

***'Advanced local policies'***

***'How to solve bicycle parking problems in densely populated inner cities'***

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**Utrecht, the heart of the Netherlands**

Utrecht is a large city with a population of just under a quarter of a million, situated in the heart of the Netherlands. It is a city of contrasts, with historical monuments and modern buildings alternating in the skyline. With its ideal central location, Utrecht has always attracted many individuals and businesses.

The city is expanding at the moment. Thirty thousand new homes are being built in a new development project along its western edge. More and more people will be travelling in and out of the city.

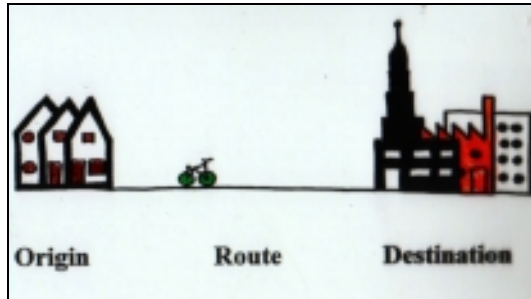
Long tailbacks build up on peripheral and access roads every day. Utrecht city council seeks to curb the growth of car traffic as much as possible. Through traffic is diverted along the arterial roads in order to relieve the residential districts. Car traffic in the historical city centre, with its intricate medieval street pattern, has been reduced significantly by changing the circulation pattern. Utrecht city council is investing in covered car parks at the edge of the city and in high-quality public transport. The council has also adopted a policy which aims to promote the use of the bicycle.

**Utrecht Cycling city**

Utrecht has always been a traditional cycling city, largely due to the abundance of students. Thirty thousand students are registered at the University and colleges of higher professional education alone. Most of the time they move around by bike. But there are also many people in Utrecht and the Greater Utrecht Area who commute or travel to the city centre by bicycle.

As result of the car restricted policy the use of the bicycle has increased dramatically in recent years. Its shar in the total number of movements has risen from 29 % to 34 % and to no less than 38 % with respect to transport into the city centre.

### Necessity of the bicycle parking policy

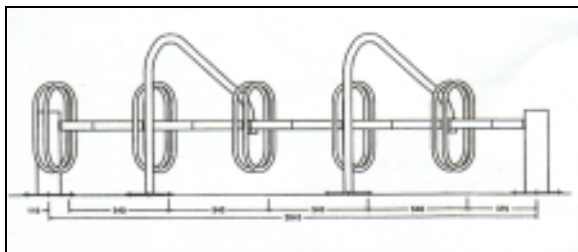


The base of the bicycle policy is of course the necessity to realise good bicycle connections (infrastructure). A good bicycle network alone, however, is really not enough. Good bicycle storage facilities (shelters) are needed as well. Without the provision of good bicycle shelters even an excellent network cannot be successful. So in order to stimulate bicycle use, there must be good bicycle connections as well as a good network of bicycle parking facilities.

Offering a good bicycle shelter network is also needed for other reasons, besides those mentioned above. It is important that people can find their bicycles (undamaged). Good parking facilities for bicycles largely ensure prevention of theft and vandalism. Moreover, they keep public areas tidy. At his moment, the city of Utrecht's image is damaged in a number of places by the large number of bicycles just parked at random. But still, great improvement has already taken place since the start of the nineties.

This makes it apparent that Utrecht is in need of a complete network of bicycle parking facilities. Good parking facilities for bicycles must be available throughout the city, not just in the centre.

### Bicycle parking concept



Mini

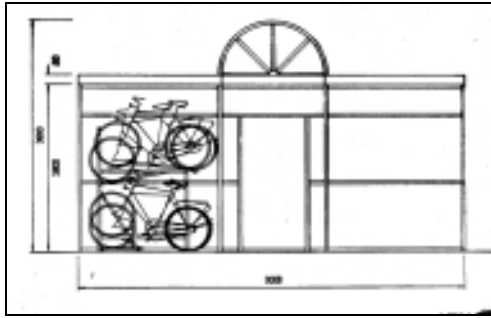
The bicycle parking policy in Utrecht recognises three main aims. Those are: to influence the modal split in favour of the bike, improvement of the quality of the open space and reduction of bicycle theft and vandalism.

In order to get a broader insight on the different parking needs, the consultancy offices *Wonen en Milieu* (Living and Environment) and the *SOAB* (Traffic and environment) have developed for the municipality of Utrecht a theoretical parking concept that is applicable at the origin as much as at the end of the trips.



