CONNECTING GREEN: LESSONS FROM EUROPE ON REGIONAL TRAILS DEVELOPMENT

A Study Tour in Partnership with the Portland Metro Council’s Connecting Green Alliance
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Amsterdam, the Netherlands

Copenhagen, Denmark
The German Marshall Fund of the United States is a non-partisan American public policy and grantmaking institution dedicated to promoting greater cooperation and understanding between the United States and Europe. GMF does this by supporting individuals and institutions working on transatlantic issues, by convening leaders to discuss the most pressing transatlantic themes, and by examining ways in which transatlantic cooperation can address a variety of global policy challenges. In addition, GMF supports a number of initiatives to strengthen democracies. Founded in 1972 through a gift from Germany as a permanent memorial to Marshall Plan assistance, GMF maintains a strong presence on both sides of the Atlantic. In addition to its headquarters in Washington, DC, GMF has seven offices in Europe: Berlin, Bratislava, Paris, Brussels, Belgrade, Ankara, and Bucharest.

The Comparative Domestic Policy Program works to facilitate the transatlantic exchange of innovative approaches to challenges affecting cities and regions, including urban economic development, sustainable development and energy, and changing demographics and social policy. Most of these policy areas are dealt with at the local and regional, rather than national government levels, yet there are very few opportunities for civic leaders to meet, to observe new approaches to persistent challenges, and to exchange best practices in addressing these challenges effectively. In order to address this gap, the Comparative Domestic Policy Program works to build and nurture a Transatlantic Cities Network of civic leaders, experts and practitioners from twenty-five core cities in the United States and Europe. In addition to the Transatlantic Cities Network, the Comparative Domestic Policy Program works to create meaningful exchanges between civic leaders, experts, and practitioners through highly focused study tour, research fellowships, and seminars and policy briefings.

Metro is the elected regional government body that has primary responsibility for urban, land-use, and transportation planning in the Portland metro area. Metro is governed by the Metro Council, which consists of a president who is elected regionwide and six councilors who are elected by district every four years in nonpartisan races. The Metro Council provides leadership from a regional perspective, reflects an ongoing, innovative planning orientation, and focuses on issues that cross local boundaries and require collaborative solutions. The Metro Council establishes policies for and oversees the operation of Metro’s programs, develops long-range plans and fiscally-responsible annual budgets and establishes fees and other revenue measures.
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1.1 The Netherlands: Map

1.2 The Netherlands: Country profile

The Netherlands is a geographically low-lying and densely populated country located on the northwestern coast of Europe, to the north of Belgium and to the west of Germany. The Netherlands is also one of the most densely cabled countries in the world; its internet connection rate is 87.8%, the 2nd highest in the world.

**Geography:** A remarkable aspect of the Netherlands is its flatness. Hilly landscapes can be found only in the south-eastern tip of the country on the foothills of the mountainous Ardennes forest region, and in the central part of the country where several low hill ranges were created by glaciers during the Ice Age.

Throughout its history, the country’s low terrain has made it susceptible to periodic flooding. After a disastrous flood in 1953 that killed 1800 people, the government launched the Delta project, a vast construction effort designed to end the threat from the sea. The official goal of the Delta project, which was largely completed by 2002, was to reduce the risk of flooding in the province of Zeeland to once per 10,000 years. (For the rest of the country the protection-level is once per 4,000 years.) This was achieved by raising 3,000 kilometers (1,864 miles) of outer sea dykes and 10,000 kilometers (6,200 miles) of inner, canal and river dikes to “delta” height, and by closing off the sea estuaries of the Zeeland province. New risk assessments occasionally show problems requiring additional Delta project dyke reinforcements. The Delta project is one of the largest construction efforts in human history and is considered by the American Society of Civil Engineers as one of the seven wonders of the modern world.

**Political Structure:** The Netherlands has been a constitutional monarchy since 1815 and a parliamentary democracy since 1848; before that it had been a republic from 1581 to 1806 and a kingdom between 1806 and 1810 (it was part of France between 1810 and 1813).

The head of state is the monarch, at present Queen Beatrix. Constitutionally the monarch still has considerable powers, but in practice it has become a ceremonial function. The monarch can exert most influence during the formation of a new cabinet, where he/she serves as neutral arbiter between the political parties.

| Full name: Kingdom of the Netherlands |
| Capital: Amsterdam (official capital)/The Hague (seat of government) |
| Official languages: Dutch and Frisian |
| Religions: 51% Christian, 42% no religion, 6% Muslim (CIA, 2004) |
| Monetary unit: 1 Euro = 100 cents |
| Main exports: machinery and equipment, chemicals, fuels, foodstuffs (CIA) |
| GDP per capita: $38,500 (CIA, 2007) |
| International dialing code: +31 |
In practice the executive power is formed by Dutch cabinet. Because of the multiparty system, no party has ever held a majority in parliament since the 19th century; therefore coalition cabinets have to be formed. The cabinet usually consists of thirteen to sixteen ministers and a varying number of state secretaries. The head of the government is the Prime Minister of the Netherlands, who is often, but not always, the leader of the largest party in the coalition.

In practice, the Prime Minister has been the leader of the largest coalition party since 1973. He is a primus inter pares, meaning he has no explicit powers that go beyond those of the other ministers. The cabinet is responsible to the bicameral parliament, the States-General, which also has legislative powers. The 150 members of the Second Chamber, the Lower House, are elected in direct elections, which are held every four years. The provincial assemblies are directly elected every four years as well. The member of the provincial assemblies elect the 75 members of the First Chamber, the Upper House, which has less legislative power, as it can merely reject laws, not propose or amend them.

**Economy:** The Netherlands has the 16th largest economy in the world, and ranks 10th in GDP (nominal) per capita. As a founding member of the Euro zone, the Netherlands replaced its former currency, the Gulden, on January 1, 1999, along with the other adopters of the single European currency. The country continues to be one of the leading European nations for attracting foreign direct investment and is one of the five largest investors in the US.

The Netherlands has a prosperous and open economy in which the government has reduced its role since the 1980s. Industrial activity is predominantly in food-processing, chemicals, petroleum refining and electrical machinery. The economy experienced a slowdown in 2005, but in 2006 recovered to the fastest pace in six years on the back of increased exports and strong investment. The pace of job growth reached 10-year highs in 2007.

A highly mechanized agricultural sector employs no more than 4% of the labor force, but provides large surpluses for the food-processing industry and for exports. The Dutch rank third worldwide in value of agricultural exports, behind the United States and France, with exports earning $55 billion annually. A significant portion of Dutch agricultural exports are derived from fresh-cut plants, flowers, and bulbs, with the Netherlands exporting two-thirds of the world’s total. The Netherlands also exports a quarter of all world tomatoes, and one-third of the world's exports of peppers and cucumbers. The Netherlands' location and gives it prime access to markets in the UK and Germany. For centuries, Rotterdam has been one of the most prosperous ports in Europe, and for much of the 20th century it was the largest port in the world.
**Foreign relations:** The foreign policy of the Netherlands is based on four basic commitments: to the Atlantic cooperation, to European integration, to international development and to international law. While historically, the Netherlands was a neutral state, since the Second World War the Netherlands has been a member of a large number of international organizations, most prominently the UN, NATO and the EU. The Dutch economy is very open and relies on international trade; the Dutch city of Rotterdam is the largest port in Europe. One of the more controversial international issues surrounding the Netherlands is its liberal policy towards soft drugs and the position of the Netherlands one of the major exporters of hard drugs.

**Relations with the United States:** The U.S. partnership with the Netherlands is one of its oldest continuous relationships and dates back to the American Revolution. The excellent bilateral relations are based on close historical and cultural ties as well as a common dedication to individual freedom and human rights. The Netherlands shares with the United States a liberal economic outlook and is firmly committed to free trade. The United States attaches great value to its strong economic and commercial ties with the Dutch. The Netherlands is the third-largest direct foreign investor in the United States, and the United States is the third-largest direct foreign investor in the Netherlands.

The United States and the Netherlands often have similar positions on issues and work together both bilaterally and multilaterally in such institutions as the United Nations and NATO. The Dutch have worked with the United States at the WTO, in the OECD, as well as within the EU to advance the shared goal of a more open, honest, and market-led global economy. The Dutch, like the United States, supported the accession of 10 new members to the EU in 2004, and accession negotiations for Turkey in 2005.

The United States and the Netherlands joined NATO as charter members in 1949. The Dutch fought alongside the United States in the Korean War and the first Gulf War and have been active in global peacekeeping efforts in the former Yugoslavia, Afghanistan, and Iraq. The Netherlands played a leading role in the 1999 Kosovo air campaign. They currently are contributing to EU peacekeeping forces in Bosnia. In the initial phase of the recent Iraq conflict, the Dutch deployed Patriot missiles to protect NATO ally Turkey, and sent a battalion of troops to Iraq to participate in stabilization operations. The Dutch also support and participate in NATO and EU training efforts in Iraq. They are active participants in the International Security Assistance Force and Operation Enduring Freedom in Afghanistan.

*Excerpts are taken from US Department of State, Wikipedia, and CIA World Fact Book*
1.3 The Netherlands: Spatial Planning

Spatial Planning and Spatial Development
The Directorate-General of Spatial Policy advises the Minister of Housing, Spatial Planning and the Environment in fulfilling responsibility for establishing and implementing cohesive government policy for the Netherlands's spatial development. The DG monitors and strengthens the quality of the country's spatial organization. The National Spatial Strategy is the pivotal policy product of DG Spatial Policy and sets out policy up to the year 2020. The document includes an implementing agenda that is amended from time to time. Similarly, the Spatial Planning Act and land usage policy are subject to revision. Another responsibility of DG Spatial Policy is the evaluation of spatial policy coupled to accountability to the Lower House of Parliament.

National Spatial Strategy: basis for developing spatial policy
The National Spatial Strategy has shifted the emphasis in the policy of DG Spatial Policy from "imposing restrictions" to "promoting developments". The ability to develop is the central consideration. It translates into less detailed regulation by central government, fewer barriers and greater latitude for other levels of government, members of the public and market parties. This approach is anchored in the National Spatial Strategy. Working together from the start on an integral spatial vision for a particular area makes it easier to deliver quality and achieve an equitable distribution of costs and benefits. Members of the public, government authorities and companies at local and regional level will be in a position to ensure strong cities and vibrant rural communities.

Implementing agenda
The National Spatial Strategy includes an implementing agenda. The agenda is a new instrument to link the objectives contained in the policy document to current and planned implementation tracks. The matters addressed in the agenda include central government's investment priorities, the effects of policy on local planning and zoning schemes and the use of implementing instruments. The agenda is an overarching way of giving integral form and substance to the implementation of plans. More than ever before, this kind of approach is essential because of the growing importance of and need for cooperation between different stakeholders in addressing spatial issues. A central theme is the integral development of supra-local areas. Areas must be developed through 'development planning'.

Program
Central government faces complex spatial issues in the northern and southern wings of the Randstad (the highly urbanized western part of the Netherlands), in the country's 'Green Heart' and in southeast Brabant. Various ministries are tackling these issues. For each area the Cabinet is producing a program that brings together the principal issues and couples them to investments by local governments and private sector parties. Government-wide co-ordination, harmonization and decision-making are being handled by central government. A government minister or state secretary has been named to take charge of each program, including responsibility for good harmonization of the projects in the preparatory and implementation phases.

http://www.netherlands-embassy.org/article.asp?articleref=AR00001324EN August 18, 2006
The Spatial Planning Act
This act became operational in 1965 and since that time has been regularly amended to adapt to new developments in spatial planning law. Not every amendment has been translated. The main elements of the act however are still valid. The text published here merely provides an insight into the way in which the Spatial Planning Act in the Netherlands is constructed.

Revision of the Spatial Planning Act
The present Spatial Planning Act came into force in 1965. Since then a large number of amendments have been passed. The last major alteration involved changing Section 19 to include an independent project procedure for local authorities. This has led to the establishment of a law that provides for many eventualities but has also become extremely complicated and confusing in practice. The Council of State has even compared it to a 'patchwork quilt'; the Second Chamber of the Netherlands parliament concurs with this opinion and because of this the government has decided to fundamentally revise the act.

http://international.vrom.nl/pagina.html?id=7351
1.4 Amsterdam: Metro Map
1.5 Amsterdam: City Profile

Amsterdam is the capital and the largest city of the Netherlands. Its name is derived from “Amstel dam”, pointing to the city’s origin: a dam on the river Amstel. The city, founded in the late 12th century as a small fishing village, has grown to become the largest city in the Netherlands with a population of 743,104 inhabitants, containing at least 172 nationalities. Amsterdam and its surrounding metropolitan area have a population of 1 million to about 1.5 million people, depending on definition, and is part of the Randstad conurbation, which has a population of 6,659,300.

The city is known for its historic port, the Rijksmuseum, its red-light district (de Wallen), its liberal coffee shops, and its many canals which have lend Amsterdam its nickname, the “Venice of the North.” During the golden age of the Dutch Empire, Amsterdam was one of the most important ports in the world, with innovative developments in trade, and became the leading center for finance and diamonds.

