



# **GoDutchCycling**

**Amsterdam – Willemstad  
Our cities and projects**

**Dr. Rob van der Bijl**

**Amsterdam, Netherlands  
January 2016**

# GoDutchCycling

In this brochure we want to share our commitment to bicycles (bikes) as healthy and great means of transport(ation) and moreover as major condition for creating liveable cities.

Bicycles are fun! Bicycles are urban planning.

Rob van der Bijl loves cycling. He is an urban planner and independent consultant and 'creator' with an Amsterdam, Netherlands-based practice known for its innovative approach to research and design. His projects are characterized by a multidisciplinary approach at the intersections of urban planning, transport, culture and technology.

Working on cycling and urban planning represents his favourite practice. He shares this practice with partners, colleagues and friends from Amsterdam/Netherlands, as well as from many places all over the world in cities like Portland (Oregon), Tokyo and Warsaw.



GoDutchCycling labels a wide-ranging practice of multidisciplinary co-operation addressing three major subjects:

- . Changing culture, clearing the way for future bicycle-use
- . Creating awareness for possible projects
- . Designing particular projects and addressing technical and practical issues



These subjects have been elaborated for cities worldwide. Since 1987 when Rob van der Bijl founded his urban planning office cycling was an important topic in many assignments and projects, sometimes related to public transport (Lightrail.nl, since 1998), and recently related to social empowerment (Favas.net, since 2009). We welcomed cities and their municipalities as clients, or assisted NGO's, companies and entrepreneurs. Particularly we were happy to support citizens, grass roots initiatives and creative individuals.



In this brochure we show some cities and projects staged in a wide variety of places. From Amsterdam as pioneer and leading cycle city to urban environments and towns like Willemstad (Curaçao) where cyclin is still a rare phenomenon. Sometimes our work focused on creating awareness of the many positive features of cycling. And sometimes we had to fight against prejudices. In more favourable environments we were able to suggest some real projects. Always we are aware of the importance of a cycling culture. Without such a culture it's hardly possible to use all those lessons embedded in state of the art Dutch cycling. This is why Rob van der Bijl underlined the importance of cycling culture when he was interviewed by the Boston Globe.



# A matter of culture

GoDutchCycling is enriched with some excerpts from two excellent articles in the Boston Globe by Martine Powers – ‘A cyclist’s mecca, with lessons for Boston’ & ‘After every crash in the Netherlands, intense scrutiny’ (Boston Globe, September 22, 2013)

## The Boston Globe



REPORTER

Martine Powers



Largely, American planners inspired by the Dutch experience have taken an “if you build it, they will come” approach: If American cities invest the money to redesign their roads, transportation experts say, children, senior citizens, and men and women in suits will try out cycling.

But the Dutch have another lesson to share: Better bicycle infrastructure isn’t enough. You need better cyclists, too, and more bike-aware motorists. Universal in-school bicycle education guarantees that every Dutch child can comfortably ride in traffic. By the time they get their drivers’ license, they’ve used bicycles as their primary form of transportation for years — and that habit continues into adulthood.

Rob van der Bijl, an urban planner in Amsterdam, said it’s a common assumption: “Well, there are a lot of amenities, infrastructure, et cetera for bicycles — so, hence, bicycles are successful,” he said. But he argues that in reality, the opposite is true: “The existence of all these facilities and infrastructure are the result of the success, not the cause of the success.”

In short, the answer to replicating the Dutch bicycling success in America might be a lot more complicated than building better bike lanes.

“In one word,” Van der Bijl said, “I would say it’s a matter of culture.”



The legal system (of The Netherlands) automatically places all of the responsibility for crashes on the motorist, not the cyclist. Even if a driver proves the crash occurred because of a bicyclist's wrongdoing, the motorists' insurance company is still responsible for at least 50 percent of the damage to the bike and its rider — and it's automatically 100 percent if the cyclist is a child.



“The car is always wrong, by law,” said Amsterdam urban planner Rob van der Bijl.

