

## NS Fiets BV

### Management of bicycle parking at Dutch railway stations

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### Introduction

Ladies and gentlemen, I am delighted to be here.

Firstly to tell you more about the vision of NS Stations in respect of bicycle sheds at stations. And secondly to tell you – as some of the very first to hear this information – a little more about NS Fiets BV, the company established on 31 May this year, by NS Stations.

NS Stations is responsible for the operation and management of stations in the Netherlands, and therefore also the bicycle parking facilities at stations.

Our motto is ‘Putting the passenger first’, and for bicycle facilities, that means:



We realised that to back up this motto, a separate specialist group of people will be necessary. And those people now form NS Fiets BV, a subject I will come back to later.

### The context

Did you know that in the Netherlands, every year, as many kilometres are travelled by bicycle as by train? ... In the Netherlands, the bicycle is not only a much used means of transport, but is also a very key link in the public transport chain. The Dutch railway companies have particularly large numbers of cyclists amongst their passengers. Approx. 30 percent of train passengers come to the station by bike. Approx. 10 percent leave stations by bike. And every year, there are more and more cycling passengers.



Particularly in the Dutch situation, it is essential there be sufficient, good quality, modern bicycle storage facilities at stations. As I am sure you can imagine, we are therefore delighted that the Ministry of Transport, Public Works and Water Management intends to invest 460 million guilders in station bicycle sheds over the next six years. For NS Stations, the investment by central government served as a ‘catalyst’ for adding new force to our own contribution to improving the combination between bike and train.

NS Stations is only one of the many players active on the ‘Dutch bicycle field’. For example there are also local and provincial governments, interest groups – such as the Cyclists’ Union – the transport companies and NS Railinfrabeheer. The roles played by all these parties and the interests they represent sometimes overlap. But sometimes they are not even parallel to one another. I am sure you recognise this situation.

Fortunately, there is enough which brings us together. Based on the interests of all parties, and of course the interests of the ‘cycling train passenger’, a number of structural improvements are clearly possible. To name but a few:

1. Encouraging the use of the sheds to ensure optimum return from central government funding.
2. Making the organisation for bicycle shed facilities at stations more transparent.
3. Operating these bicycle sheds on a non-profit basis.
4. Creating broad-based support by directly involving the affected parties in the drawing up of station bicycle facility policy.

### **A new independent company**

These points have resulted in the plan drawn up by NS Stations to place its bicycle activities in a new, independent company:

## **NS Fiets BV.**

NS Stations has issued its subsidiary company with the following mission:

*NS Fiets BV wishes to strengthen the position of bicycle users in the public transport chain, by offering bicycle facilities at transport hubs which provide sufficient capacity, quality and service, in a socially safe environment.*

Let us deal in greater detail with the meaning and elaboration of this mission.

### **M i s s i o n topics**

- bicycle users
- bicycle facilities
- transport hubs
- sufficient capacity, quality and service,
- safe environment.

As you can see, the customer – the bicycle user - is in the forefront.

We operate at *transport hubs*. We mean by this the 380 railway stations in the Netherlands, but in the future also possibly bus stations and car transfer points.

