

City on Foot – through metropolitan landscape

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Abstract - 205A

City fringe zones deserve more attention in spatial planning. The pressure cities are exerting on space is huge and creates numerous demands for more space in the fringe zones. This calls for a clear vision of the city fringe zone so that it can become an attractive and accessible landscape for pedestrians and walkers in the city.

City on Foot is a big step towards making this vision a reality. To achieve this, green recreation spaces near the city will have to be easy to access and barriers in the routes from the cities through the city fringes to the outlying areas need to be taken to hand. The concept enhances the significance and value of walking routes as feeder roads into and out of cities. Home, work and leisure become more attractive the better the fine-tuning between green and red areas in urban networks.

Themes

1. Why is reaching and accessing city fringe zones so often a problem?
2. What constraints are there that impair access to these fringe zones?
3. What is City on Foot and how can it provide a solution to the above problems?

City on Foot is a comprehensive network of short, easy walking routes from home in the city through the city fringes to the outlying areas that makes maximum use of all facilities that are available in the city on the way. City on Foot is the result of smart use of green, red and blue links in urban areas. It enlarges access to urban links and is a way of tackling barriers in the routes feeding from the city to the outlying areas. City on Foot offers opportunities for embedding sustainable walking routes and walker access in metropolitan areas.



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drs J.M.L. Naber



Stichting Wandelplatform-LAW is a platform of 12 organisations united under the red/white and yellow/red waymarking system. The aim of the Walking Platform is to give walking in the Netherlands the standing it deserves – opportunities to go everywhere on foot – because almost all Dutch people walk, because walking is healthy and fun and because it contributes towards a sustainable society.

The Walking Platform's focus is to develop new and smart walking concepts by combining existing and new technologies for sustainably embedding walking in this small, densely populated country with all its infrastructural challenges.

Activities of the Walking Platform:

- Developing new walking routes.
- Improving existing routes in the total Dutch network (8,500 km).
- Easing constraints (working with local, regional and national authorities)
- Developing new walking concepts.

1. Research

In order to fine-tune its policy to various target groups, the Walking Platform conducts research into walkers' activities and motives. In 2005 and 2010, Bureau Trendbox in the Netherlands carried out a survey among the entire Dutch population (16.5 million), examining the kind of walking they do, and what their motives and their behaviour are.

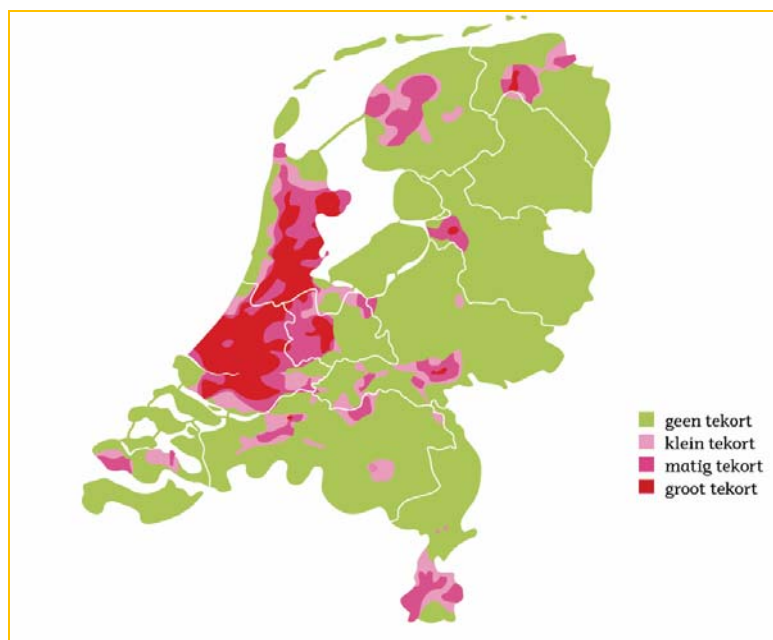
Some information:

- No less than 6.6 million people go on regular walks
- The Dutch do 710 million walks a year

Short walks (<1 hour; 2 - 4 km)	78%	5.3 mln
Longer walks (1 – 4 hours; 4 -14 km)	45%	4.3 mln.
<i>City walks</i>	<i>35%</i>	<i>2.3 mln.</i>
<i>Round the block</i>	<i>38%</i>	<i>2.5 mln.</i>
Long distance (>15 km)	33%	0.8 mln.
Multi-day walks abroad	55%	0.3 mln.
Multi-day walks in the Netherlands	35%	0.2 mln.