“There are disadvantages, of course — you may expect that it promotes irresponsible behavior by cyclists, and it does,” Van der Bijl said, citing the preponderance of cyclists who ride without lights or text while biking. “A lot of cyclists are a pain in the ass — really, very annoying.”

But Van der Bijl said the laws reflect the physical realities of interactions between cars and bicycles — the fact that people inside cars are virtually never harmed in an accident with a bicycle. By deciding to get behind the wheel of a car, drivers are inherently taking responsibility.

“It’s a deadly weapon, the car. So it’s good to protect those who are most vulnerable,” he said.



# Cities and projects

Changing culture, clearing the way for future cycling, creating awareness for possible projects and finally designing particular projects or addressing technical and practical issues of cycle infrastructure. All this will be overviewed in a series of projects and cities, from Amsterdam to Willemstad.



Copenhagen (Denmark), cyclists are passing the bicycle counter at the Queen Louise Bridge, 16:30h. June 9, 2011: 7013 bicycles did pass the counter already that day.

# Amsterdam (Netherlands)



Amsterdam: regional cycle-infrastructure by Onno Rieven (former master student of Rob van der Bijl, Academy of Architecture, Rotterdam 2005-2007). Onno designed a super biking trail ('fietssnelweg') using the alignment of an old railway.

This great city is our own true laboratory. The streets of Amsterdam host urban cycle culture. Moreover Amsterdam and other Dutch cities represent state of the art bicycle technology. Rob van der Bijl challenged several bicycle types and modals. For many years he has been using Brompton, the famous folding bike. Since the eighties he covered long distances with Koga Miyata racing bicycles. Today he experiments with one of his former racing bicycles to be converted into an urban bike (though not into a 'fixie'). Meanwhile at his office a series of new bicycle concepts are elaborated, such as a long distance route in the Amsterdam region (with Onno Rieven), and a smart design for bicycle storage in cities' trams.

## Almaty (Kazachstan)



Almaty, example of 'sporty' bike rental, October 16, 2014.

October 2014 Rob van der Bijl was invited by UNDP-GEF (United Nation Development Program) to investigate mobility issues of the city of Almaty in Kazachstan. Rob delivered presentations at two conferences and also lectured about sustainable transport at the Al-Farabi Kazakh National University.

Cycling in Almaty is upcoming but still in the early starter phase. Car rules public realm, while improvement of public transport and cycle infrastructure are in a slow pace. Almaty's cycling is first of all a kind of sport instead of a daily and common means of transport.



## Arnhem-Nijmegen (Netherlands)



Nijmegen, November 2005. Public transport bicycle ('OV-Fiets') showed on the splendid bicycle-bridge.

Since 1988 Rob van der Bijl was frequently involved in the urban region of the cities of Arnhem and Nijmegen, which is famous for its innovative high speed bicycle way. Transit Oriented Development was a major topic of design, research and consultancy. It was recognised that cycling can improve the accessibility of urban transport nodes. The main station of Nijmegen served as specific topic (2012). To establish a coherent logistic system for public transport, pedestrians and bicycles proved to be a real challenge.

# Bangkok (Thailand)



Bangkok: one of the 28 designated bicycle lanes throughout Bangkok. Bangkok Car Free Sunday has been aiming to raise environmental awareness and understanding of the importance of slow travel like bicycles.

Many Asian cities used to be very bicycle-oriented. However, with the rapid transformation of their economy and social fabric, including the fast shift to car-use, the role of bicycles in transport became marginal (see also Singapore). Bangkok unfortunately, is no exception. However, since the first Car Free Sunday (July 2011) Rob van der Bijl feels that Bangkok as major Asian hub deserves special attention. Research planned in 2016.

# Bogotá (Colombia)



El experto holandés Rob A.J. Van Der Bij compartió su experiencia sobre promoción del uso de la bicicleta y planeación urbana con el IDRD y activistas de la bici



Footage from presentation at YouTube.

In co-operation with URBANOS (Amsterdam, NL) GoDutchCycling used the yearly 'Ciclovía Naranja' in Bogotá to present the Dutch Cycling Embassy. Meanwhile we enjoyed the weekly 'Ciclovía'.