Population: (January 1, 2006)

- City 742,884
- Density 4,459/km² (11,548.8/sq mi)
- Urban 1,021,870
- Greater Amsterdam 1,468,122
- Randstad 6,659,300

Government: Like all Dutch municipalities, Amsterdam is governed by a mayor, aldermen, and the municipal council. However, unlike most other Dutch municipalities, Amsterdam is subdivided into fifteen stadsdelen (boroughs), a system that was implemented in the 1980s to improve local governance. The stadsdelen are responsible for many activities that previously had been run by the central city. Fourteen of these have their own council, chosen by a popular election. The fifteenth, Westpoort, covers the harbor of Amsterdam, has very few inhabitants, and is governed by the central municipal council. Local decisions are made at borough level, and only affairs pertaining to the whole city, such as major infrastructure projects, are handled by the central city council. The Council is responsible for setting the city's annual budget and legislating policies on public order and safety, drugs, the homeless, economic policy, sports, and culture.
Economy: Amsterdam is the financial and business capital of the Netherlands and one of the business centers of Europe. Many large Dutch corporations and banks have their headquarters in Amsterdam, including ABN Amro, Akzo Nobel, Heineken International, ING Group, Ahold, Delta Lloyd Group and Philips. KPMG International’s global headquarters is located in nearby Amstelveen, as is the European headquarters of Cisco Systems.

Though many subsidiaries are located along the old canals, more and more companies are deciding to move to a newly built office tower outside the city center. The South Axis, where the new world trade center is located, is increasingly a banking area, and is intended to become the new “business face” of the Netherlands. The Amsterdam Stock Exchange (AEX) is part of Euronext, and is the world’s oldest stock exchange. It still is one of the most important in Europe.


1.6 Amsterdam’s Cycling Policy

Amsterdam’s Regional Cycling Path Network
Amsterdam

(Information on cycling in Amsterdam was collected directly from Dutch transport planners and cycling experts. The main bicycling planner for Amsterdam, Rut Hilhorst, provided extensive information, corrections, and valuable feedback on this case study of cycling in Amsterdam. Information was also collected from the following published sources: City of Amsterdam (2003a; 2003b; 2007); Dutch Bicycling Council (2006); Osberg et al. (1998); and Langenberg (2000).

Bikes have shaped the image of Amsterdam to such an extent that, for many people throughout the world, Amsterdam is almost synonymous with cycling. In 2005, cycling accounted for 37% of all vehicle trips - a bike mode share unheard of in other European cities of comparable size (City of Amsterdam, 2007).

With a population of 743,000, Amsterdam is the largest city in the Netherlands. The Greater Amsterdam region has 1.5 million inhabitants and is situated at the northern end of the Randstad, the Netherlands’ largest urban agglomeration.

Amsterdam’s city administration estimates that there were 600,000 bikes in Amsterdam in 2006, about 0.75 bikes per inhabitant.

Inhabitants made daily use of their bikes (City of Amsterdam, 2003a). Over 85% of Amsterdam’s residents ride their bike at least once a week in 2003. Bicycling is almost universal in Amsterdam. The rich and the poor, men and women, children and the elderly, all use the bicycle for a minimum of 20% of their trips (City of Amsterdam, 2003b). Two noteworthy variations in bike usage exist, however. First, the affluent cycle more than the poor in Amsterdam.

Amsterdam’s topography and spatial development patterns are ideal for cycling. The city is mostly flat and densely built-up. Mixed use neighbourhoods keep trip distances relatively short. Furthermore, many small bike bridges and bike short cuts make it easy to navigate the city centre by bike. By comparison, car use is difficult in the central city. There are few car parking spaces, and many cul-de-sacs and one way streets hinder car travel. Given high bike ownership levels, restrictive policies on car use, compact and mixed-use development patterns, it is no wonder that in 2003 fifty percent of Amsterdam’s...
Higher car ownership levels in affluent households lead one to expect more car use in this income group compared to poorer households. Bike planners in Amsterdam speculate that lower income groups see the car as an important status symbol, while they view the bicycle as a "poor man’s" vehicle. Consequently, they prefer to drive instead of cycle. Bike planners argue that richer households find the bicycle to be a fast, healthy and convenient means of transportation without a stigma attached to it.

Secondly, recent immigrants and their children also cycle less than the average resident of Amsterdam (Dutch Bicycling Council, 2006). Amsterdam's bike planners found that cycling is often not part of the original culture of immigrants. Therefore cycling is not their transport mode of choice in the Netherlands either. The city council tries to promote bike use through special programs for immigrants and their children.

Travel trends

Similar to Copenhagen, Amsterdam has a long tradition of cycling. In 1955, up to 75% of all trips in Amsterdam were made by bicycle. From 1955 to 1970 the cycling mode share had declined to only 25% of all trips (Dutch Bicycling Council, 2006; Lengersma, 2000). Declining levels of cycling were accompanied by increasing suburbanization and growing car ownership and use. However, most other European cities of comparable size would be proud of a bike mode share of 25%.

The placement of the bike path behind the bus stop avoids conflicts between cyclists and passengers getting on and off of buses in Amsterdam.

Source: Lewis Dijkstra

Since the late 1960s and early 1970s, bicycle advocates and environmentalists have promoted bicycle use in the city. Their main concerns were air and noise pollution, traffic congestion, and unsafe traffic conditions caused by automobile use in the city. At the time, there were two competing solutions to Amsterdam's traffic problems: adapting the development patterns and city structure to the automobile or limiting car access to the city centre and promoting walking, cycling, and public transportation. The city council chose to promote alternative modes of transport over widening roads and building car parking garages in the city centre.

Finally in 1978, a newly elected city council focused on bicycling as an integral tool for solving the city's transport problems. Since the early 1980s bicycle use has been increasing. It reached 31% of all vehicle trips in the mid 1980s, and was at 37% of all vehicle trips in 2005 (City of Amsterdam, 2007). Over the same period of time, the mode share for public transport declined, however (37% in 1985, 27% in 2005). The percentage of trips made by car remained almost unchanged from 1985 to 2005 (42% in 1985, 41% in 2005) (Dutch Bicycling Council, 2006; City of Amsterdam, 2007). This indicates that increased levels of cycling were most likely in expense of lower levels of transit use and walking. Cycling in Amsterdam is used for all trip purposes for 34% of work trips, 33% of shopping trips and 27% of leisure trips in 2003.

In 2001, over half (55%) of all vehicle trips in the historic city centre were by bike (Condon counts at important intersections in the city centre support this number). They also reveal an increase of up to 29% in the number of bike trips from 1990 to 2000 (City of Amsterdam, 2003b).

As in most other cities, bicycling levels decline with distance from the city centre. In 2006, 46% of trips were made by bike in inner ring city districts; and 21% of all trips were by bike in more suburban districts built after World War II. From 1986 to 2000 bicycling levels decreased by around 10% in these outlying areas.

Overall policy goals

Non-motorized modes of transport are at the centre of Amsterdam's transport policy. Even though the city's main transport policy goal is to increase accessibility by all modes, concerns about quality of life and air pollution give the bicycle a special role in transportation planning. In 2006, the main area of concern for cyclists was bicycle theft, shortage of safe bike parking facilities, traffic safety, and relatively long waiting times at signalized intersections. Following its bicycle policy plan "Choosing for Cyclist: 2007-2010", the city has started to try to address these problems by increasing bike parking facilities, combating bicycle theft, and improving and promoting traffic safety, completing and improving the bike network and getting young people to bike more (City of Amsterdam, 2007). From 2007 to 2010, about €40 million of city funds will be spent on cycling projects, not including additional measures to increase traffic safety. Together with matching funds from other levels of government the total amount of funding for bicycling will increase to €70 million over 4 years. This comes to about €13 per inhabitant per year, which is comparable with other Dutch cycling cities. About €12 million are set aside to improve bike parking facilities and guarded bicycle garages. Furthermore, traffic calming areas (with a speed limit of 30 km/h) are to be expanded. Amsterdam will invest €500,000 for bike education, public relations campaigns and other activities designed to increase bicycling among young people and other groups of society that tend to cycle less often (City of Amsterdam, 2007). The city also wants to replace on-road bike lanes with separate bike paths.

The city is making efforts to integrate bike and transport planning across all city districts and across many departments of the city administration. For example, efforts are being made to integrate transport and spatial development plans. The main responsibility for carrying out bicycle projects lies with the city districts. This results in slight differences in implementation of bike projects and bike infrastructure among the various areas of the city. The traffic and transport infrastructure department (DIV) tries to coordinate and harmonize all cycling efforts citywide.
Bike traffic signal in Amsterdam that shows cyclists the number of seconds till they get a green light.  
Source: Peter Berkeley

Amsterdam recently launched a comprehensive program to combat bike theft. In 2006, about 50,000 bikes were stolen in Amsterdam (almost 10% of all bikes). That might seem like a lot, but it is in fact a 37.5% decrease compared to 2001 and can be considered a first success in combating bike theft. Amsterdam’s bike policy postulates the goal to further reduce bike theft to 0% of all bikes by 2010 (City of Amsterdam, 2007).

To help to achieve this goal, the city has a comprehensive approach consisting of official bike registration, collaboration with bike stores, and strict police checks for bike ownership. Amsterdam has invested €5 million since 2002 and plans to invest €4 million over the next 4 years into bike registration and police checks (City of Amsterdam, 2007). For example, the city actively promotes engraving unique codes onto the bike frame. Engraving is free and engraved bikes are registered with the police. Based on this unique registration code, stolen bikes can be returned to their owner and police can detect stolen bikes during bike checks. The city even has a special webpage especially for this program and other bike theft issues (http://www.fietsenstiftst.nl/english/index.html).

Amsterdam’s bicycle stores have adopted a new policy, not to repair, buy or resell any bike that could potentially be stolen. Additionally, Amsterdam police are stepping up checks of bikes on the road. In 2006, over 70,000 cyclists were checked for ownership status and potential bike theft.

Safety
As in most of our case study cities traffic safety increased for cyclists over the last few decades. In 2005, there were 40% fewer severe cyclist injuries and deaths from traffic accidents than during the mid 1980s. Even though progress has been made, between 6 and 7 cyclists are still killed in traffic accidents in Amsterdam every year. As already described in the case study about Groningen, bicycle safety is important in the Netherlands. It does not revolve around bicycle helmets, however. In the Netherlands, bicycle helmets are seen as unattractive and therefore potentially discouraging cycling. Additionally, bike planners argue that bike helmets might lead cyclists to behave more dangerously, as they feel less vulnerable. Finally, bike planners point out that car drivers use less care when interacting with cyclists wearing helmets.

Dutch traffic laws protect young cyclists and put the responsibility for an accident on the car driver. The only exception is when cyclists deliberately and flagrantly disobey traffic laws. Similar to Germany, Dutch traffic laws postulate that car drivers have to take special care when encountering children and the elderly.

Police officer in Amsterdam ticking a cyclist for disobeying traffic regulations  
Source: Peter Berkeley

Provision of cycling facilities
In 2007, the city of Amsterdam had a total of 450km of bike paths and lanes. In contrast to cities like Copenhagen, where bike paths and lanes have a long history, most paths and lanes in Amsterdam have been built since the early 1980s. In 2007, the city's bike infrastructure was made up of 200km of separate bike paths throughout the city and 200km of bike lanes along 30 km/h traffic calmed neighbourhood streets. There were 50km of bike paths along roads with speed limits of 50 km/h. In addition, Amsterdam had about 775 km of traffic calmed streets in 2000. Over the coming years, the city plans to expand the main bicycle network by about 40 – 50 km of paths and lanes and to add another 175 km of traffic calmed streets.

Most of the proposed investments for bicycling discussed above will go towards cycling infrastructure. The majority of funds (€94 million) will be used for three crucial bridges and tunnels connecting the main bike network ("Hooftstijl Foots"). Building separate bicycle paths to connect the bike network will cost an additional € 18 million. Funding for bike infrastructure comes from district, city and regional budgets (City of Amsterdam, 2007).

Restrictions on cars
The city of Amsterdam has greatly restricted car access to the city centre. Many streets are one way for cars, and others are solely reserved for pedestrians and cyclists, and are completely off-limits for automobiles. Since the 1970s the city has reduced the amount of car parking in the city centre. Additionally, fees for the remaining car parking spaces were substantially increased since the 1970s (Langenborg, 2000; Dutch Bicycling Council, 2006). In 1992, citizens voted to continue to decrease car parking in the city centre. This has proven to be an effective transportation demand management tool. When parking is sparse and costly, it discourages car trips to the city. Furthermore, as in most Dutch cities, many residential areas are traffic calmed at a low speed for cars (30 km/h areas).

Bike Parking and Coordination with public transport
Amsterdam has large bike parking facilities at its train stations. During peak hours on weekdays, up to 10,000 bikes were parked at Amsterdam Central Station in 2006. Unfortunately, the number of unguarded bike parking facilities has declined sharply in recent years due to massive reconstruction around the Central Station. The reconstruction is proposed to last until 2012. The city is trying to accommodate bike parking needs with a temporary three story bike parking garage. Demand for parking outnumbered the available 2,500 parking spots, however. City planners estimate that
about 4,000 bikes are parked in this parking garage. This is accomplished by double parking bikes in parking spots originally designed for single bikes. Even though this parking garage is overcrowded, it is still not enough to accommodate all bicycles.