- Motives

- Need for relaxation 85%
 - Health 66%
 - To experience nature 53%
- Economic importance: 1.8 billion euros per year
 - Packed lunches
 - Hospitality *en route*
 - Public transport
 - Overnight stays
 - Others:
 - Clothing
 - Maps
 - Guides
 - Huge demand for walks – too few opportunities: in the cities (red):



map: no shortage (green); minimal shortage; moderate shortage; large shortage (red)

- Trends
 - Ageing: number of walkers in the 55-65 age group is growing
 - Need for easily accessible relaxation: no training, no equipment, no timetables, and near home
 - Growing individualisation
 - Need for walks starting from cities

2. Developing concept, policies and quality

The research results prompt a development of walking concepts that are close to home:

Develop a comprehensive network of short, easy walks from home to outlying areas through city fringes.

Create a comprehensive network of themed routes making optimal use of all available city facilities

Ensure that this network is sustainably embedded in the metropolitan area.

2.1. Policy focus

The development of City on Foot means that urban administrators and planners will have to take pedestrians and walkers into account in their policy-making.

1. The design of urban districts (zones) must be tailored to the quality demands of road users such as walkers.
2. The same way urban designs include feeder roads and links out of the city so too should they also include routes for walkers.
3. Urban administrators must be involved in the project and in developing the concept.

2.2. Wandelplatform-LAW[®], the Platform's quality criteria

The Wandelplatform LAW has set down 14 quality requirements for its walking routes. These requirements are all included in the City on Foot concept.

Quality of the routes

1. paving
2. exclusive for walkers
3. road safety
4. silence (sound levels)
5. barriers and crossings
6. traffic quietening
7. negotiability / physical access

Quality of the landscape

8. attractive landscape
9. variation in landscape and use of land
10. recognised quality of landscape
11. distinctive regional character

Quality of facilities

12. (links to) public transport
13. opportunities for overnight stays
14. opportunities for resting and stocking up on provisions

2.3 Constraints

The challenges posed by the metropolitan areas are significant: there are countless constraints, a major infrastructural dynamic and intense levels of economic activity, cluttering of the landscape and usually poor connections between residential areas. When developing City on Foot, a considerable number of infrastructural constraints will have to be solved, avoided or sidestepped.

Safe passage across or past infrastructures (line):

- traffic routes
- railway lines
- water

Increasing the appeal of urban areas (space):

- businesses (business parks)
- isolated city districts
- wasteland sites
- large infrastructural works

2.4 Potential

Using the potential of urban areas to link:

- green zones
 - parks and public gardens
 - avenues
 - along or through playgrounds, allotments, cemeteries
 - etc.
- blue zones
 - paths along watercourses (canals, rivers, etc.)
 - paths next to ponds and lakes
 - bridges and viaducts
 - etc.
- Red zones (all-in)
 - Pedestrian precincts
 - Space around public buildings
 - Links between districts
 - Old paths and roads
 - Etc.

Using and cross-linking all urban facilities

- public transport
- cafés and restaurants
- museums
- historic buildings, bridges, etc.
- cutting across/crossing historic districts

3. Implementation - Utrecht on Foot®

Utrecht te Voet
wandellijnen van de binnenstad naar het buitengebied

Utrecht te Voet

Bekijk Utrecht eens van een andere kant en wandel de stad in of uit met één van de dertien Utrecht te Voet wandellijnen!

Al wandelend doorbreekt u de barrières rond de stad en geniet van de - vaak nog onbekende - natuur en cultuurhistorie. Onderweg overstappen op een andere wandelijn is heel eenvoudig. U reist terug met trein, tram of bus.

De routes variëren in lengte van 4 tot 17 km en zijn gemarkeerd door middel van gekleurde pijlen. Een actuele routebeschrijving in twee richtingen staat op deze site. Eenvoudig uit te printen, net als het detailkaartje en het overzicht van bezwaarsaandigheden. Dankzij het interactieve karakter van de detailkaartjes kunt u thuis al een virtuele wandeltocht maken langs deze 'hoofpunten' onderweg.

Bij [tekst en uitleg](#) staat de benodigde informatie ter voorbereiding op uw wandeling.