April 27 (2015) the 'Instituto Distrital de Recreación y Deporte' (IDRD) hosted our presentation for an audience of local bike leaders during a special conference chaired by IDR D's director. Topics addressed were Dutch cycling history and Transit Oriented Development combined with cycling.

During May our team, expanded with colleagues from Witteveen+Bos, Berenschot and the University of Technology Delft, guided urban planning workshops in the cities of Armenia, Bucaramanga and Manizales.

# Boston (Massachusetts, USA)



Boston-Somerville, field trip ( July 2007). Path is proposed along existing railway and parallel Green Line extension.

Like Seattle, Boston marks the start of in-depth analysis of USA's state of the art bicycle (r)evolution. In this great city and its neighbours like Somerville and Cambridge Rob van der Bijl has been supporting Alan Moore and his 'Friends of the Community Path' who were aiming the extension of the popular Community Path in Somerville to Boston city and Cambridge in conjunction with the Green Line Extension (GLX). Since 2007 Rob elaborated and discussed features of this light rail project and made field trips by bicycle.

# Copenhagen (Denmark)



Copenhagen light rail project 'Ring 3', section at Herlev Hospital. A true challenge for safe integration of trams and bicycles.  
Image courtesy: Torben Eskerød & Lars Hifling. See also our friends at [www.letbaner.dk/](http://www.letbaner.dk/)

Like Amsterdam this Scandinavian metropolis serves as our cycle laboratory. Copenhagen for sure is synonym for urban cycle culture and state of the art bicycle technology. Moreover Copenhagen is engaged in ambitious improvements of its rail-based public transport, for instance the 'Ring 3' light rail project. In August 2013 Rob van der Bijl (in co-operation with 'cycle engineers' of Goudappel Coffeng) was assigned by 'Atkins Danmark' to assess safety issues regarding crossings between bicycles and light rail. A review of a series of accidents in Dutch cities revealed constrains and challenges for design and construction of crossings. However, the primer reason for accidents is behaviour of cyclist, like not having enough awareness or attention and violation of traffic rules.

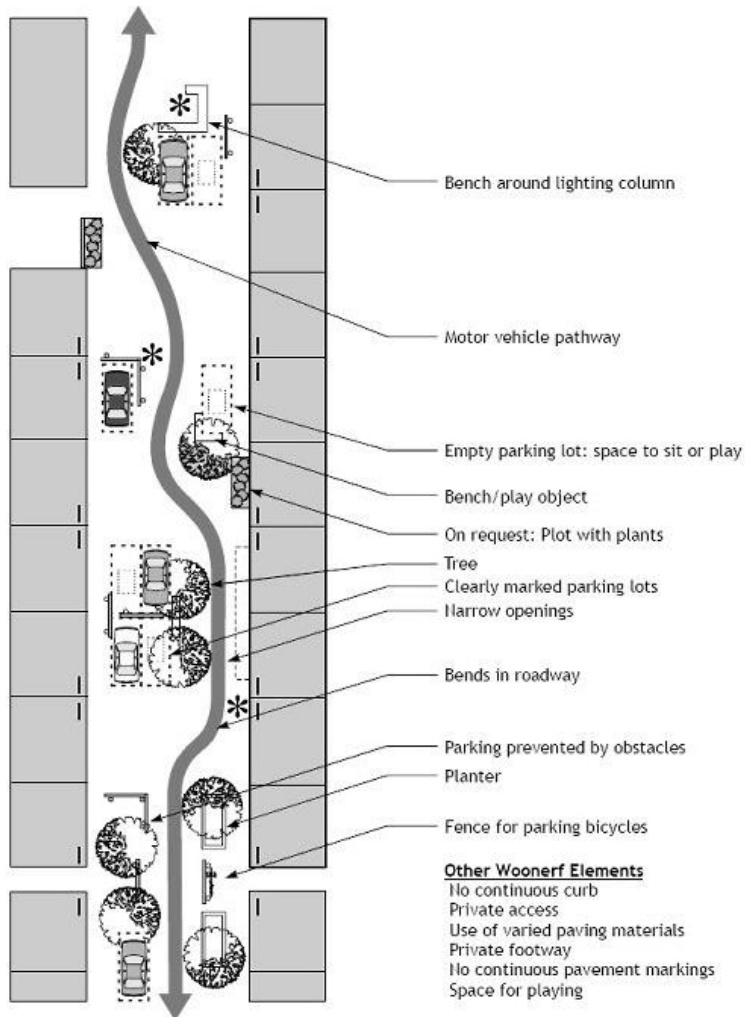
# Dahka (Bangladesh)