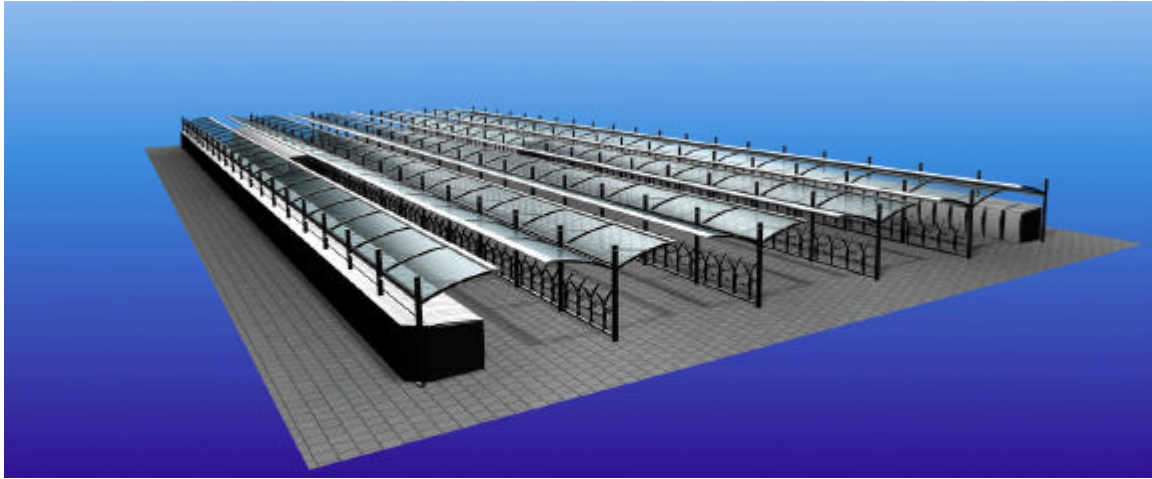
### **Facilities**

*Bicycle facilities* refer to all resources which relate to the parking and storage of bicycles. Let us first differentiate here between unguarded and guarded bicycle sheds.

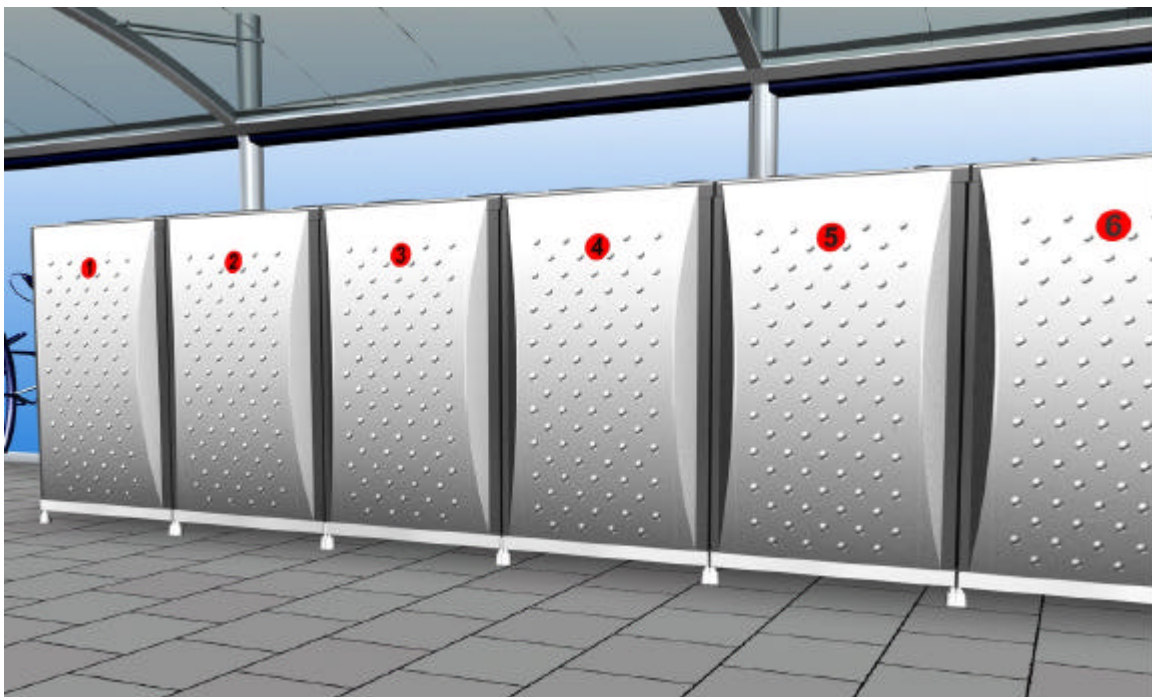


Experience has shown that demand for unguarded and guarded spaces at stations is split approximately fifty-fifty. The capacity of both parking types will be matched to this demand.