As a result bikes are parked all around the train station. The City of Amsterdam installed an additional 1,000 bicycle racks around the station and provided another 1,500 bike parking places on an old ferry anchored on an adjacent river until construction of the train station is completed. After reconstruction is complete in 2012, there will be 10,000 bike parking spaces in sheltered facilities at the train station.

Amsterdam has pioneered an innovative integration of automobile and bike use. This program is called “Park and Bike” and allows motorists to park their cars at the fringe of the city and to complete their trip to the city centre on bike (Dutch Bicycling Council, 2006). The main reason for implementing this program was the lack of car parking in the downtown area and a shortage of transit access to all parts of the city. The bike rental fee is included in the price of the car parking ticket. In 2006, Amsterdam had 30 of these rental bikes at two locations (Olympic Stadium and Sloterdijk station). During summers the city reports that 60% of all rental bikes are in use every day. The program is not working at a profit, thus municipal governments in the region cover excess costs not met by parking fees.

Bicycling promotion
Similar to Germany, Dutch school children go through bicycle training in school. This further familiarizes children with bicycling and teaches necessary traffic rules and behaviour. Bicycles are made available to schools by the city government for free so that children who do not own a bicycle can learn at school how to cycle safely in Amsterdam. In the Netherlands many children experience bicycling early in life; they learn to cycle when they are 3-4 years old. Many infants make their first bike ride on the backseat or in special bike trailers with their parents. Children of immigrants often do not have these early experiences of bicycling, as cycling is not part of the culture of their country of origin. Indeed, the city reports that children of recent immigrant cycle less than the average child in Amsterdam. Therefore, the city plans to make special efforts to target children of recent immigrants through bicycling promotion and to make bicycling as appealing and as irresistible as possible to them.
Choosing for cyclists: The 2006-2010 bicycle policy plan

Seven spearheads can be distinguished in the new long-term plan that appeared by the end of 2005:

1. Realizing more and better bicycle parking facilities. To give more structure to the policy, attempts are made by the municipality to lay down a so-called ‘bicycle parking consideration frame’ including general observations on how and where to realize, manage and run parking facilities. Another thing required is capacity enlargement near houses in older city quarters, near public venues, near railway stations and more generally in ‘Locker’, the urban bicycle parking network. For the next five years to come the required budget is estimated at € 37 million; funds must be made available by subsidies of the regional authority (€ 2.5 million), city sectors (€ 1 million), the municipal mobility fund (€ 18.5 million), the municipality’s own funds (€ 2.6 million) and specific funding of the most expensive underground bicycle parking facilities.

2. Persistently combating bicycle theft. Continuation of the close cooperation between the municipality, police and the justice department and continuation of the main activities: registration, enforcement, mounting tags, registration checks and so on. Costs: ca. € 5 million in five years.

3. Constructing the missing links in the Hoofdnet Fiets bicycle network. Realization of most of these will be possible before 2010, so completion is not far off.

4. Promoting traffic safety for cyclists. Black spots and red routes must be persistently tackled, in addition to “Duurzaam Veilig”, the sustainable safety policy. These measures must be funded by way of the 2006-2010 traffic safety policy plan.

5. Proper management and maintenance of the Hoofdnet Fiets bicycle network.

6. Reinforcing ‘weak links’ in the Hoofdnet Fiets bicycle network. For instance construction of separate cycle paths instead of integrated cycle lanes.

7. Formulating and implementing a communication strategy directed to specific target groups and themes. The emphasis must be on groups that cycle less frequently, especially young people. Costs: € 600,000.

The three spearheads of the Hoofdnet Fiets bicycle network will cost an estimated € 53 million in five years. The three most expensive projects (missing links in the form of bridges and tunnels) make up for as much as € 21.5 million. Funding must largely come from regional subsidies (ca. € 25 million), contributions from city sectors (€ 10 million), the municipal Mobility Fund (€ 5.5 million) and € 5 million.

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1 Excerpted from “Continuous and integral: The cycling policies of Groningen and other European cycling cities.” Fiets Beraad Publication No. 7
via the central city’s own budget. In this way, the assumed total spendings including organisation expenses will be over € 100 million in five years for Amsterdam cycling policy - excluding specific traffic safety projects.
2.1 Denmark: Map

Source: www.nordregio.se
2.2 Denmark: Country Profile

Denmark consists of a large peninsula, Jutland, and many islands, mainly to the north of Germany. Denmark is bordered by the North Sea to the west and the Baltic Sea to the east. It is the southernmost of the Nordic countries.

**Geography:** Denmark has long controlled the approach to the Baltic Sea, and these waters are also known as the Danish straits. The country consists of the peninsula Jutland, which stretches north from Germany, and 443 named islands, 72 of which are inhabited. Many of the larger islands are connected by bridges; the Øresund Bridge connects Zealand (where Copenhagen is located) with Sweden, the Great Belt Bridge connects Funen with Zealand, and the Little Belt Bridge connects Jutland with Funen. The Øresund Bridge especially constitutes a major economic linkage for Denmark; Copenhagen and Malmö, the Swedish city at the bridge’s other terminus, are rapidly growing into a transnational metropolitan area. Denmark also includes two self-governing territories, Greenland in the northern Atlantic Ocean and the Faroe Islands to the north of Great Britain.

**Political structure:** Denmark is a constitutional monarchy. Queen Margrethe II has largely ceremonial functions; probably her most significant formal power lies in her right to appoint the prime minister and cabinet ministers, who are responsible for administration of the government. However, she must consult with parliamentary leaders to determine the public’s will, since the cabinet may be dismissed by a vote of no confidence in the Folketing (parliament). Cabinet members are occasionally recruited from outside the Folketing.

The 1953 constitution established a unicameral Folketing of not more than 179 members, of whom two are elected from the Faroe Islands and two from Greenland. Elections are held at least every 4 years, but the prime minister can dissolve the Folketing at any time and call for new elections. Folketing members are elected by a complicated system of proportional representation; any party receiving at least 2% of the total national vote receives representation. The result is a multiplicity of parties (eight represented in the Folketing after the November 2007 general election), none of which holds a majority. Electorate participation normally is around 80-85%.
Since a structural reform of local government was passed by the Folketing in 2004 and 2005, Denmark has been divided into five regions and 98 municipalities. The regions and municipalities are both led by councils elected every four years, but only the municipal councils have the power to levy taxes. Regional councils are responsible for health services and regional development, while the municipal councils are responsible for day care, elementary schools, care for the elderly, culture, environment and roads.

The Faroe Islands and Greenland enjoy home rule, with the Danish Government represented locally by high commissioners. These home rule governments are responsible for most domestic affairs, with foreign relations, monetary affairs, and defense falling to the Danish Government.

**Economy:** The Danish economy has in recent years undergone strong expansion fueled primarily by private consumption growth, but also supported by exports and investments. This thoroughly modern market economy features high-tech agriculture, up-to-date small-scale and corporate industry, extensive government welfare measures, comfortable living standards, a stable currency, and high dependence on foreign trade. Unemployment is low and capacity constraints are limiting growth potential. Denmark is a net exporter of food and energy and enjoys a comfortable balance of payments surplus. Government objectives include streamlining the bureaucracy and further privatization of state assets.

The government has been successful in meeting, and even exceeding, the economic convergence criteria for participating in the third phase (a common European currency) of the European Economic and Monetary Union (EMU). Although a referendum on EMU participation held on September 28, 2000 resulted in a firm "no" and Denmark, therefore, has not yet adopted the euro, opinion polls show a majority in favor of EMU. It is uncertain when the government will have another referendum on the EMU/euro. Danes are generally proud of their welfare safety net, which ensures that all Danes receive basic health care and need not fear real poverty. However, at present the number of working-age Danes living mostly on government transfer payments amounts to more than 680,000 persons (roughly 20% of the working-age population).

**Foreign Relations:** Danish foreign policy is founded upon four cornerstones: the United Nations, NATO, the EU, and Nordic cooperation. Denmark also is a member of, among others, the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund; the World Trade Organization (WTO); the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE); the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD); the Council of Europe; the Nordic Council; the Baltic Council; and the Barents Council. Denmark emphasizes its relations with developing nations. Although the government has moved to tighten foreign assistance expenditures, it remains a significant donor and one of the few countries to exceed the UN goal of contributing 0.7% of GNP to development assistance.
In the wake of the Cold War, Denmark has been active in international efforts to integrate the countries of Central and Eastern Europe into the West. It has played a leadership role in coordinating Western assistance to the Baltic states (Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania). The country is a strong supporter of international peacekeeping. Danish forces were heavily engaged in the former Yugoslavia in the UN Protection Force (UNPROFOR), as well as in NATO's Operation Joint Endeavor/Stabilization Force in Bosnia and Herzegovina (IFOR/SFOR), and currently in the Kosovo Force (KFOR).

Denmark has been a member of NATO since its founding in 1949, and membership in NATO remains highly popular. Danes have had a reputation as "reluctant" Europeans. When they rejected ratification of the Maastricht Treaty on June 2, 1992, they put the European Community's (EC) plans for the European Union on hold. In December 1992, the rest of the EC agreed to exempt Denmark from certain aspects of the European Union, including a common defense, a common currency, EU citizenship, and certain aspects of legal cooperation. On this revised basis, a clear majority of Danes approved continued participation in the EU in a second referendum on May 18, 1993, and again in a referendum on the Amsterdam Treaty on May 28, 1998.

**Relations with the US:** Denmark is a close NATO ally, and overall U.S.-Danish relations are excellent. Denmark is active in Afghanistan and Kosovo, as well as a leader in the Baltic region. Prime Minister Rasmussen reaffirmed that Denmark would remain engaged in Iraq even as its troop levels there decline. Denmark and the United States consult closely on European political and security matters. Denmark shares U.S. views on the positive ramifications of NATO enlargement. The U.S. also engages Denmark in a broad cooperative agenda through the Enhanced Partnership in Northern Europe (EPINE)—the U.S. policy structure to strengthen U.S.-Nordic-Baltic policy and program coordination.

Denmark's active liberal trade policy in the EU, OECD, and WTO largely coincides with U.S. interests. The U.S. is Denmark's largest non-European trade partner with about 5% of Danish merchandise trade. Denmark's role in European environmental and agricultural issues and its strategic location at the entrance to the Baltic Sea have made Copenhagen a center for U.S. agencies and the private sector dealing with the Nordic/Baltic region.

Since September 11, 2001, Denmark has been highly proactive in endorsing and implementing United States, UN, and EU-initiated counter-terrorism measures, just as Denmark has contributed substantially to the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) in Afghanistan and the neighboring countries. In 2003, Denmark was among the first countries to join the "Coalition of the Willing" and since that time it has provided 500 troops to assist with stabilization efforts in Iraq. Prime Minister Rasmussen announced in February 2007 that most Danish troops would be withdrawn from Iraq by August 2007.

*Excerpts taken from CIA World Factbook, Wikipedia, and US Department of State*
2.3 Copenhagen: Metro Map

2.4 Copenhagen: City Profile

Copenhagen is the capital of Denmark, its cultural, educational, and economic center, and its largest city, the center of a metropolitan region that is home to nearly 1.2 million residents. It lies on the eastern shore of the island of Zealand and part of the island of Amager, and is situated on the western shore of the Strait of Øresund, a narrow strait separating Denmark from Sweden.

The city’s location at the mouth of the Baltic Sea has been an important factor in shaping its history. Since the beginning of Copenhagen’s recorded history in the 11th century, its port has been both a source of prosperity and prominence, and a target of attack by competitors who sought to control the city’s strategic site. Despite frequent attacks throughout the Middle Ages, by the end of the 17th century, Copenhagen was the wealthy and prominent capital of a Danish Kingdom whose influence extended over much of the Baltic region.

Today, Copenhagen is well-known for its innovative urban plan. After World War II, the city adopted the “five-finger” development plan, which directed planned suburban growth to the west along five train lines, or “fingers,” with green belts and highways in between. Because the finger plan limits development to the west of the city, today, Copenhagen is growing east across the Strait of Øresund to
form a single urban agglomeration with Malmö, Sweden. Since 2000, the cities have been connected by a toll bridge.

**Population (01/2008)**

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Urban area</td>
<td>1,153,615</td>
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<tr>
<td>Municipal</td>
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<td>Metropolitan Area (Øresund Region)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Density (city/met/region/region+)</td>
<td>5777/1947/812/686/km²</td>
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**Government**

The Copenhagen City Council is composed of 55 members elected to four-year terms, and is chaired by the Lord Mayor. The Council is divided into six specialized policy committees, which oversee areas ranging from health to employment to sports and culture, as well as a seventh, overarching Finance Committee, which is chaired by the Lord Mayor and composed of representatives from each of the other six committees. The Finance Committee coordinates the city’s overall financial and urban planning.

**Economy**

Copenhagen’s economy is dominated by the service sector, which represents 80% of jobs in the city. The city’s prominence in Northern Europe makes it an ideal home for the regional headquarters of several multinational corporations, including Microsoft. In recent years the city has seen significant growth in high-tech service sectors, like biotechnology, pharmaceuticals, and telecommunications. Because of heavy international investment in the city, Copenhagen’s population is quite international; in 2005, about 11 percent of residents were foreign nationals.

