

## Summary

# Action Plan 2015 - 2020

With the 'Utrecht - we all cycle' Action Plan, Utrecht is meeting the challenge of becoming a world-class bicycle city. Why? The answer is obvious. Utrecht is growing at a rapid pace. It is a city where an increasing number of people wants to live and work. Additionally, it is a popular destination for day trippers and tourists. This is good news for the Utrecht economy, but with the growing bustle and increased activity we also have to make a greater effort to keep our city pleasant, orderly, clean and safe. In Utrecht, this is a joint effort of residents, entrepreneurs and organisations. The bicycle has been assigned a leading part, for if we make Utrecht a genuine world-class bicycle city, the health of our city and its region will benefit in all respects.

### On our way to making Utrecht a world-class bicycle city

To become a world-class bicycle city, Utrecht should be safe for cyclists of any age. In a world-class bicycle city, the street scene is dominated by cyclists. In the development plans for the public area, the bicycle has pride of place and right of way – both literally and figuratively – wherever possible. To be a world-class bicycle city, however, it is essential that a firm basis is in place: an extensive network of comfortable bicycle paths and lanes as well as excellent bicycle parking facilities. We are doing our utmost to make this happen. We aim at using innovative methods to make cycling easier, safer and more fun.

### City Discussion

We set our targets high. A great deal has been set in motion or has been achieved already. Especially in the past four years, some

major steps were taken, as has been noticed undoubtedly by well over 100,000 cyclists while riding to their work, school, shops or train via the city centre. Yet, they – the 'users' of bicycle city Utrecht – can mention various points that require improvement. At the City Discussion in January 2015, we spoke at great length with residents and organisations on the basis of themes that had emerged from previous interviews with 800 cyclists. These themes served as a framework for the Utrecht Cycles! Action Plan. The ideas mentioned in the City Discussion provide inspiration and practical handles to render Utrecht a world-class bicycle city in as many (sometimes highly innovative) ways as possible.

### The bicycle comes first

According to the vision of 'Utrecht Attractive and Accessible', the right balance between accessibility, attractiveness and liveability



Pupils and students are a major target group with respect to traffic safety behaviour.



Red asphalt covers the intersection of Leidseweg and Kanaalweg on one of the major bicycle routes.

should be achieved by 2030. In this context, the bicycle is considered a primary means of transport. To make this happen, the Action Plan has the following aims: providing facilities

to cyclists, making cycling more attractive, increasing bicycle use among certain target groups, and stimulating the bicycle economy.



## What are we going to do to achieve this?

### • Bicycle routes and bicycle paths

The five busiest bicycle routes have already been improved considerably. Another seven bicycle routes have been planned for the next few years. The bicycle paths are more and more becoming a recognisable network – its striking red asphalt certainly helps – that is connected to the regional and recreational bicycle network. In the next few years, the focus will be on completing the major bicycle network and improving its quality where necessary. Additionally, we improve alternative routes in and around the city centre and promote their use.

### • Traffic lights and circulation

Together with residents we identify which traffic lights are unnecessary or can be set in a way that they are more bicycle-friendly. The new bicycle routes with few traffic lights provide a good and fast alternative for the delay-prone busier routes. We are also looking for creative ways to shorten, or at least sweeten, waiting times.

### • Work in progress and diversions

Road works in the city are a real pain in the neck for cyclists. Despite everything we do as a municipality to make diversions safe and clear, many cyclists believe it is not good enough. So we are going to make improvements: hard and fast agreements with contractors, imposing stricter demands on those performing the contracts and testing compliance even better. In addition, we will be experimenting with creative solutions to test diversions and ‘brighten them up’, so as to mitigate the annoyance among cyclists and reduce unsafe behaviour kindled by annoyance.



These bicycle parking areas, put into use in Neude (city centre) in 2014, are used intensively.

### • Road safety cycling behaviour

If cycling in the city is safe and fun, more people will be encouraged to use a bicycle. Complex intersections, narrow bicycle paths and unsafe behaviour of other road users can make cycling too much of a challenge for children and elderly people in particular. Measures referred to above, such as shorter waiting times at traffic lights, definitely have a favourable impact on road safety. The separate Road Safety Action Plan includes measures to enhance safety for cyclists of all ages. The ‘Utrecht - we all cycle’ Action Plan is intended to promote safe and bicycle-friendly road design and is a further step towards affecting traffic behaviour in a positive way by means of pilots and experiments.

### • Bicycle parking and enforcement

Bicycle parking is high on the priority list of the municipality. This is not surprising, as the steadily increasing number of cyclists riding to the city centre and the railway stations requires additional parking places. Besides, a growing number of people will opt for the bicycle if they know they can park it conveniently and safely. Many parking places have been added in the past few years, and we continue this policy: additional bicycle parkings (including the largest in the world!) will be built, and the ‘p-route bicycle’, where cyclists are informed of free parking spaces, will be extended. We keep on focusing on providing more service and information about bicycle parking.

### • Bicycle economy

July 2015, the Tour de France will start in Utrecht. It does not take a Tour de France enthusiast to understand that the bicycle has a positive influence on the city and that it will continue to do so after 2015. As a municipality we want to keep our growing city liveable, accessible and economically strong, and we are convinced that the bicycle can and should play a major role in this. Investments in bicycle routes and parkings bring all kinds of benefits. In the next six years, we will investigate in the widest sense possible how the bicycle can be used to enhance our city and region – as an attractive and healthy means of transport, as an interesting product for entrepreneurs, and as a special draw for tourists and visitors. We will be collaborating with knowledge institutes, allowing starting entrepreneurs to get a piece of the pie as well.

### On the pedals

In short, we will leave no stone unturned to make cycling the logical choice for everybody in Utrecht. It is a joint effort of the municipality, the business community, the university, the university of applied sciences, social and interest groups, and of course the residents. Using an online network approach (social media, partner channels and the community ‘Utrecht - we all cycle!’) we invite cyclists and stakeholders to participate in making this effort a success. With the Action Plan we move into gear, looking for new opportunities and solutions together and taking a lot of steps to make Utrecht a real world-class bicycle city.



As the bicycle sector grows, the number of bicycle couriers increases accordingly.