Unguarded bicycle sheds consist of bicycle racks which will be fitted with standard coverings.



At smaller stations, the secure spaces will consist of bicycle safes, which can hold a single bicycle. At larger stations, buildings are available where bicycles can be stored collectively: the guarded bicycle sheds.

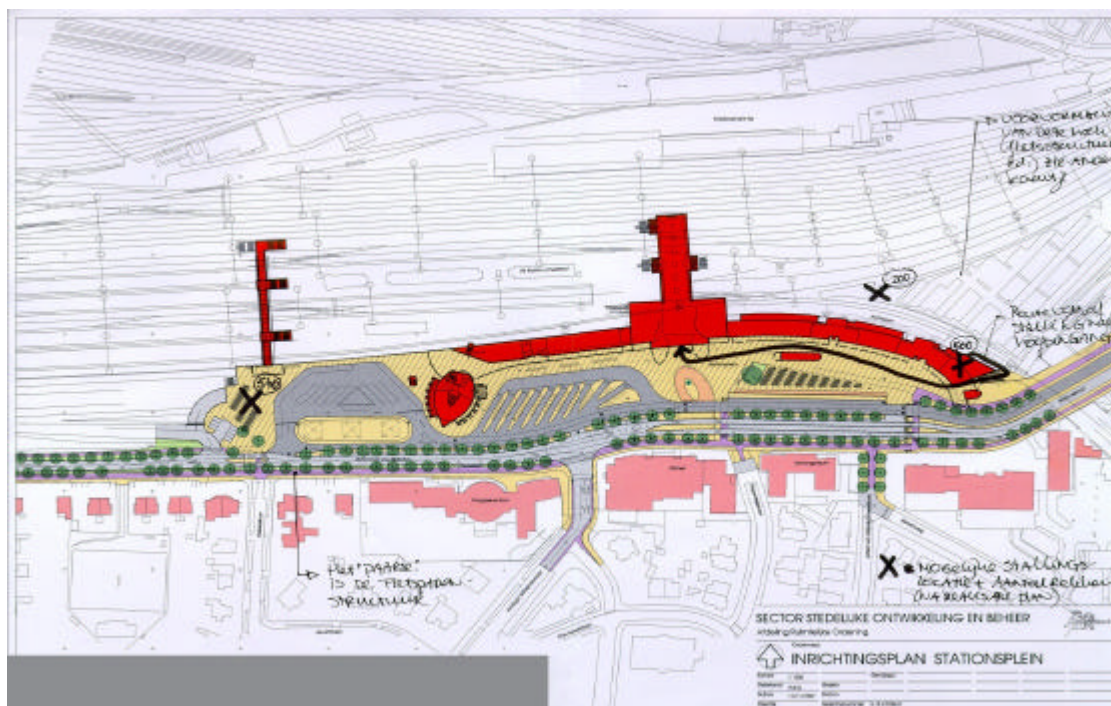
To ensure optimum use of the guarded bicycle shed, easy accessibility is crucial. We will therefore ensure that access is possible from the first through to the last train.

At smaller locations, this can be achieved using an automatic access system. Operators will be present during the peak hours, but passengers who catch the last train will in the future still be able to retrieve their bicycle, thanks to the automatic access system.