Copenhagen is consistently ranked as one of the world’s richest cities, with average wages up to 40% higher than those received by workers in New York City. However, the cost of living in the city is quite high, and wages are heavily taxed to support the relatively large number of social assistance recipients.
With about half a million inhabitants in the city and 1.7 million inhabitants in its metropolitan area, Copenhagen is Denmark’s largest city as well as its capital (City of Copenhagen, 2007a). Of Europe’s major cities, only Amsterdam is more bicycling oriented than Copenhagen. With its long history of cycling and high share of trips by bike, the city actively markets itself as the “city of cyclists.” Since spring 2007, the city has set itself the goal to become “the best city in the world for cycling” (City of Copenhagen, 2007b).

Children ride up front on this bike in Copenhagen, a design that was developed in Denmark and is called the “Children’s bike.”
Source: Peter Barkley

Brightly colored bike lane crossings at intersection in Copenhagen to highlight presence of cyclists to motorists
Source: Peter Barkley

The extensive bicycling network and the central role of cycling facilities in all traffic planning highlight the importance of bicycling in the city’s transport policies. Indeed, a third of Copenhagen’s road transport budget is earmarked for cycling facilities and programs.

Land use and development policies have also facilitated cycling. As noted by Cerovec (2001), Copenhagen’s suburban expansion has been concentrated along radial train corridors that focus on the city centre. The relatively high residential densities and mixed land uses ensure a high percentage of trips that are short enough to cover by bike.

In contrast to most other case study cities, there are no bicycle streets in Copenhagen, and traffic calming is not very extensive. Currently, some residential areas have 30km/h speed limits and a very limited number of streets have car speed limits of 15km/h. However, the city has plans to reduce the general speed limit for cars from 50km/h to 40km/h in large parts of the city.

Travel trends
Cycling has almost continuously increased in and around Copenhagen in recent decades. Cordon counts indicate that the number of bike trips grew by about 20% from 1997 to 2006, with especially rapid growth in the areas beyond the city centre. A 2005 travel survey found that 20% of all trips in Copenhagen were by bike. An even higher 36% of work trips were by bike (City of Copenhagen, 2006).

Cycling rates are high for all groups: men and women, all age groups, all professions, and all income levels. Similar to Amsterdam, cycling is viewed as a perfectly normal way to get around the city, and cyclists are a permanent part of the scene on virtually every street. Interestingly, bike use in recent years has risen most among older age groups. For example, the percentage of Copenhagen residents over age 40 who cycle regularly increased from 25% in 1998 to 38% in 2005 (City of Copenhagen, 2006).

Entire family cycling together on this bike path in Copenhagen. Note the child is wearing a helmet but not the parents.
Source: Peter Barkley

Overall policy goals
The goals of its cycling policy were first clearly stated in Copenhagen’s 2002-2012 Cycling Policy Plan and then slightly revised in 2007 (City of Copenhagen, 2007c). The city aims to increase the bike share of work trips to 50% by 2012 (for jobs located within the city), and to reduce the number of cyclist injuries by 50%. Moreover, the city has a specific goal of raising the percentage of cyclists who feel safe from the current 57% to 80%. The Policy Plan also sets the goals of increasing cycling speeds by improving the cycle pathway system and by giving cyclists more priority at intersections. As of spring 2007, the city plans to double funding for bicycling (City of Copenhagen, 2007b).

Safety
Although cycling levels in Copenhagen are high, they would be much higher if safety...
of impressive improvements in actual cycling safety. From 1995 to 2006, the number of cyclist fatalities and serious injuries fell by 60%, although the total number of kilometres cycled rose by 44% over the same period (City of Copenhagen, 2006).

In the past, Copenhagen's main approach to increasing safety was the extension and improvement of the system of bikeways along roads and in parks. Although those efforts continue, the city's focus now is on improving safety at intersections, since that is where most serious crashes occur. Increasingly, the city is installing advance stop lines for cyclists, priority traffic signals, and bright blue marking of bike lanes crossing roads.

Similar to Dutch cities, cyclists in Copenhagen rarely wear helmets. In sharp contrast to Odense, there does not appear to be any public campaign to promote helmet use. As in the Netherlands, bike planners in Copenhagen reject laws requiring helmet use since they would probably discourage cycling by making it less convenient and less fashionable.

**Provision of cycling facilities**

Even as far back as 1934, Copenhagen had 130 km of bike paths, but they have been extended considerably since then (Danish Cycling Council, 2006). In 2004, there were 345 km of separate bike paths and 14 km of bike lanes, with plans to invest €16 million to build an additional 50 km of bike paths by 2015 (City of Copenhagen, 2004 and 2007b). In addition, the city has begun construction of a series of 21 new bike routes—designated as green bicycle routes. They will have a total length of over 110 km and cost €70 million. By routing them through parks, along waterfronts, and in other green spaces, the planners are minimizing roadway crossings, thus maximizing safety, comfort, and speed (City of Copenhagen, 2007b).

Copenhagen bike planners have a strong preference for separate paths over on-street lanes on major roads. Although some bike lanes are being built, they are viewed as cheap, temporary measures - less safe than separate paths. Most lanes will eventually be replaced by fully separated paths. Generally, bike paths in the city are on both sides of the street, situated between the roadway and the sidewalk. The bike path is separated from motor vehicles by a curb and elevated by 7-12 cm above the level of the street. Most bike paths are 2.2 meters wide, but on especially busy commuter routes, they are widened to 3 meters. At intersections and other road crossings, bike paths turn into bike lanes and are often painted a bright, highly visible blue to alert motorists to the presence of cyclists crossing the road.

Green wave for cyclists on this major street in Copenhagen, synchronized at 20km/hr. Note the specially protected path, with a curb separating the path from the lanes for motor vehicles.

Source: Niels Jensen, City of Copenhagen

While the bicycling facilities in Copenhagen are extensive, about a fifth of current cyclists report in the bi-annual survey that they are dissatisfied with them overall (City of Copenhagen, 2004 and 2006). Over half of current cyclists complain about poor maintenance. As in many cities, motor vehicles sometimes stop or park illegally on cycle tracks, endangering cyclists and slowing them down. Another problem is the congestion of several key bike paths during rush hours, with over 2,300 cyclists per hour. Congestion is limited to only 3 to 4 km of the bike networks, but bike planners and cyclists still consider it a problem.

In response to these problems, the city is planning to expand the network of bike paths, widen paths to 3 meters on the most congested routes, ticket motor vehicles obstructing paths, and improve maintenance. Furthermore, similar to Odense, the city synchronizes its traffic lights on certain roads to give cyclist consecutive green lights (a so-called green wave). First results show that this measure speeds up bike trips by an average of 10%. Overall, Copenhagen planners report considerable progress with these recently implemented measures.

**Intersection treatments and traffic priority for cyclists**

As already noted, the transport planners in Copenhagen are now making intersection improvements the main focus of their efforts to make cycling faster, more convenient, and safer. Many key intersections already provide advance stop lines, traffic signal priority, and special blue lane markings for cyclists. In the
coming years, the city plans to redesign more intersections in this way to be more bicycling friendly.

**Coordination with public transport**

Although city planners recognize the importance of integrating cycling with public transport, 42% of Copenhagen's cyclists rated the situation in 2006 as unsatisfactory (City of Copenhagen, 2006). Consequently, improvements in bike and ride facilities are a major goal of city cycling policies.

Bicycles are now allowed on all suburban trains as well as the metro. All suburban trains and most regional trains have special compartments for bike parking. Bike parking around train stations, however, is not nearly sufficient to meet demands. Many of the existing facilities are crowded, outdated, inconvenient, unguarded, and primitive in comparison to the state-of-the-art facilities in Muenster and Groningen. Likewise, Amsterdam has vastly superior bike parking facilities at its rail stations. Fortunately, the city plans to improve bike parking at train stations in the coming years, but it has a long way to go.

**Bike parking**

Similar to the unsatisfactory state of bike-public transport coordination, bike parking in general is both insufficient and of poor quality in Copenhagen (City of Copenhagen, 2006). In the city's bi-annual survey, cyclists regularly rate the lack of good bike parking as the worst aspect of cycling conditions (rating only 3 on a scale of 1 to 10).

The total number of bike parking places is over 20,000, but that is not nearly sufficient. Thus, the city's goal is to vastly improve both the quantity and quality of bike parking facilities in the coming years. Over 400 new bike parking places were built for the city centre from 2000 to 2002.

Copenhagen could learn a lot from Odense, which has been pioneering a range of advances in bike parking, both overall and especially at train stations.

**Bicycling promotion**

There are two innovative policies that Copenhagen has implemented to promote cycling: the free bike rental program and the annual survey of bicyclists. The City Bikes program places over 2,000 free city bikes at over 110 locations in the city centre (Fonden Bycyklens, 2007). Only a small deposit is required to retrieve the bike from its parking location, and it can be left at any many different locations, depending on the route taken. The City Bikes programme certainly is a good idea in principle, making bikes easily available on short-term basis. Unfortunately, the programme has been hampered by the inevitable problems of vandalism and theft, as well as insufficient maintenance of the bikes. Technological improvements to the City Bikes in 1998 mitigated these problems somewhat, but one often finds abandoned, broken, vandalized City Bikes throughout the city. Overall, however, the City Bike program appears to be a success.

Another innovative program in Copenhagen is the Bicycle Account, a bi-annual survey of cyclists (City of Copenhagen, 2004 and 2006). Every two years cyclists themselves evaluate the actual performance of the bicycling system in the city, and provide suggestions for its improvement. They are asked, for example, about their degree of satisfaction with the extent and width of bike paths, road and path maintenance, bike parking, coordination with public transport, and safety. Because it is a bi-annual survey, it permits cycling planners to track progress over time.

In addition to monitoring cyclist satisfaction with the current system, the Bicycle Account also provides information on cycling levels, trip purpose, and cyclist characteristics, thus supplementing the information from cordon
Copenhagen’s Cycling Policy: An Overview

“An overall action plan for the improvement of cycling conditions shall be drawn up. The plan shall contain certain provisions for the extension of the cycle track network and proposals for new cycle routes and include proposals for the improvement of general passability, cyclist safety and comfort, including necessary maintenance.”

City of Copenhagen, Budget 2000-2003

The Subplan for the Improvement of Cycling Conditions is a subsection of the City’s Traffic Improvement Plan of 2000. The plan was approved as the basis for all further work and the subplan may be considered a blueprint for an action plan for the improvement of cycling conditions. The aim is to achieve the following goals for 2012:

- The proportion of people cycling to workplaces in Copenhagen shall increase from 34% to 40%.
- Cyclist risk of injury or death shall increase by 50%.
- The proportion of Copenhagen cyclists who feel safe cycling in town shall increase from 57% to 80%.
- Cyclist travelling speed on trips of over 5 km shall increase by 10%.
- Cyclist comfort shall be improved so that cycle track surfaces deemed unsatisfactory shall not exceed 5%.

The Subplan for the Improvement of Cycling Conditions was passed in 2000 including an appropriations bill earmarking funds for implementation. Along with Proposals for Green Cycle Routes (2000) and the Cycle Track Priority Plan (2001), it forms the basis of the cycle policy and action plan presented here.

Quantitative goals make it possible to carry out a continuous assessment of the cycle policy. This will be done, as hitherto, in the Bicycle Account. In order to fulfill the objectives, work will be concentrated on nine focus areas:

- Cycle tracks and reinforced cycle lanes
- Green cycle routes
- Improved cycling conditions in the City Center
- Combining Cycling and public transport
- Bicycle parking
- Improved signal intersections
- Better cycle track maintenance
- Better cycle track cleaning
- Campaigns and information

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2 Excerpted from “Cycle Policy 2002-2012,” City of Copenhagen
3.1 Delegate Biographies

Mia Birk

Ms. Birk is a Principal at Alta Planning + Design, with 17 years experience in pedestrian, bicycle, trail, and greenway planning, design, and implementation. She also serves as an adjunct professor in the graduate program in Urban Planning at Portland State University, teaching courses on Pedestrian and Bicycle Issues, and she is currently working to create and Initiative for Bicycle and Pedestrian Innovation there.

From 1993 to 1999, Ms. Birk was manager of the Portland Bicycle Program. During her tenure with the Program, the City’s bikeway mileage more than tripled. In her role with the City of Portland and subsequently in her private practice as a planner, Ms. Birk has developed over 100 bicycle, pedestrian, trail, and corridor plans in the Portland metropolitan area, the San Francisco Bay Area, Los Angeles, and several other cities and states in the U.S. and internationally. She has managed the public process, design, and implementation of over 500 miles of new bikeways and walkways, as well as programs such as the Safe Routes to School initiative, bicycle and pedestrian-friendly development codes, and bikeway/walkway maintenance. Most recently, Ms. Birk has become involved in “rails to trails” planning efforts, which aim to connect bicycle trails to rail networks to create a comprehensive sustainable transportation network. In 2007, Ms. Birk was named Professional of the Year by the Association of Pedestrian and Bicycle Professionals.

Scott Bricker

Mr. Bricker is the Executive Director of the Bicycle Transportation Alliance (BTA), a Portland-based bicycle advocacy organization whose work covers Oregon and southwestern Washington State. In Mr. Bricker’s ten years with the BTA, he has developed the organization’s Safe Routes to School Program, which includes the BTA’s award-winning Bicycle Safety Education curriculum; authored the BTA’s Blueprint for Better Bicycling; and spent five years as the organization’s Policy Director and Lobbyist, during which time he helped pass state, regional, and local legislation promoting increased and safer cycling.