Midi

Eighty per cent of the modal choice happens at the front door. By facilitating safe and accessible parking at the residence point, it is possible to influence the modal choice in favour of the bike. The neighbourhood parking planning starts, thus, by taking into consideration the need on bicycle parking facilities. And then, not only the current needs, but also the qualitative, quantitative and latent need.



Maxi

The concept takes the needs of the consumers as the centre of the approach. For the consumer there are three indicators essential: distance (D), costs (C) and Quality (Q). With these three indicators it is possible to make a DCQ scan for every point on the cycling chain. The three elements are mixed and transformed in hour parking sorts: Mini, Midi, Maxi and Mega



Mega

In the 80 year old quarter Vogelenbuurt, where the houses have no room to store bicycles, a test has been carried out. With the help of the DCQ-scan a network of bicycle parking facilities has been implemented, including proper parking shelters (maxi), bicycle drums on the street (midi) and clip-bows (mini).

### Typology of bicycle parking facilities

Type of parking	Provision	distance to the residence point of commuting or destination	with lock or guarded
Mini	bow or trap	almost at the front door or entrance	No
Midi	Cycle drum Form between trap and parking (1-10 bikes)	from 30 to 40 meter	with lock
Maxi	Parking (40-60 bikes)	up to 150 meter	with lock
Mega	big parking (>150 bikes)	up to 300 meter	with lock and guarded

#### Policy up to now

Up to now, the municipality has already achieved much. A large bicycle shelter was realised at Vredenburg square. The municipality has opened a bicycle shelter near the station and a large number of bicycle racks has been placed in the direct vicinity of the station (Stationsplein and Jaarbeursplein). In the residential areas a lot has also been done to improve bicycle parking. Not alone in the 'Vogelenbuurt' district, but, in other districts too, bicycle racks have also been placed and neighbourhood bicycle shelters opened.

## **Still much to be done**

Over recent years much has been done to improve bicycle parking. However, it remains necessary to heavily invest in bicycle parking facilities. A large demand for this continues. There are still places in the city where the street image is damaged by bicycles just parked at random. This applies to the centre as well as to residential areas. Great emphasis will be given to bicycle parking in future. This will be financed by subsidies on the one hand and by money made available from the Mobility Fund on the other. (The proceeds of car parks will be put into this mobility fund. Money in this fund will then be used for mobility projects, such as bicycle parking projects.)

In the coming years, the aim will be to provide bicycle parking facilities along the complete chain ('origin' (departure)-route-destination). At the departure point (residential districts), the same level of parking facilities must be provided as in the Vogelenbuurt district (racks, drums and neighbourhood bicycle shelters, if desired show sheet with example). An important part of this is the placing of approximately 30 bicycle drums in places where the need for bicycle parking is greatest and public space scarce.

The advantage of bicycle drums is that they are easy to place, easy to use and moveable (so they can be used in more locations). The disadvantage of bicycle drums is that they are costly, that they occupy parking spaces for cars and that they are relatively difficult to maintain.

## **Problems to solve**

Utrecht has gained a prominent position with regard to bicycle parking, but I will not conceal the fact that we, too, have our problems.

-In the past there often was a shortage of funding. Bicycle parking is difficult to make profitable; a large amount of investment funds is needed. Due to the availability of UNA funds (money made available from the sale of a factory that was owned by the municipality), the financial problem has now been solved.

-The lack of legislation is also a regular problem. It is difficult to pass laws or regulations restricting the parking of bicycles to bicycle racks or bicycle shelters. Action against random parking of bicycles is difficult (enforcement is difficult). Moreover, sufficient facilities for the parking of bicycles must be present (enough to meet demand), should the local authority wish to stop "wild parking" of bicycles. More attention will be given to this legal problem in future.

In realising bicycle parking facilities the saying "experience makes the best teacher" certainly applies.

## **Recommendations**

From the experience we have gained in Utrecht a number of recommendations can be made:

- a good bicycle parking policy lays the foundation for stimulating bicycle use;
- the approach to realising bicycle parking facilities must be just as professional as for car parking;
- in city centres, bicycle parking must be included in the overall mobility policy;
- in areas where building is planned, bicycle parking must be included from the beginning;
- renovations of (sections of) cities offer an excellent opportunity to improve bicycle parking;
- to meet the demands of users, it is continually necessary to come up with new and better solutions.

With these recommendations, we wish to end our presentation on bicycle parking in Utrecht. We hope it will inspire you in your own situation. We welcome you to visit our interesting and beautiful city.