of the “Long John” design socially acceptable. If the children were previously taken by car to kindergarten or school – this can now be done with a cargo bike thanks to child seats in the cargo area.”

E-cargo bikes are a potential solution to the growth in delivery van traffic. Some studies indicate that delivery vehicles now make up about 15 per cent of urban traffic. At the same time, e-cargo bike sales are expected to grow by more than 50 per cent over the next year. Perhaps this is why we are seeing a huge number of e-bike innovations, including their use for delivery and a project to convert old bikes into e-bikes.

Written By: Lisa Magloff

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Takeaway:

The notion of reclaiming cities from cars is becoming much more popular, as governments and residents scramble for a way to reduce pollution and carbon emissions and make spaces more 'livable'. Amsterdam, Hamburg, Münster, Freiburg and Masdar City in Abu Dhabi are just some of the areas that have adopted car-free districts. The difference is striking. Forty years ago, Copenhagen was clogged with cars. Today, 45 per cent of the population travels to school or work by bicycle. However, without cars, it is also harder to deliver goods and shop. That's where e-cargo bikes come in. They offer a convenient and healthy way to replace cars with bikes.