Mr. Bricker holds an undergraduate degree in Political Science from the State University of New York in Albany and a Masters in Urban and Regional Planning from Portland State University.

Rob Burchfield

Mr. Burchfield earned an MS in Civil Engineering from Oregon State University and has spent over 25 years working in the field of municipal traffic engineering. For the past 22 years, he has worked for the
City of Portland, where he now serves as City Traffic Engineer. Mr. Burchfield has primary responsibility for the management of Traffic Operations and Safety on the City of Portland’s streets.

Mr. Burchfield managed the development of Portland’s Bicycle Program and oversaw the implementation of Portland’s on-street bikeway network.

**Rex Burkholder**

Mr. Burkholder has served as a Councilor of the Portland Metro Council for almost eight years, with a special legislative focus on transportation, climate change, and conservation education. In his role Councilor, he has led efforts to integrate sustainable practices into urban mobility through the realignment of regional transportation investments, with the goals of increasing non-automobile travel options and reducing greenhouse gas emissions.

Mr. Burkholder is founder and policy director of the Bicycle Transportation Alliance; has served on many government commissions, both as a citizen and in his capacity as an elected official; and serves on the board of the Association of Metropolitan Planning Organizations.

**Gary Campbell**

Mr. Campbell lives and works as a legal secretary and professional photographer in the Portland metro area. He is a strong advocate for alternatives to automobile transportation, especially cycling and walking. Mr. Campbell recently undertook a 19-day bicycle tour of China, where bicycles are the primary vehicles used by commuters. Because Mr. Campbell often feels unsafe biking on Portland roads alongside cars, he was surprised to find that in China, biking is often a safer alternative to driving. After returning from China, Mr. Campbell has concentrated his attention on finding solutions for increasing the safety and comfort of Portland residents who commute on bicycles, and looks forward to discovering how other cities approach this issue.

**Mary Anne Cassin**

Ms. Cassin manages the planning, parks, and trails development division of the Portland Metro regional government. She holds a Master in Landscape Architecture (MLA) from the Harvard School of Design, and before entering the public sector, Ms. Cassin taught at the University of Illinois and practiced landscape architecture for design firms in Chicago, Boston, and Portland.

Ms. Cassin has spent over 25 years in the public sector as a park professional in the Portland metro area. Her projects have included high-visibility downtown and waterfront parks, trails, long-range vision
development, and implementation of funding proposals, and her experience encompasses both project
design and project management.

**Chris Enlow**

Mr. Enlow oversees corporate social responsibility at KEEN, Inc., a Portland-based manufacturer of
outdoor, running, and trail shoes.

Mr. Enlow received his graduate degree from Arizona State University’s School of Community Resources
and, beginning in 1998, spent two years volunteering with the Peace Corps in Bulgaria. Upon his return
to the United States, Mr. Enlow worked as a fundraiser for the Lowcountry Food Bank in Charleston,
South Carolina, and then traveled to Jamaica to work at a nonprofit devoted to community revitalization
in the city of Falmouth. He moved to Portland in 2006 to join KEEN in the role of corporate giving
manager. Mr. Enlow also serves as a board member for the Forest Park Conservancy, a non-profit
dedicated to the preservation of the City of Portland’s Forest Park.

**Jay Graves**

Mr. Graves, a Portland native, is CEO and owner of The Bike Gallery. A family-owned business since its
inception in 1974, the Bike Gallery has 6 neighborhood locations in the Portland metro area. Two of Mr.
Graves’ four grown children work alongside him in Bike Gallery locations, and his wife, also an avid
cyclist, works for the Community Cycling Center.

Mr. Graves describes “getting people on bikes” as his passion. He is active in the cycling community, and
currently serves as Chairman of the National Bicycle Dealers Association. Mr. Graves also sits on a
number of boards, including that of Cycle Oregon, a week-long bicycle ride serving over 2000 cyclists.

Mr. Graves was recently named a commissioner of Oregon State Parks, a role in which he will work to
increase the proportion of cycling trips in the Portland area, with Amsterdam as a key role model.

**Richard Potestio**

Mr. Potestio works as an architect and consultant in the Portland metropolitan area. He currently works
at his own architectural firm, Potestio Studio: Architecture + Design, and has taught in the Department
of Architecture at the University of Oregon and Portland State University. Mr. Potestio holds a Bachelors
of Architecture from the University of Oregon and a Masters of Architecture from Syracuse University.

Mr. Potestio has received several awards from the American Institute of Architects (AIA), especially for
his residential projects. He has also worked on institutional and commercial projects in the Portland area.
and nationally, and has been an active participant in a number of Portland community planning projects, including the Public Market Steering Committee, the PDXplore Urban Design Collaborative, and the River City Bicycle Cyclocross Crusade.

Zari Santner

Ms. Santner is director of Portland Parks and Recreation. After spending the first 21 years of her life in Iran and receiving a BS in Horticulture Tehran University, Ms. Santner earned a Master in Landscape Architecture (MLA) from the Harvard Graduate School of Design.

After working for a decade in the private sector, Ms. Santner moved to Portland in 1980 and began her public sector career with Portland Parks and Recreation’s Planning and Development Department. In 1994, Ms. Santner became manager of the $66 million Parks Bond Measure. In this role she successfully managed the completion of 114 projects at 99 sites within the five-year timeline of the bond measure and within budget. Ms. Santner was also a steadfast champion of the east bank park along the Willamette River, and in 2001, she led the opening of the Eastbank Esplanade with thousands of exuberant citizens.

In April 2003, Ms. Santner was named Portland Parks and Recreation’s first female director. Her recent awards include the Governor’s Livability Award for Jamison Square and the American Society of Landscape Architecture Award for South Waterfront Park and the Eastbank Esplanade.

Dick Schouten

Mr. Schouten is the Washington County Commissioner for District 1, and represents the Aloha, Beaverton, and Cooper Mountain area.

Mr. Schouten’s family migrated from the Netherlands to Fresno, California, when he was four years old. After completing his undergraduate degree at Santa Clara University and earning a law degree from UCLA, Mr. Schouten served as legal counsel for several California cities. In 1992, Mr. Schouten, his wife, and two daughters moved to Washington County.

Mr. Schouten represented The Make Our Park Whole Committee, which helped obtain a 22-acre addition to the Tualatin Hills Nature Park. In 2003, he was awarded Oregon Parks Providers’ “Legislator of the Year” award. Currently, Mr. Schouten serves on the Board of Directors for Clean Water Services; Metro’s Blue Ribbon Trails Committee; Washington County’s Aging & Veteran Services Advisory Council; the Bridges to Housing Portland Regional Steering Committee; the Board of the Community Action Organization; and the Regional Emergency Managers Group, which oversees regional anti-terrorism preparedness.
Mike Wetter

Mr. Wetter is Senior Advisor to David Bragdon, President of the Portland Metro Council. In addition to his role as policy advisor, Mr. Wetter has taken the lead on several large scale policy and program initiatives on behalf of Mr. Bragdon and the Metro Council. In this capacity, Mr. Wetter managed the Metro Council’s strategic planning initiative; founded the Metro government’s Regional Leadership Initiative; and spearheaded the Connecting Green program, an initiative to create an exemplary system of parks, trails, and natural areas in the Portland metropolitan area.

Mr. Wetter holds a Masters in Applied Information Management from the University of Oregon. Prior to joining the Metro Council in 2003, he spent thirteen years working as a management consultant at Matrix Associates, a firm he founded in 1990. He is also the founder of Masters of Ceremony, a nonprofit organization that serves people navigating life transitions, including adolescent boys and girls and veterans returning from war.

Philip Wu

Dr. Wu is a general pediatrician and the leader of Kaiser Permanente’s national child weight management efforts. Because of the strong links between childhood obesity, healthy eating and physical activity, and the built environment, Dr. Wu is a strong advocate for the improvement of land use, transportation, and food policy with the goal of encouraging active and healthy lifestyles.

David Yaden

Mr. Yaden is the chair of the Portland Delegation. Now retired, Mr. Yaden spent over 35 years working in the area of public affairs in Oregon.

He began his career in the early 1970s as a public opinion analyst, founding a firm in 1971 that served clients including the Portland public school system. Since then, Mr. Yaden’s career has included extensive service to a number of local, state, and federal agencies. He has served as Director of Oregon’s Department of Energy, special assistant to US Secretary of Transportation Neil Goldschmidt, chief of staff to a Congressman, and, most recently, as an independent consultant. In this role he has helped develop strategic plans for the Tri-County Metropolitan Transportation District of Oregon, which covers the Portland metropolitan area; the Portland Metro Council; and Oregon’s State Board of Higher Education. Mr. Yaden also serves on the board of the Sightline Institute, a Seattle-based think tank that focuses on sustainability.
## 3.2 Currency Conversion

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Monday, September 29, 2008

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Cycle proficiency classes give immigrant women more self confidence

Dutch nationals of foreign origin cycle less than Dutch nationals who were born here. Despite a lack of good recent statistics, however, immigrant women seem to be catching up. They are doing so by attending cycle proficiency classes, which are being offered in more and more municipalities. Two good examples are the projects in Amsterdam and Tilburg.

Twenty or fifty years old, newcomer or long-time resident in the Netherlands, of Turkish, Moroccan, Surinam or other origin, the participants in the Amsterdam project Cycle Proficiency Classes for immigrant women are as diverse as the multicultural society itself. Woman from other European countries are also enrolling. Refugee organisations and centres for asylum seekers also provide candidates. “We clearly fulfil a need”, according to Roxanne Stienstra, bicycle project coordinator at the Sport & Recreation department of the Welfare Services Amsterdam.

Meeting place
The reasons for the increasing popularity of the bicycle among immigrant women are the same as for any other person: taking the children to school, shopping and outings: cycling is cheap and fast, increases their self-confidence and independence and also gets them active. But there's more to it than that, Stienstra has noticed: “The classes also function as a meeting place, where they can chat, exchange information, have a cup of tea, while many go on to other activities like swimming, aerobics or fitness training.” The cycle proficiency classes in Amsterdam have been going for over ten years. Each of the fourteen urban districts has at least one project. Publicised through advertisements in the local newspaper, for example, the women can enrol at the community centre. Some urban districts have a permanent community sports worker. Others hire someone. The classes are given in the nearest gym. “We provide the bicycles, the teachers and help with the start-up”, says Roxanne Stienstra. She personally trains the teachers, paid employees with a sports academy diploma and a First Aid certificate. They tend to be women, which is particularly important for Turkish and Moroccan participants. “But in the south-east which has a big African population, it doesn’t matter whether the teacher is male or female. Here, a complete men’s group was recently formed. And in the River district, a mixed group recently started. There are also immigrant women giving cycling lessons.”

No prying eyes
The course involves twenty weekly sessions lasting one hour: ten for beginners and ten for advanced cyclists. The first series, in which ten to twelve participants learn the theory and practice of cycling, is given indoors. “Very important, because the women don’t want to attract prying eyes. The long skirt is
swapped for trousers, the headscarf comes off: they have to feel uninhibited.” In the second half of the course, they learn the Highway Code and participate in traffic.

“First they practise in a quiet park, before moving on to the public road, eventually in all weathers, because cycling with slippery tyres makes braking difficult and that’s something they have to learn too. Outside there is always an assistant teacher in attendance, so that someone can cycle behind the group.” The course ends with an exam. Successful candidates receive a certificate. The urban districts operate autonomously, but Sport & Recreation coordinates the cycle proficiency classes. Stienstra strives to achieve unity, such as a uniform price. The price now varies in each urban district from thirty to sixty guilders for ten classes. Two videos supported by a reader were presented to former Sports councillor Roel Walraven in January and are intended to promote uniformity in the classes. An introductory 25 minute video tells the teachers about the organisation and structure of the classes, and how they can reach the target group. The second film lasts 2.5 hours and instructs the teachers about preparing the classes, the contents and the best way to teach. “This can be used in two ways: the teacher can prepare her lesson and show the participants what the class will be like. This helps overcome any language barrier.”

**Knowledge distribution**

The municipality of Amsterdam subsidises some of the cycle proficiency classes from its sport promotion budget. The Infrastructure, Traffic and Transportation department granted the subsidy to make the videos, among others. Roxanne Stienstra regrets that there is no information exchange with other big towns about the cycle proficiency classes. “This kind of exchange is long overdue”. The Centre for Foreign Women (CBV) in Tilburg has been promoting cycle proficiency classes for immigrant women for years, both inside and outside its own municipality. Angela van der Kloof, coordinator of the Steunpunt Fiets (Bicycle Support Centre) run by the CBV, has developed the course Stap op de Fiets (Get on the Bicycle); over 400 have already been sold all over the country since 1996. Besides developing and distributing teaching material, Van der Kloof also gives cycling and traffic classes to immigrant women and girls, trains teachers in various towns, advises institutions like community centres and organisations for asylum seekers about launching cycle proficiency classes and brings the subject to the attention of policy makers.