Jos Huber is showing the bicycle lighting. Rickshaw impressions in Dahka (December 2013).

In this capital city thousands of rickshaws rule the streets. November 2013 Rob van der Bijl and his friend Jos Huber launched the idea to improve traffic safety by providing bicycle lighting. Jos uses the rickshaw service on a daily bases to bridge the 2.5 kilometre between her house and the Dutch embassy (where she was based as an expert 'Corporate Social Responsibility'). Our first test entailed an easy and cheap lighting set for the personal rickshaw of Jos (Dahka, December 2013). The first real pilot could comprise the equipment for all rickshaws of the Dutch Club in Dahka. A second shipping of lighting sets marked the finalisation of the project during 2014.

# Delft (Netherlands)



Delft 'woonerf example city'. Principles of woonerf design.

Home of the University of Technology the city of Delft represents a traffic laboratory. The Dutch invention of 'woonerf' was tested here in the seventies of the previous century. Slow traffic environments such as the woonerf enhances safe cycling. In 1975, Rob van der Bijl started his study architecture and urban planning in Delft. Lived at a woonerf for many years. He cycled a lot. Experienced and studied bicycle traffic, technology and culture ever since.

# Fukuoka (Japan)



Fukuoka (June, 2013), proposal for pilot bicycle route between main station, city centre and waterfront.

In co-operation with design laboratory 'Stadslab Fontys' and assigned by Fukuoka District Council (a PPP of Fukuoka city and major local businesses) Rob van der Bijl and several colleagues examined possible improvements of connections to, and accessibility within the city (2011-2013). New bicycle networks were elaborated in design research and master classes.

Eventually Van der Bijl proposed a pilot bicycle route and provided as a reference image an American-style bike lane in the streets of San Francisco. That bike lane is distinguished only by its painted markings from other vehicular lanes. Ultimately Fukuoka should consider a high-class, publicly well promoted bicycle route, one of whose distinguishing features would be a new type of signage. In addition, the city should identify the most important bottlenecks, notably difficult or dangerous crossings with cars and buses, and propose short-term design solutions for them.



# Ghent (Belgium)



Ghent, April 2013. Example of important route.

During 2013 Rob van der Bijl and his friend-colleague Jaap Modder (Brainville) were assigned by the city of Ghent to develop their expert view on the future of a deprived high-rise neighbourhood ('Nieuw Gent'). They examined many issues and considered proper connections between Nieuw Gent and the city centre as a major issue. Public transport but also cycling can enhance those connections, in respect to logistics and social fabric. The project allowed Van der Bijl and Modder to assess several bicycle routes from city centre to problematic outskirts of Ghent.

