

## **Sustainable road safety opportunities and threats for cyclists.**

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The theme of the Dutch policy on road safety for the coming years is 'sustainable safe traffic system' or 'sustainable road safety'. This approach is stronger than before preventive by nature. One of the principles of this approach is that road-users with large differences in vehicle speed, mass and direction of movement should not meet. When conflicts between road-users with large differences in vehicle speed, mass and direction of movement are desirable or unavoidable, road-speed has to be reduced to a maximum of 30 km/h. Apart from that, the sustainable safe traffic system strives for homogeneous and predictable use of the road network, thus preventing uncertainty amongst road users and enabling the behaviour of fellow road users to be anticipated.

For cyclists, sustainable road safety offers good opportunities but at the same time poses a number of strong threats. In this contribution these opportunities and threats will be mapped on the basis of Dutch experience. Aspects that will be addressed are:

- **More safety through large 30 km/h-zones**

Because of their vulnerability, cyclists have a large interest in lower maximum speeds for motor traffic. Besides the 'objective' safety, cyclists feel less intimidated by motorised vehicles at lower speeds. Cycling becomes more enjoyable.

The advantages are bigger when the 30 km/h-zones are larger. Preferably all frequent destinations of cyclists and pedestrians should be within the 30 km/h-zone. Consequently the complete built-up area should be a 30 km/h-zone.

- **Infrastructure barriers get bigger**

According to the principles of sustainable road safety, differences in vehicle speed, mass and direction of movement should be avoided. For roads that are categorised as 'distributors' that means that speed has to be reduced on crossroads to 30 km/h. On roads with a flow-function all conflicts such as crossing cyclists or pedestrians should be avoided. There are even those who suggest putting up fences. Consequently cyclists and pedestrians will be forced to make substantial detours.

- **Motor traffic more dominant though uniformity**

Striving for simplicity and uniformity is positive. Road-users know what to expect and can adjust their behaviour accordingly. There is however a big threat that the most dominant road user becomes even more dominant. Road categorisation is done on the basis of the function of a road for motor traffic. As a consequence bicycle routes will suffer.