**Professionalisation**

As long as the CBV has existed, almost a quarter of a century, cycle proficiency classes have been given to immigrant women. Angela van der Kloof became involved when she volunteered to support the only teacher at the time in 1991. In 1992, the teacher retired and Van der Kloof took over the cycling activities. “When she left, her experience was lost too. A real shame. I wanted to structure and professionalise the classes. Because there was no teaching material anywhere in the Netherlands, we developed our own course material.” This includes a teaching manual, an instruction booklet for participants, photo cards showing the right and wrong way to follow the Highway Code and certificates. Teachers can decide for themselves what they want to use. “Through this package, we came into
contact with other municipalities, I started to organise workshops and an annual study day”, Van der Kloof continues. In Tilburg, three teachers assisted by volunteers teach four groups: two at the CBV and two in district centres. Nine participants learn cycling proficiency on one morning or afternoon a week. Just like in Amsterdam, their background is very diverse, from highly qualified to uneducated, from refugees from Somalia and Afghanistan to immigrant women from Italy and Portugal. So no lack of candidates. “There is still a waiting list. And that’s just thanks to word-of-mouth advertising.”

**Tailored classes**

The classes are divided into cycling, having a cup of coffee and theory. “All three are equally important. The women must be able to talk about it”, says Van der Kloof. “We tailor the classes as far as possible: if someone needs more time and attention, we give it. If someone learns fast, they finish sooner.” The CBV provides the bicycles, but strives to ensure that every participant has her own bicycle. “We take the whole group to a bicycle shop.” Sometimes there are difficult situations. “Some women may have been given a bicycle as a wedding present, but it’s the wrong size. Then you have to tactfully advise the woman and her husband that she would be better buying a more suitable bicycle.” According to the coordinator, like most municipalities, Tilburg does not have a traffic policy for immigrants, let alone immigrant women. For the classes themselves, the CBV gets a subsidy in the framework of traffic safety. In 2001, for the first time the municipal council allocated more money which facilitated two classes in the district. For developing teaching material, the centre was granted a financial contribution by the provincial Fiets AdviesTeam (Cycling Advisory Team).

**Low threshold**

On 15 March, a new instruction video was presented in Tilburg during a national study day of the CBV. In the fourteen minute film, (future) teachers are instructed how to teach someone to ride a bicycle and organise this in classes. “We tried to make the video as low threshold as possible. Cycling classes are usually given in a community centre by volunteers, who have to think up the teaching material themselves. This is not always successful. Some people think that it’s better to hold someone, for example, but the best thing is to let them do it themselves. With the video, we try to move them towards another approach.” She knows how important it is for the teachers and participants to have a video like this that can be used again and again. Despite the many immigrant women who want to learn how to ride a bicycle, the available budget is very small. Here is an opportunity for many municipalities, Angela van der Kloof is convinced. “The women are very motivated, but classes are too marginalised at the moment. In some places, cycling lessons only involve a tour of the square. There is often no money for a good quality course. Yet with a municipal contribution of just 5,000 Euros, you can achieve a great deal. That’s nothing compared with the cost of constructing a cycle path costing a couple of hundred thousand Euros. If you want to approach cycling proficiency classes for immigrant women seriously, you need a budget and people. It’s time that policy-makers responded to this need.”
Cycle ABC for immigrant woman

Hassina Sakher and Ithelma Nicolaas are two of 4000 immigrant women who have joined a bicycle course in the Netherlands this year. The aim is that they will be skilled enough to ride with the Dutch flow.

Tilburg: “It’s hard to stop!”, Hassina Sakher cries out. The front wheel of the bike waggles while one of her legs hops to kill the speed. Ithelma Nicolaas steps onto her bike, but doesn’t manage to move it forward before she steps down again.

“My problem is that I turn the peddles the wrong direction and get out of balance”, she laughs.

The two women are wearing blue vests with huge white L’s on the front and back. Both the women have lived in the Netherlands for three years now, Hassina is from Algeria and Ithelma is from the Antilles. The first time they ever sat on a bike was in September this year.

“It felt strange, and I was so afraid of falling”, Ithelma says. Hassina felt like a child.

“I was so happy, I never thought I would manage it!”

Hassina and Ithelma are in the first stage of a bicycle course arranged by the national bicycle support organisation “Landelijk Steunpunt Fiets”. First they will learn the basic technique, start – cycle – stop, and gradually they will move towards the traffic. When they are considered skilled enough they will get a certificate and can be let loose by themselves.

“It was immigrant women who took the initiative and asked for courses”, says coordinator in LSF Angela van der Kloof. The organisation was founded in 1996 in Tilburg, but bicycle courses for immigrant women have existed for 25 years and now there are about 300 local places with courses across the Netherlands.

“They see how practical it is and that it actually is a basic need to get around”, Angela van der Kloof says. She has no statistics on how the number of course participants who actually rides a bike, in the traffic is growing.

“Off course there might be some who are scared of biking alone when they are finished here, I do see more and more immigrant woman in the bike lanes. The local authorities also say that the number of immigrants on bikes is increasing.

“I will bike a lot when I’m finished. It will for example be more convenient to cycle my son to the kindergarten”, Hassina says.

“I also think I will feel more integrated on a bike”. The coordinator also points out that there are more than practical reasons for teaching immigrant women to ride a bike.
“This is important because it stimulates woman to develop themselves and take part in society. One of the participants once said to me “I want to learn to cycle because I am the only one walking”. It also make them more self confident. They hear “You’ll never mange to ride a bike, but then they discover that they can do it step by step.”

Get on your bike!

Bicycle- and traffic lessons for foreigners in Tilburg, the Netherlands

Angela van der Kloof

Centre for Foreign Women

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E-mail: avdkloof@planet.nl / cbvturbed@planet.nl

Summary:

In the Netherlands, riding a bicycle is a very common form of transport. To the outsider, it seems everybody rides a bike. The truth, however, is that many inhabitants of the Netherlands do not know how to ride a bicycle. And although a large number of foreigners living in the Netherlands have acquired the skill, many of them can not or dare not face the traffic in the streets. Some foreigners are helped by friends or colleagues. Others are trained in bicycle riding and traffic rules at community centres and centres for foreigners. One of the places in the Netherlands where such training is given is the Centre for Foreign Women in Tilburg.

In our presentation we will use quotes and examples to make clear why foreign women wish to learn how to ride a bicycle in Tilburg, and how they acquire the necessary skills. In the course of years methodologies have been developed for the theoretical part as well as the more practical issues of signalling, balancing and being part of the traffic. This presentation is relevant to all those who wish to stimulate the acquisition of bicycles and bicycle riding by foreigners in their respective countries, cities or villages.

Our methodologies are also useful for organisations in countries where women generally do not ride bicycles. They will get an impression of the way in which bicycle courses may be developed and they will be given recommendations on how to deliver courses successfully.

1. Introduction
In the Netherlands, riding a bicycle is a very common form of transport. To the outsider, it seems everybody rides a bike. The truth, however, is that many inhabitants of the Netherlands do not know how to ride a bicycle. And although a large number of foreigners living in the Netherlands have acquired the skill, many of them can not or dare not face the traffic in the streets. Some foreigners are helped by friends, colleagues or members of their families who have arrived in the country earlier. Others are trained in bicycle riding and traffic rules at community centres and centres for foreigners. One of the places in the Netherlands where such training is given is the Centre for Foreign Women in Tilburg.

The initiative for these lessons was taken at the beginning of the 1980s when migrant women expressed their need to learn to get around on a bike to their teachers of Dutch at the Centre for Foreign Women. One of their teachers reacted and found a group of volunteers willing to start and teach women how to ride their bicycles.

At present women may apply at various meeting points in town, where they are trained in groups of nine. On the average, 35 women follow the course weekly. There is a lot of demand for the course, as the waiting list of 50 women shows.

2. From bicycle lessons to Cycling Centre

I became an active member of the bicycle project of the Centre for Foreign women in 1991. At that time, the volunteers started to realise that learning how to ride a bicycle involved more than acquiring the necessary motor skills, that conquering the fear of being part of the traffic was an important issue as well. Many women were scared when on the roads and this was partly due to ignorance of the traffic regulations. The importance of teaching those regulations became increasingly clearer. It appeared, however, that there was no course material cut to the needs of our target group. Many women could not read or write Dutch well enough and learnt best by studying pictorial representations of traffic situations. With the aid of various subsidies we were able to develop and publish our own course material by 1996. We sell the course material nation-wide and have sold it to over 300 clients in the Netherlands.

We combined the introduction of the course material to a symposium on ‘safety in bicycling and in traffic for foreigners’. This was our first step towards presenting the phenomenon of bicycle lessons for foreigners to the outside world. The symposium netted us enthusiastic responses from course providers in other cities. Following the symposium we have built up a network and organise workshops, we train trainers and course providers and volunteers and give advice on the telephone. All these activities resort under our Cycling Centre.

Right after the introduction of our course material we were taken seriously by members of the municipal Department of Road Safety in Tilburg. They provide us yearly with extra funding to enable us to organise and execute the courses in a professional manner. At the same time we have started to work with other organisations in Tilburg that buy our courses. In 1999 we had 88 participants who, on the average, needed 15 bicycle lessons and 8 traffic regulations lessons to finally take part in traffic independently and safely.
3. The methodology of bicycle-riding

It’s strange but true: there is no description of how to teach an adult how to ride a bicycle, at least not in the Netherlands. We have devised a planning in phases which teachers can use to determine which step a certain participant can or should take, with the relevant exercises for each phase. There is much interest in our methodology in the Netherlands. We have searched for more funding so we could have an instructional videotape made. This video is meant for instructors and course providers. We aim to distribute this tape in the Netherlands in the autumn of 2000.

4. The reasons to take bicycle lessons.

All applicants for the bicycle course come voluntarily. Unlike the lessons in the Dutch language bicycle lessons are, strangely enough, not obligatory. The people who come to our centre are from highly different backgrounds. There are women from many different nationalities, such as Moroccan, Turkish, Somalian, West Indian, Iraqi and Iranian women as well as women from Afghanistan, Venezuela, Portugal, Greece and Ghana. Some are young girls, others young women and some are elderly. Some have a high level of education and others have not ever followed a course. There are working women, housewives, women looking for jobs, students. Some women are sportswomen; others have never practised a sport. All these women have different reasons to wish to learn how to ride a bicycle.

Juliet from Liberia says: “Biking is good for me, I would have problems getting transport if I did not ride a bike. My husband had to come and pick me up when my work was done, and the children would be alone at home, sleeping. Now I can bike home on my own. The bus is too expensive, too.”

Lanny from Indonesia says: “It is good for your health and it is important to be able to cycle in Holland. It is also good and nice in a social way.”

5. What about foreign men and boys? Don’t they want to learn how to ride a bike?

99% of bicycle courses in the Netherlands are organised for women. For many years this has been taken for granted. The stereotype image is that women should be lured from their isolation, that they were often not allowed to engage in activities such as bicycling, etcetera. Now that the courses for women are getting more publicity and people are beginning to recognise their success and value, men are asking to be involved as well. The well-established view that foreign women apply for courses and information from a disadvantaged position does not appear to hold true, rather they have a head start. Presently we are working towards courses in bicycle-riding and traffic regulations for men and boys as well.

6. What is the scale of things we are talking about?

So far, no research has been done on the phenomenon of bicycle courses and lessons about traffic regulations in the Netherlands. As to the scale of the activities I can only make an educated guess based on the information I have. There are 220 centres, (these are community centres, centres for women, centres for refugees etc.) that I know of where such courses are given to foreigners. My estimation is that, on the average, 20 people are taught at every centre.
This means that at least 4400 foreigners follow a bicycle course in the Netherlands every year. In most places there is a lack of funding and there are not enough good teachers. Time and money are wasted because people set out to re-invent the wheel, so to speak, and we aim to change all that. By publishing and distributing our methodology we hope to contribute to the improvement in quality of the courses elsewhere. Publication will also help to make the courses visible to a greater public and to show that they are essential for many foreigners if they wish to fully integrate in Dutch society.

7. Why have our courses received more interest and more subsidies only recently?

It has taken approximately fifteen years, from the early 1980s to 1996, for our courses to get the necessary extra subsidies that allowed us to organise and execute them in a professional manner. In many places in the Netherlands there is still no extra budget to do so. I would like to list, briefly, a number of possible reasons for this rather lukewarm appreciation of the work:

• Civil servants, politicians and sociological researchers do not know the phenomenon ‘bicycle and traffic lessons’ exists;

• The position of foreign women and their organisations in Dutch society is marginal and nigh invisible;

• In general, road safety is approached in terms of physical measures instead through an educational approach;

• Bicycling is simply too common in the Netherlands, most people did not stop to think that there might be people who do not know how to or dare to get on a bike;

• The attitude of many larger organisations for foreigners in the Netherlands, bicycles are seen as low-status and therefore has a low priority;

• For cycling organisations, on the other hand, stimulating foreigners to ride a bicycle has a low priority.