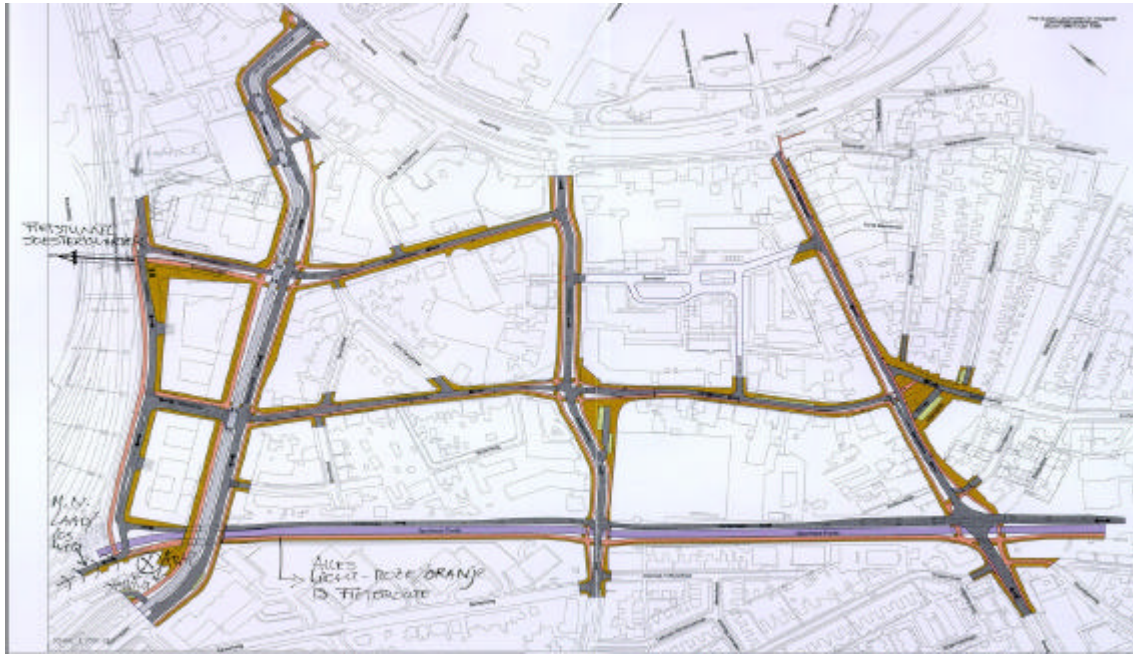
At the larger, guarded sheds, the operators and their employees will provide a personal service, from the first through to the last train. They will also carry out bicycle repairs and sell bicycle products, at their bicycle shop.

### Access routes



Even a perfect station bicycle parking facility, which is difficult to reach, is entirely worthless.



