

# Utrecht

## A bicycle friendly city



Gemeente Utrecht

Utrecht  we all cycle



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# Utrecht – A bicycle friendly city

A medieval city that was originally built at a human scale, Utrecht refuses to set aside enormous amounts of space for cars. Instead our goal is to create room for commerce, community, and social connection. However there is a big challenge: Utrecht is the fastest-growing Dutch city with fast expanding urban mobility. The city has to facilitate this within the same limited public space and a denser built environment.

## How to maintain the human scale in this fast-growing bicycle-friendly city?

In order to maintain the human scale we have created a sustainable mobility plan that gives way to the most efficient modes of transport in terms of public space. This means that we prioritize pedestrians, cyclists and public transport. This transition resulted in a well-developed bicycle infrastructure and encourages us to take the next step in bicycle-friendly urban development, such as:

- building shared space solutions at busy streets and spaces
- reduce parking space to less than 0.3 car / house to boost the transition from car ownership to mobility as a service
- restore the attractiveness of public space in the area surrounding the biggest railway hub of the country
- expand the capacity of (regional) bicycle routes and parking facilities to increase the percentage of people getting to work by bicycle and train

On the following pages you will find some inspiring projects and initiatives to illustrate how we are working to achieve our goals.

# Healthy Urban Design

The Dafne Schippers Bridge for cycling and walking connects the districts of Leidsche Rijn and Oog in Al over the Amsterdam-Rhine canal. It has significantly improved the infrastructure between the two districts. The bridge is named after famous Dutch athlete Dafne Schippers who grew up in Oog in Al. The design of the bridge allows for an integrated urban area with the most spectacular element being the ramp of the bridge that also functions as a roof of a primary school.





The Dafne Schippers Bridge, a combination of functional, innovative, and healthy urban planning









The Dafne Schippers Bridge, a combination of functional, innovative, and healthy urban planning



Smakkelaarsveld, this parking facility located in the public space will disappear when the Stationspleinsstalling fully opens. This area will be converted into a high-quality city park where living and greenery come together.

With over 125,000 cyclists going to the city centre every day, Utrecht's bikeways are among the busiest of the Netherlands. This has made Utrecht one of the world leaders when it comes to building bicycle parkings and facilitating cyclists in innovative ways.

The largest bicycle parking in the world, the Stationsplein Parking, is situated at the largest public-transport hub in the Netherlands, with a capacity of 12,500. In total some 22,000 high-quality public bicycle parking places will be realised in the new Utrecht Central Station area. Our goal is to have cyclists park in bicycle parkings at prime locations close to the station entrances, which keeps our public spaces liveable and attractive.



The largest public-transport hub in the Netherlands deserves the largest bicycle parking in the world: the Stationsplein Parking on the east side of the Central Station.





Fully open in 2019 with a capacity of 12,500 places.



# Utrecht Central Station area

The busiest cycling route of the Netherlands, the Vredenburg route, seen from above. A total average of 33,000 cyclists pass every day in two directions. The peak is a staggering 47,000 cyclists per day.



The Vredenburg route; Netherlands' busiest cycle route.






The Jaarbeursplein has undergone a complete makeover in recent years.





Utrecht Central Station area



The Jaarbeursplein behind the railway station has been given a complete makeover. Before it was a place where nobody wanted to stay and it was packed with some 5,000 bicycles. Today, the Jaarbeursplein is an attractive square, ready to be used for events and functioning as the entrance to the railway station on the fast-growing western part of the city. We created the Jaarbeursplein bicycle parking for 5,000 places. The main artery along the square, Croese laan, has been closed for through traffic. At the same time we realised our most sustainable bike path here. Westplein has been transformed as well, as you can see in the pictures from on the following pages.





Utrecht Central Station area

The Jaarbeursplein bicycle parking, with 5,000 places on the west side of the Central Station.



Croeselaan, where our most sustainably produced bike path is being realised, is closed for through traffic.



Westplein, close to the Jaarbeursplein, has also been transformed in the past 50 years.



# Complete redesign for more allure in historical centre

The Mariaplaats is a historical street in the centre of Utrecht. After discussing the redevelopment of this street with local residents and shop owners we decided to get rid of all the parking spaces, broaden the pavements and make the street bicycle friendly. Afterwards shop owners reported an increase in sales. This example aided decision making in other projects where we fundamentally want to change the use of public space.





Complete redesign

The Mariaplaats has been redeveloped after conversations with local residents and shop owners.



2015





The refurbished Twijnstraat is located in the museum district, and is the oldest shopping street in Utrecht.



Malie- and Tolsteegsingel have been redesigned: more spacious for cyclists and pedestrians because the asphalt was replaced by a strip with stones in the middle and two strips of asphalt on the sides.