8. Invitation and recommendations

We would like to invite all policy makers, managers and politicians to think along with us and help diminish the gap between theory and practice. Where stimulating foreigners to ride bicycles is seen by many as worthwhile, few actually take steps to make it happen in practice. This is a pity as knowledge of the subject and experience in teaching it have been built up over the years. We ask everybody to make use of this knowledge and experience and of the network we have built up. We would like to recommend the following:

1. For City Councils and organisations both within the Netherlands and abroad: Do not try to re-invent the wheel but contact us. We offer course materials, training and workshops, which we can apply to the local situation. In many places bicycle courses are already given. Support these courses with the money needed to provide good quality.
2. For organisations in countries where women generally do not ride bicycles. Use our methodology and our materials in as far as they are applicable to the local situation. We will be glad to advise you concerning this. We like to share our knowledge and experience with other people!

Notes:

1. We are no longer dealing with migrants exclusively, but with growing numbers of people from the West Indies and Surinam and refugees from all over the world. This is why we choose to speak of ‘foreigners’ in this paper.

2. Besides foreigners, many Dutch people do not dare (any longer) to cycle. Among these people are persons with a phobia, mentally impaired people, elderly people and others who, for one reason or the other have not cycled for a while. For them the hectic traffic of today is quite forbidding.

Cycling in the Pacific Northwest

Loek Hesemans, November 2007

Summary: The Netherlands is a cycling country par excellence. In no other country does cycling contribute to the total amount of traffic like it does in the Netherlands. According to estimates published by the Dutch Ministry of Transport, Public Works and Water Management in 2007, cycling accounts for 27 per cent of all trips taking place in the country on any given day. Yet Dutch cities can learn a trick or two from North American cities like Vancouver (British Columbia, Canada) and Portland (Oregon, United States), which may not boast as many cyclists, but could certainly inspire us to take interesting, less obvious steps to promote cycling, precisely because their infrastructure, public administration and culture are so different from ours. That the prominent place the bike holds in Dutch society cannot be taken for granted is obvious from the fact that certain sections of the population, like immigrants and schoolchildren, are increasingly less keen to ride bikes. Cycling safety is another reason for concern. Actions taken to promote bike usage have proven to be quite effective. Research undertaken by the Dutch Social and Cultural Planning Office (2006) indicates that municipalities boasting good cycling infrastructure and a well-developed cycling culture have a larger number of cyclists (including immigrants) than other places. So it seems that even in a traditionally cycling-mad place like the Netherlands the number of cyclists may rise further.

During my study tour of North America I came across some forty aspects which proved to be either beneficial or detrimental to bike use in that part of the world. A number of these maybe conducive to our own promotion of cycling, such as cheap infrastructure solutions and the sophisticated marketing programmes used, all designed to promote cycling. Furthermore, I found it interesting to see how North American policy-makers link cycling to local, national and international political themes like climate change, air quality and traffic congestion, and to personal issues such as body weight and health.
Another notable feature of North American cycling policy is the way it caters to creative professionals, who are most likely to be drawn to the ‘alternative lifestyle’ that is cycling in North America. Finally, I was fascinated to learn what cycling means to various North American subcultures. On the other hand, I found it quite shocking to witness the negative aspects to which car-focused societies are prone; landscape pollution, noise and bad air quality can be found all over the United States and Canada. Experts warn that free public transport will decrease the number of people who cycle rather than drive to their destinations. Furthermore, it seems that linking cycling to a certain group identity may be off-putting to newcomers or outsiders. The same appears to be true for linking cycling to a specific national identity.

I would like to recommend the following things: (1) drawing up a position paper outlining all the benefits attendant on significantly increased bike use in the Netherlands; (2) choosing a subtle approach when promoting cycling among certain sections of the population; and (3) more fully integrating various government policies on politically and socially relevant issues which would benefit from increased bike use.

**Motivation**

Cycling is an inextricable part of Dutch culture. It is such a regular part of our daily lives that we hardly ever think about its many advantages, like efficient use of available space, sustainability, environment-friendliness, road safety and health benefits (Page, 2005). We more or less regard these things as nice bonuses, rather than reasons to get on our bikes in the first place. Yet a number of developments indicate that grabbing a bike to go somewhere is no longer the self-evident course of action it once was for the Dutch. According to the National Mobility Monitor, a document published annually by the Ministry of Transport, Dutch bike usage has gone down in recent years, although the number is still within normal ranges of fluctuation. Amsterdam schoolchildren of Turkish and Moroccan descent are less likely to cycle than their native peers and previous generations (Department for Research and Statistics, 2003).

Fewer primary school pupils now walk or cycle to school, and according to the Dutch Road Safety Association, the number of schools holding road user examinations has declined to 50 per cent (2007). Although the number of general traffic accidents has decreased over the past few years, the number of accidents involving cyclists has remained virtually unchanged for several years (Ministry of Transport, Public Works and Water Management, 2007). Equally strikingly, cycling has not been explicitly proposed as a possible solution to the traffic congestion problem which has been a hot topic of discussion ever since the Ministry of Transport announced that the number of traffic jams had increased by 11 per cent over the course of one year. However, on a local and regional level, cycling-related solutions are being developed (e.g. intercity cycle routes), and the government is looking into cycling as a means to beat the traffic jams – see the Randstad Urgent project, a policy document outlining how to improve mobility and curb congestion in the Netherlands’ densely populated Randstad area.
Since we can no longer count on Dutch children being brought up to ride bikes as a matter of course, it is interesting to look at countries where cycling has never been a big part of life, like Canada and the United States—two countries which differ from the Netherlands in terms of culture, scenery (more geographical relief), spatial planning, town planning and road-building. Thanks to these differences, Canada and the United States have come up with solutions which may not look applicable to the Netherlands at first glance, but from which our cycling policy may stand to benefit. Both Vancouver and Portland—the two North American cities I visited—are known in their respective countries for being cycle-friendly places which are actively promoting cycling. In short, cycling is not the alien activity there which it seems to be in other parts of North America.

Armed with a number of questions (previously evaluated in the Netherlands) regarding local cycling policies, I examined Portland’s and Vancouver’s cycling policies and cycling-promoting programmes, and examples thereof. During the course of my trip I spoke to forty policy-makers, scientists, representatives of NGOs, consultants, politicians, artists and civilians and attended meetings and events in both cities. Furthermore, I cycled, observed cyclists and had a look at the local cycling facilities. Towards the end of my trip, I tested my findings in three presentations given before about one hundred persons interested in these matters. I returned home with a number of recommendations which have by now been evaluated by Dutch experts.

Findings

Why and how do the authorities promote cycling in Oregon and British Columbia? Cycling policy tends to be mainly a local affair in both Canada and the United States. In Portland the regional government, Metro, plays a major role in spatial planning, traffic and the environment. In Vancouver Translink, the transport authority for the Greater Vancouver metropolitan area, has a big finger in the pie, playing a prominent preparatory and executive part in the field of transport. In this capacity the two organisations play an important role in the planning of cycling infrastructure, together with municipal, county or provincial and state authorities. Both Vancouver and Portland have long-term municipal plans governing bike traffic. As part of these plans, local authorities are making streets and roads more cycle-friendly. In Portland, after first equipping important thoroughfares with cycle lanes, they have now linked several roads so as to create entire cycle routes.

Usually these roads are linked by streets with low traffic density, some of which may only be accessible to slow traffic. In some cases these routes have been equipped with traffic lights serving cyclists, signposts and other marks indicating the presence of cycle lanes. The robust street grid in East Portland made it relatively easy to create these “bike boulevards”, whereas in West Portland more challenges arose due to the hills and absence of grid. Newer neighbourhoods, with their capricious structure and cul de sacs are also more difficult to open up and connect for bicycles.

Vancouver started with local street facilities, which were easier to implement there. Reallocation of road space away from cars proved to be more of a political challenge and has been done more recently. Both
cities are currently experimenting with segregated cycleways. Especially in West Portland these might prove to be a safe alternative for the East side “bike boulevards”.

When building new districts and regenerating older neighbourhoods, Portland (and to a lesser extent Vancouver) systematically takes into account safe routes for slow traffic, making sure there is easy and safe access to places like hospitals, universities, shopping centres and public transport hubs. Additionally, the two cities have created recreational routes (with special cycling facilities) for slow traffic, some of which either follow along or replace former railway tracks. Some of these attractive, quiet and green routes are suitable for commuter cycling. The routes are scheduled for expansion, but this is a time-consuming and costly process, due to the expropriation of property and the amount of administrative hassle involved.

Due to the low budgets available for the building and maintenance of cycling facilities, policy-makers have had to come up with inventive, resourceful and effective ‘low-tech/low-cost’ solutions which can be built and maintained at little expense. Portland has been especially successful at this. Bridges and tunnels may constitute an obstacle to cyclists. Thanks to the county government, which is in charge of river crossings, Portland has successfully opened bridges to cyclists. Vancouver offers a shuttle service to help cyclists cross a major tunnel, though some experts feel it is a rather limited, unsatisfactory stopgap solution. Both Vancouver and Portland allow cyclists to take their bikes on public transport (including buses) for no additional fare.

Both Vancouver and Portland have social marketing programmes designed to stimulate bike usage. Portland boasts the effective municipal ‘Smart Trips’ programme, which helps interested parties pick a transport modality that suits their purposes (which may or may not be cycling) and take all the steps required to start using it. For one person this may involve getting a map detailing all the cycle routes in the area, whereas another person maybe taken on a guided tour by bike. Portland has adolescents from socially and economically disadvantaged backgrounds repair second-hand bicycles in community centres; they may then use these bikes to find a job. Both cities have many NGOs and civil servants who are convinced that people must be encouraged to ride bikes more often and that cycling requires certain technical skills. They have an eye for perceived hindrances (e.g. safety issues, transpiration caused by exercise, hairdos suffering from compulsory helmets) and are on hand to provide safety advice and practical tips regarding personal appearance (e.g. what to wear when cycling, how to keep one’s hair from getting tousled, how to minimise transpiration, etc.).

Many experts regard pushing back motor traffic as a way to promote other forms of transport, like cycling. In an effort to curb motor traffic, the city of Vancouver has closed certain parts of the grid (the characteristic pattern of perpendicularly intersecting streets and roads that characterises many North American cities) to motor traffic in favour of slower traffic. Furthermore, it has made both driving and parking a car relatively expensive, compared with Portland (and other cities). The city is considering implementing a road user charging scheme and insurance premiums determined on the basis of actual car use. Since the business community opposes plans to partly or entirely close roads to motor traffic, the latter is a politically sensitive issue. It does not help either that making it happen would involves one
lengthy and fairly complicated procedures. For its part, the city of Portland has stopped building new motorways. The turning point came in the 1970s, with the remarkable transformation of Harbor Drive (now Waterfront Park).

Both Vancouver and Portland are considering introducing sponsored public bikes (so-called ‘community bikes’), like the ones used in Paris and Vienna. However, this would involve certain troublesome practical, financial and legal issues, like liability in the event of accidents, compulsory safety helmets and the fact that the market is quite saturated when it comes to outdoor advertising (for which sponsored bikes would be an excellent medium).

What is in favour of cycling is the fact that community interest in the environment, livability, social coherence and dependence on fossil fuel has increased significantly over the past few years. Climate change and sustainable living are hot topics, especially in Vancouver. Canada’s per-capita emissions of greenhouse gases are very high. Climate change, whose effects can be seen clearly in the country, frequently makes headlines. Vancouver’s local authorities are promoting cycling as a cheap alternative to car use which will also improve people’s health and increase livability and density. This is all part of an ambitious plan to increase ecodensity (http://www.vancouver-ecodensity.ca).

Most people I consulted considered local infrastructure unconducive to cycling, claiming it is not sufficiently bike-friendly. Other factors playing a part in the locals’ reluctance to take up cycling include flagging investments in road maintenance (notably in Portland), the car-friendly way in which towns are laid out, the lack of road safety and the locals’ attachment to cars and spacious homes. The latter is related to the high premium North Americans place on convenience and comfort (more on this later). All over North America one can witness examples of unbridled low-density suburban development (sprawl) and its effects. Portland is one of few cities in North America which has passed sprawl-restricting legislation – the ‘Urban Growth Boundary’. Sprawl increases people’s dependence on cars and renders public transport rather inefficient. Many civilians and politicians alike would like to see urban sprawl curtailed. A combination of higher urban density and two-wheeled transport rather than four-wheeled transport would be a step in the right direction.

Portland likes to call itself the USA’s No. 1 city for cyclists and is receiving praise for its achievements. It is very interested in the economic benefits associated with cycling: tourism, the bicycle-manufacturing industry, provision of services, and attracting creative professionals so as to boost life in the city.

How does scientific research contribute to the development of cycling policy?

Both the University of British Columbia (UBC) in Vancouver and Portland State University (PSU) in Oregon offer research programmes investigating alternative means of transport, like cycling and walking. Vancouver boasts the ambitious UBC-based ‘Cycling in Cities’ study (http://www.cher.ubc.ca/cyclingincities). UBC’s Faculty of Medicine is investigating factors influencing the likelihood of people taking up cycling as a means of urban transport. For its part, Portland’s School of Urban Studies and Planning is conducting a multi-faceted study into travelling habits which also involves cycling (http://web.pdx.edu/~jdill/research.htm).
What role do NGOs and the business community play in all this?