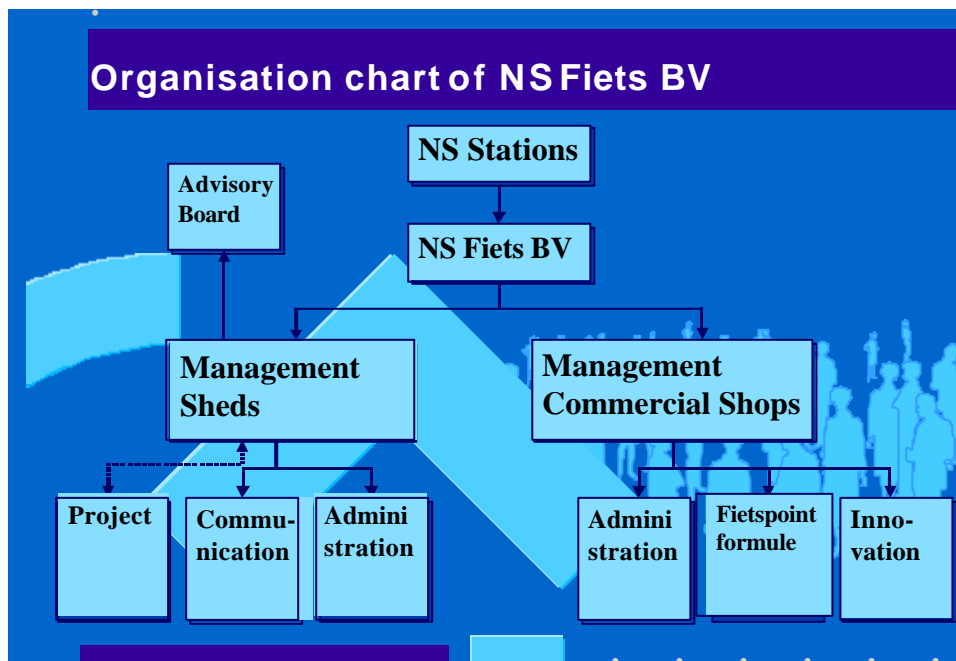


Bicycle routes from and to the station and the area around the station must therefore be designed to be bicycle-friendly and safe. This calls for cooperation with the local authorities.

## Organisation

In line with the mission of NS Fiets BV, we are aiming for optimum synergy between bicycle shed and bicycle shop.

But what does this mean?



It does **not** mean that there will be no differentiation in the operation of the SHED and the SHOP. Indeed, both in terms of organisation and financing, there will be a very clear differentiation. But it **does** mean that SHED and SHOP will influence one another positively.

We consciously decided to split the organisation of NS Fiets BV into two sectors.

- The Management sector – i.e. the SHEDS – will manage and operate parking facilities, on a commercial basis, but not for profit.
- The Commercial sector – i.e. the SHOPS – will offer bicycle products and commercial services, on the basis of normal operating profits.

### Management sector

Government authorities, interest groups and public transport companies will be involved as far as possible in the Management sector. Against this background, in the near future, an advisory Board known as the *Bicycle and Public Transport Foundation* (Stichting Fiets en Openbaar Vervoer) will be appointed for the Management sector. The foundation will supervise the financial policy and policy frameworks of the Management sector in such a way that each year they are able to adjust capacity, quality, charges or opening hours. The foundation also contributes to consideration of reinvestment of any operating profits in the storage facilities.

Central government, NS Railinfrabeheer, the Cyclists' Union, the Royal Dutch Touring Club ANWB, the Union of Netherlands Municipalities and Mobis, the sector organisation of all public transport operators, have already responded positively to the organisation form selected by NS Fiets BV. A number of these parties will take up a position in the Bicycle and Public Transport Foundation.

### Commercial sector

The most important task set for the Commercial sector of NS Fiets BV is to professionalise the bicycle shops. Some time ago, NS Stations made a cautious start with a shop formula developed specially for stations, known as *Fietspoint* (Bike Shop).

Whilst the passenger's bicycle remains in the shed, as necessary, it can be serviced. Once the passenger returns to the station, the bike will be repaired, ready to take away.

At Fietspoint, bicycles will also be available for sale and hire, alongside a whole range of other bicycle accessories.



The first Fietspoint stores at the stations Tilburg, Zaandam and Leiden Central have proved so successful, that the Commercial sector aims to apply the same shop formula at more stations.

The Commercial sector of NS Fiets BV also wishes to develop new bicycle products and services, together with other market parties, aimed at further improving the combination between bike and public transport.

Fietspoint is geared precisely to the needs of the 'cycling train passenger'

Any suggestions in this connection are more than welcome

## Summary

In summary, NS Fiets BV will offer the following plus points for the cycling train passenger:

1. The government investments in bicycle storage facilities at stations will be maintained by a specialist management organisation.
2. Any operating profits from the storage facilities will be recycled, as it were. They will be used for reinvestment in improvements and promoting the storage facilities. An independent foundation will advise on these reinvestments.
3. Optimum synergy should be achieved between the not-for-profit storage facilities and commercial service provision.



Our new organisation aims to move forward decisively. Together with the Ministry of Transport, Public Works and Water Management, NS Railinfrabeheer and all other players on the bicycle field, we aim to CREATE SPACE FOR BIKES, and if it is down to us, we will be doing so in top gear. Of course, we will always welcome any suggestions you have to make.