Klik hier voor een vergroting kaartje

Tekst en uitleg

Kaartjes en routebeschrijvingen

Achtergrond project

Colofon

[www.utrechttevoet.nl](#) [www.utrechttevoet.nl](#) [www.utrechttevoet.nl](#) [www.utrechttevoet.nl](#)

VSBfonds Gemeente Utrecht Regio Utrecht

www.utrechttevoet.nl

3.1 Aims

The aim of City on Foot is to create an urban network of walks linking at least 150 km of walking routes starting from a ring around the city centre, through the fringes to the outlying area and vice versa, i.e. from logical starting points outside, people are guided into the city on foot. Start and end points are public transport pick-up points such as train stations, tram, bus and metro stops. Each route has a theme and comes past special attractions.

Waymarking along the routes is simple. A simple map and a description can be found on a website so everyone can access the information they need. There are about ten routes, some short (4 km) and some longer (17 km).

At strategic points along the routes walkers will find intersections where they can choose from several paths. Each intersection has its own name, which is also given on the map and in the description of the walk. This allows walkers to organise their own route and choose a short 'Sunday afternoon' stroll or a brisk day's hike, for example.

Current routes and maps can be found on a special website.

3.2 At policy level

Province and city administration working closely with other parties are looking to make a concrete contribution towards living, working and leisure in the province of Utrecht. There are several goals: getting more people walking is one, linking urban areas with outlying areas another. Once in these outlying areas, City on Foot then feeds into the provincial, national and international walking networks.

Therefore alongside the Wandelplatform-LAW, the municipal and provincial authorities of Utrecht and a major fund are also involved in the development.

3.3 Waymarking



The walking routes are mapped and described with two-way markings. Each route is marked with arrows and has its own colour code. The waymarkers are simple, no expensive signs or fingerposts have been used, only small coloured arrows on a grey background that easily attract walkers' attention. The arrows are good quality 9.8 by 9.8 cm stickers with rounded edges. Where possible, they are placed slightly above eye level on existing posts and other street furniture. They can also be applied to aluminium signs measuring 10 x 10 cm that are then fixed with screws. The waymarkers are two-way, i.e. from A to B, and from B to A.

Road and path maintenance departments have given permission for the waymarkings. Practice has shown that waymarkers of this type are found to be satisfactory.

The first waymarkers were set up with the help of a small firm of professionals that specialises in making waymarkers. A team of volunteers will be responsible for checking, maintaining and replacing them.

The website www.utrechttevoet.nl is featured on the stickers.

3.4 Website and GIS



Utrecht on Foot

There is a special website www.utrechttevoet.nl for walkers where they can download the latest route description and a map with the highlighted route. The website also contains information about how the system works and the links in the network.

The website can respond quickly to current circumstances. Things are in a constant state of flux, in the city and on the fringes. Thanks to a well-oiled local management system, email contacts and simple website maintenance, the route description can be amended and updated to respond within a day to the many changes, warnings, temporary detours, etc.

Changes on the map are monitored in a GIS system, using a special viewer and refined cartography. The map indicates the route and small detours hardly affect the route line.

A brochure is available for each walking route with information about attractions on the way and the transport available to start and end points. The brochures can be found at tourist information centres and at several points in the city.

We keep track of the number of users through the website, by monitoring the number of hits, downloads, reactions on the forum page, volunteers' and others' observations. Number of downloads per year: 21,000.

3.5 Maintaining and improving the route

The walking network is maintained by professionals and volunteers. Walkers can also report any complaints they have on the website. The routes are checked regularly and problems are

communicated to the responsible authorities and where possible solved. The route is constantly in development and improvements are fitted into the urban network straightaway and published on the website.

3.6 Other route users

We have been rather wary when it comes to allowing people other than walkers to use the City on Foot routes, which are intended specifically for walkers, and possibly for runners. Nordic walkers might also find the routes attractive but they are not suitable for mountain bikers, inline skaters or wheelchair users.

4. Conclusion

The City on Foot® concept is a big step towards making this vision a reality. To achieve this, green recreation spaces near the city will have to be easy to access and barriers in the routes from the cities through the city fringes to the outlying areas need to be taken to hand. The concept enhances the significance and value of walking routes as feeder roads into and out of cities. Home, work and leisure become more attractive the better the fine-tuning between green and red areas in urban networks.

City on Foot is an excellent way of sustainably embedding facilities for walkers and pedestrians in the city towards the outlying areas. The concept is interesting for many large cities with an abundance of green, blue and red zones. It takes existing links and combines them into a sustainable urban network. By involving policymakers, the walking network will prompt urban improvements and renewal and offer perfect opportunities to improve the network and resolve constraints.