NGOs are cycling’s main advocates and supporters. They play a vital and active part in promoting cycling in both Vancouver and Portland, advocating better cycling facilities and cycling infrastructure and marketing cycling to the masses. In Vancouver, the Vancouver Area Cycling Coalition (VACC), subsidised by the municipal authorities and Translink, teaches commuters cycling skills, while another prominent advocate of cycling, BEST (Better Environmentally Sound Transportation), is collaborating with the local authorities to raise employers’ and employees’ awareness of the benefits of cycling as a form of commuter traffic. For its part, Oregon has its Bike Commute Challenge (a competition revolving around the number of times employees go to work by bike), organised by the Bicycle Transportation Alliance (BTA) and sponsored by local authorities and the business community. In addition to ‘official’ NGOs, there are many other organisations acting in cyclists’ interests. Many of these are of a temporary and activist nature, frequently lacking in formal structure. Examples of such groups and their activities include the Portland Zoobombers (who ride their minibikes down the long, steep hills in the vicinity of the Zoo) and the monthly Critical MassTours (involving huge crowds cycling through the city centre, thus rendering other traffic virtually impossible).

As one might expect, those sectors of the business community which have a stake in the cycling industry (like bicycle retailers and bike hire companies) play their part in promoting cycling, sponsoring cycling events (about two thousand a year of them in Portland!) and contributing financially to the professionalisation of Portland’s BTA. Bicycle retailing tends to be a highly specialised business. The ‘bicycle repairman next door’, a common phenomenon in the Netherlands, is considerably less common in North America. Both British Columbia and Oregon have consultants who advise and support the local authorities in developing and implementing cycling policy, like the Victoria Transport Policy Institute (VTPI) in British Columbia and Alta Planning in Oregon.

Despite a few success stories, local business communities in both Vancouver and Portland fear a decrease in turnover if streets are closed to cars in favour of cyclists. The Vancouver business community appears to be slightly more optimistic than its Portland counterpart, possibly because Vancouver’s Commercial Drive boasts pedestrian-only days on which shopkeepers report their largest sales of the year.

What is local cycling culture like in British Columbia and Oregon?

Both Vancouver and Portland have quite a few subcultures and groups for whom cycling is a way of life – a way to express their identity. Some of these groups are advocacy groups; others stress the recreational and social aspects of cycling. In some cases their purpose is to create a sense of togetherness, of companions in adversity finding support with each other. On the one hand, such groups may encourage newcomers to take up cycling themselves; on the other hand they may put prospective cyclists off as they tend to be so ‘different’ that budding cyclists may well be scared off. Therefore, NGOs and civil servants would like to establish a more diverse, utilitarian cycling culture, to which more people would be likely to be attracted. The existing pressure groups grew out of the locals’ strong sense of
engagement (engaged citizenry), which is especially prevalent in Portland. In its turn, this sense of engagement is a result of the widely held belief that civilians must tackle problems themselves, raising society’s and politicians’ awareness of those problems in the process. Sometimes members of subcultures and pressure groups end up having successful careers in NGOs, consultancies, policy-making or politics. However, such career switches require considerable skills which members of cycling-loving subcultures do not necessarily have, such as the ability to empathise with cycling novices and a business-like attitude.

Cycling is still considered a dangerous activity in both Vancouver and Portland. Fascinatingly enough, this reputation both attracts people (who then continue to break all the rules) and puts them off. Many people regard cycling as a sport or a form of exercise rather than as a way to get from one point to another. People on racing bikes give off a serious and competitive impression, which ties in nicely with the high premium North Americans place on athletic bodies (the body cult) and achievement. Not everybody likes that kind of thing, which makes cycling an unattractive activity for some.

Cycling in North America is clearly a leftist thing, although it ties in with conservative North American values like independence, freedom and the ability to manage for oneself. However, it seems that the convenience and comfort provided by cars exert a stronger pull.

How do the Canadian and American public regard government actions to promote cycling?

Studies conducted in Vancouver and Portland indicate that the public likes the idea of cycling as an alternative means of transport; they would like to cycle more. They particularly like the idea of getting some exercise this way, with all the health benefits attendant on this. Most civilians do not object to the government investing more in cycling infrastructure. However, they do not seem to take into account the fact that this would involve higher taxes and measures to curb motor traffic, which experts deem necessary to achieve better cycling infrastructure.

Most civilians appreciate the authorities’ attempts to promote cycling. Portland’s Smart Trips team is actually quite popular. Studies conducted in Vancouver and Portland indicate that there are many more potential cyclists out there than can be found on the streets today. Sadly, there are quite a few factors conspiring to keep them off their bikes, many of which are beyond civilians’ control. In both Portland and Vancouver, a perceived lack of safety has been found to be the main reason why people do not cycle more. And for good reason—Canadian cyclists are twice as likely to get killed in a road accident as their Dutch counterparts, whereas American cyclists are a whopping six times more likely to get killed on the road. Furthermore, North American cyclists are twenty to thirty times more likely to get injured than their Dutch counterparts (Pucher and Buehler, 2006, and Pucher and Dijkstra, 2003).

Traffic offences are subject to strict legislation in North America. Cyclists who ignore stop signs are fined as heavily as motorists committing the same offence, and the fines can be astronomical. Some people consider this harsh treatment of cyclists unfair, pointing out that cyclists are more vulnerable than motorists and therefore more likely to pay a heavy price in the event of accidents. For some people these strict laws and their enforcement might be a reason not to take up cycling. Other safety
precautions have been taken, as well. Portland has made cycling helmets compulsory for children under sixteen. In Vancouver all cyclists are supposed to wear helmets, although enforcement of the law is lax. Compulsory helmets are hardly a subject of discussion. Although cyclists can see their disadvantages, protection from harm appears to be the greater concern. Due to the relative vulnerability of cyclists and the North American tendency to sue for damages in the event of accidents, there is now a kind of lawyer specialised in cycling and liability: the ‘cycling solicitor’.

Many politicians now pay lip service to the importance of cycling, claiming it should be a spear point of transport policy. However, there is some doubt as to their willingness to foot the bill for all the steps that will have to be taken to promote cycling. In addition, reduced access for cars (perceived or genuine) continues to be a hot topic in politics. Case in point: Burrard Bridge, one of Vancouver’s main bridges, where a narrow slow-traffic lane used by cyclists and pedestrians alike was to be turned into a broad dedicated cycle lane. It was agreed that one car lane would be turned into a cycle lane. However, political support for these plans was later withdrawn. On the other hand, one Portland mayor candidate is explicitly seeking support from the ‘cycling community’, whose interests he promoted as an alderman. Due to politicians’ and administrators’ ambiguous attitude, it will be a while before the city’s ‘critical mass’ of cyclists gets sufficiently numerous to force a breakthrough. Although civil servants and NGOs believe bikes account for almost 10 per cent of all transport taking place in the Portland city centre and in certain parts of Vancouver, cycling does not register in the cities as a whole, least of all in terms of commuter traffic. Bikes account for only 1.9 per cent of all commuter traffic taking place in the Greater Vancouver area. In the Greater Portland area the number is 0.8 per cent (Pucher and Buehler, 2006). However, a very recent census carried out in Portland indicates a sharp increase in bike use.

Apparently bicycles now account for 3.5 per cent of all commuter traffic taking place in the city (Yardley, 2007).

Analysis

This analysis will focus on several aspects either conducive to or hindering the promotion of cycling, and the extent to which they benefit or impede the acceptance of cycling. I have divided them into several categories: infrastructure, culture, safety and convenience, administrative aspects, tie-up with political themes, financial aspects, and public transport. Afterwards I will discuss the extent to which Dutch cycling policy may benefit from these aspects or be negatively affected by them. You will find the most beneficial and a few potentially harmful aspects listed below. For a complete overview, please turn to Appendix I.

Seven aspects from which Dutch cycling policy might benefit considerably (in alphabetical order):

Accessibility/congestion. People at both sides of the political spectrum consider lack of accessibility and congestion serious problems. Cycling rather than driving a car constitutes one solution to these problems.
Attracting creative professionals. Many cities regard the presence of a ‘creative class’ as a prerequisite for vibrant city life. In order to attract creative professionals (who are more likely to cycle than most other North Americans), cities should market themselves as being bicycle-friendly places.

Bike-on-bus schemes (possibly no additional fare). Being able to take bikes on board public transport helps cyclists surmount natural as well as infrastructural barriers. It improves the quality of longer journeys by public transport as it enables people to get to public transport junctions and back home in a fast, pleasant and independent manner. Furthermore, it is nice to be able to take one's bike on board public transport when the weather turns nasty or in the event of other unforeseen circumstances. Although expansion of this facility (which is at present rather limited in the Netherlands) is fraught with practical problems, it is an idea worth contemplating.

Climate change/emission of greenhouse gases. If more people grab a bike rather than drive a car, fewer greenhouses gases will be emitted. This will help even countries where cycling is already quite popular, like the Netherlands, achieve their greenhouse gas targets.

Critical mass/number of cyclists. Experts agree that the more cyclists there are, the safer roads tend to be. This is an additional benefit to having more cyclists on the road. This approach is as politically interesting for the Netherlands as it is for other, less traditionally cycling-minded countries.

Health/fitness/a healthy body weight/livability/air quality. It turns out that many people are unaware of the health benefits attendant on cycling, or of the fact that cycling may help them lose weight and contribute to improved air quality. There should be more emphasis on the fact that there is a connection between these things – that cycling to work or to the shops has a direct, demonstrably beneficial effect on people’s health and body weight. Furthermore, it should be stressed that cycling rather than driving a car clearly improves livability (in that it reduces noise) and air quality in cities and villages alike.

Low-tech/low-cost solutions. Proper cycling infrastructure does not necessarily require radical and expensive changes to roads, nor expensive traffic signals or signposts. Cheaper alternatives include the clever linking-up of cycle routes as parts of networks, closing roads to motor traffic but keeping them open to cyclists, taking steps to reduce motor traffic in certain streets, providing cyclists with ways to cross barriers such as bridges, hills and tunnels, special shuttles which carry cyclists and their bikes from one place to another (e.g. from one end of a tunnel to the other) and sharing traffic lanes.

Special attention for practical objections of a personal nature. Not everyone is an experienced, tough, seasoned and fit cyclist. Furthermore, looking presentable is a prerequisite for most jobs. It is important that budding cyclists' insecurities regarding their level of fitness or the effects cycling may have on their appearance are taken seriously and obviated.

Subcultures. Subcultures cater to the human need to belong to one group while distinguishing oneself from other groups. Subcultures use certain items, honour certain heroes, observe certain rituals and tell each other certain stories in order to create group spirit. Cycling can constitute an important part of
their identity. We might want to try and target specific Dutch subcultures, tailoring the image of cycling to these groups’ experience and need to distinguish themselves from other subcultures. Several widely divergent groups could be targeted, such as inner-city teens of Moroccan descent and VVD [Dutch Liberal Party] voters. (According to Fietsbalans, published by the Dutch Cyclists’ Union in 2007, few people ride bikes in towns where the VVD is well represented.) However, if cycling is targeted to such subcultures, newcomers may be put off, as many subcultures are close-knit units which may not seem too inviting at first.

I will now list three aspects which may pose a threat to cycling in the Netherlands (listed alphabetically):

Free public transport. Experts agree that people need safe, high-quality public transport rather than free public transport. According to a report published by the Dutch Cyclists’ Union in 2007, public transport constitutes a rival to cycling. Then there is the fact that free public transport may attract less desirable customers, such as homeless people, drug addicts and pickpockets. It is important that policymakers take the undesirable consequences of free public transport into account when formulating their policies.

Linking cycling to a specific identity (national or otherwise). Explicitly linking cycling to a specific group identity can be a risky enterprise, as such a group identity may act like a barrier which can be hard to break down for newcomers or outsiders. The same is true for linking cycling to a national identity, no matter how obvious this might seem to the cycling-mad Dutch public. In fact, such a tie-up may be counterproductive.

Prioritising easy access by car. Dutch society would do well to learn the lesson taught by North America, i.e. that more roads will only lead to increased suburbanisation, greater use of cars, more noise, more pollution, more congestion, deteriorating air quality and livability, and an increasingly unhealthy population. Every now and then Dutch town planners, traffic planners and politicians prioritise motor traffic without being even aware of it. In the end, cyclists and pedestrians always pay the price.

Recommendations

Some of the above-mentioned aspects have been incorporated into the following recommendations:

Drawing up a position document

I would recommend drawing up a position document outlining how Dutch society would benefit from a significantly increased (and seemingly attainable) level of bike use, paying special attention to subjects like air quality, noise pollution, health, traffic congestion, road safety, greenhouse gas emissions and the economy. One might also consider targeting the document to specific local groups and communities. Such a document should contain broad arguments palatable to both ends of the political spectrum, from which interested parties might draw examples when discussing cycling in social and political debates, policy documents and other products concerning these subjects.

Subtly promoting cycling
When targeting specific sections of the population to promote bike use over car use, opt for a subtle, untraceable, low-profile approach which caters to the target group’s wish to distinguish itself from other groups. This could involve special bikes and gear (items), events (rituals), role models (heroes) and deploying media frequently used by the target group (stories). Be prepared for potentially undesirable consequences.

Linking themes and borrowing themes from elsewhere

Both current and future government policy should explicitly link cycling to other politically and socially relevant themes which would benefit from increased bicycle use. This is especially true for the social marketing component. The more frequently people hear a message, the more likely it is to stick, because of the power of repetition.