Utrecht is improving the cycling network and filling in any missing links. The number of cyclists in the city is very high. Because it is impossible to keep on widening the bicycle paths on main routes and in the congested city centre, we are working on routes that avoid busy areas, like a cycling ring around the historic city centre. This will give cyclists an alternative route along the restored canal system. With the car losing its dominant position on these roads, the number of cyclists has increased rapidly on this alternative route. More living space has been created around the historic canals in this way.







Artist impression Malieblad: a missing link in the cycling ring around the historical city centre.





Utrecht invests in several main entrance streets from the east into the downtown area. These extraordinary projects have been developed together with local residents, shop owners, the university, the cycling union and many others. What makes it very special is that despite the divergent interests, in the end almost everybody agreed on the changes that should be made, like a reduction of (parking) space for cars and more priority given to pedestrians and cyclists.



Artist's impression plan Voorstraat.



Current situation Nachtegaalstraat.



Artist's impressions plan Nachtegaalstraat.





Artist's impressions plan Burgemeester Reigerstraat.





Current situation Burgemeester Reigerstraat.



Oosterkade and Westerkade 2019.

**This historical southern part of the city centre nowadays serves as an important connection between the new railway station Vaartsche Rijn and the Museum district. In the plan both streets will be redesigned to facilitate the influx of restaurants and shops. The pavements will be widened, with fewer parking spaces and the bicycle will be the most important user.**



Artist's impressions of the redevelopment of Oosterkade and Westerkade.







1939

Bleekstraat, rail viaduct – 50 metres from the new Utrecht Vaartsche Rijn railway station.



2019



Utrecht Vaartsche Rijn is a completely new railway station at the southern tip of the old medieval city. This station is developing into a mayor hub for traveling towards the university complex by tram. And of course there are plenty of bicycle parking facilities. The old photo shows a mix of all kinds of transport modes. Nowadays these are separated. In this area, that is increasingly becoming part of the city centre, we will probably reverse the situation and start mixing traffic again.

# Redesign parts of residential areas

This square used to be an intersection dominated by (car) traffic. To redesign it, the city used the perspective of local users of the public space and worked together with local stakeholders like entrepreneurs. One part of this intersection has been transformed into shared space. Cars, bicycles, buses and pedestrians pay much more attention to each other than before.





Adriaan van Ostadelaan: one part of this intersection has been transformed into shared space.




These former train tracks are now a park and high-quality cycling route. It also connects two districts that were separated before. We were inspired by the High line in New York and now cyclists and pedestrians like to use this relaxing route.







The Oosterspoorbaan is a former train track that is redesigned in a park and high-quality cycling route.




**This former city ring road has been transformed from 2x2 lanes for cars into a 2x1 lane layout. The new 'city boulevard' is easier to cross and has a discouraging effect on traffic.**



't Goylaan: this new 'city boulevard' is easier to cross and has a discouraging effect on traffic.



# Utrecht bicycle streets



Since the turn of the millennium, Utrecht has created a number of important bicycle connections as bicycle streets. These are streets that are designed as a cycle route: comfortable asphalt, fast and safe. Cars are a guest here and their use is limited by the character and layout of the bicycle street. As no legal regulations for a bicycle street exist in the Netherlands, every municipality can for itself decide on the design of the local bicycle streets. They are often coloured red, just like cycle paths. When searching for new locations for a bicycle street, Utrecht must take the local circumstances for each bicycle street into account.





Two examples of bicycle streets: Leidseweg and Koekoekstraat.



# Regional bicycle connections

These are examples of comfortable, fast cycle routes extending in the region. We are now developing an integrated regional cycling network and are directing our investments towards projects that support our ambition to increase the use of (electric) bicycles up to distances of 20 kilometers. There is a lot of potential for commuters at this level.



Vechtdijk: a fast cycling route into the region.





Vechtdijk





# Digital road signs to find parking: P-route Bicycle

To better control the flow of cyclists on the cycle routes in the city centre, an innovative system to guide cyclists to free places in the bicycle parkings has been developed: the 'P-route Bicycle'. Utrecht is the first city in the world where such a system is being used for cyclists. The number of available places is monitored real time via smart software tools in combination with a detective system with optical sensors and is projected on digital road signs along the main cycle routes. A smartphone app is also available.







The Moreelsebrug is a bridge for cyclists and pedestrians between the city center and the west side of the city. The bridge is an important link in the network of main cycle routes.





Published on behalf of the Municipality of Utrecht  
[www.utrecht.nl/bicycle](http://www.utrecht.nl/bicycle)

**Photography**

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Utrechts Archief  
Sylvia Wink

**Printed by**

De Bondt - Barendrecht

**Design & productions**

Utrege Ontwerpers / Lawine visuele communicatie

2019





The Stationsplein Parking: the largest bicycle parking in the world with 12,500 places.



**Gemeente Utrecht**

*Utrecht  we all cycle*