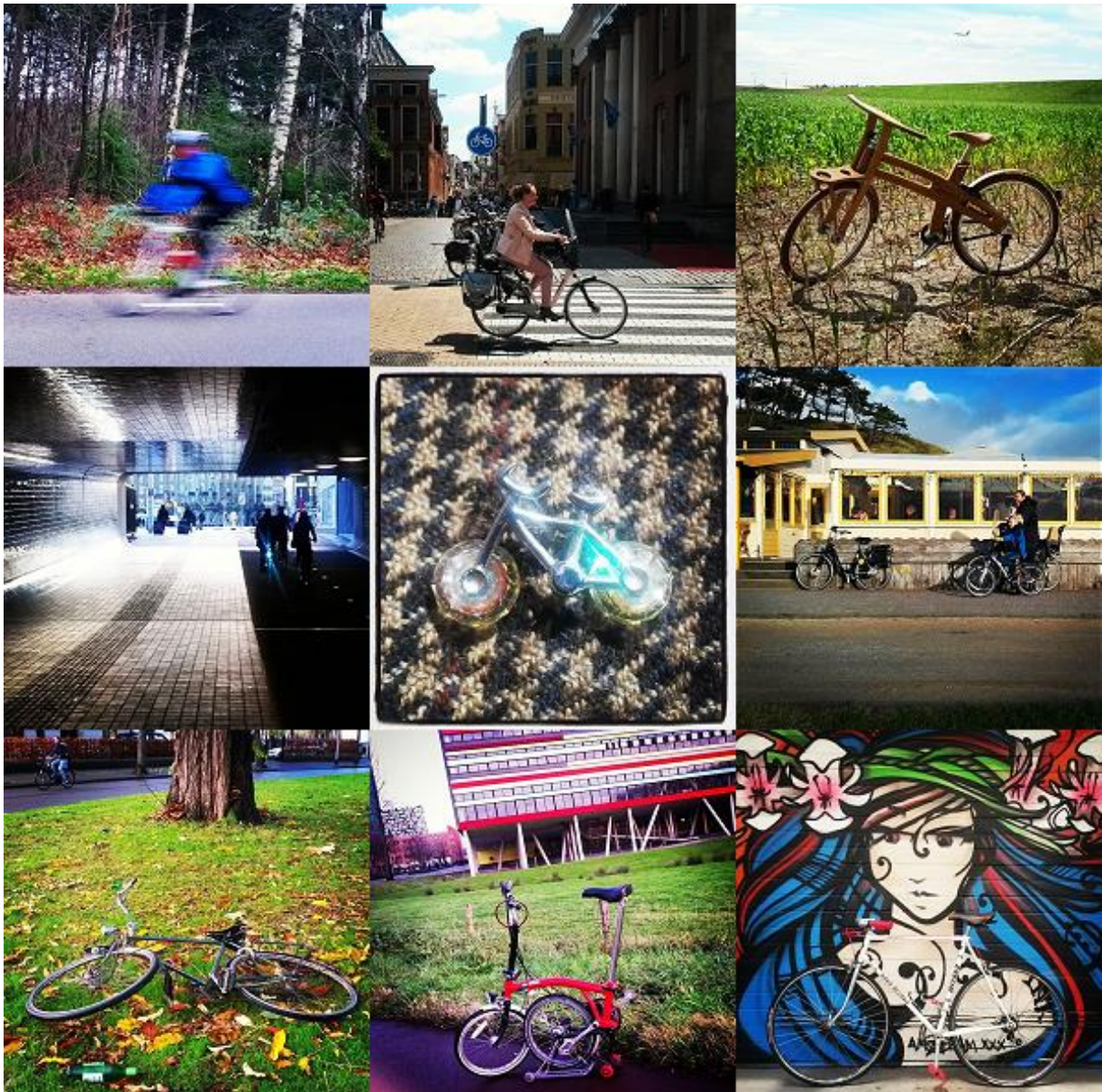
# Groningen (Netherlands)



The conversion from current one way bus to bidirectional tram operation in the Oosterstraat would have allowed a dedicated bicycle way in the parallel street, hence a substantial improvement of Groningen centre's cycle network.

'RegioTram' was an ambitious tram project for both city and region of Groningen. Besides new tramways the project implied an enhanced cycle network. Rob van der Bijl was assigned for several duties (2002-2013), among others as embedded consultant in the former project office. For various reasons politicians pulled the plug late 2012, though this allowed an alternative plan for a transformation of the bus network (2013). New tram or better bus, still the challenge remains to improve the cycle infrastructure of Groningen, since this city is faced with heavy use (over 50% of all city trips (max 7.5km) by bicycle).

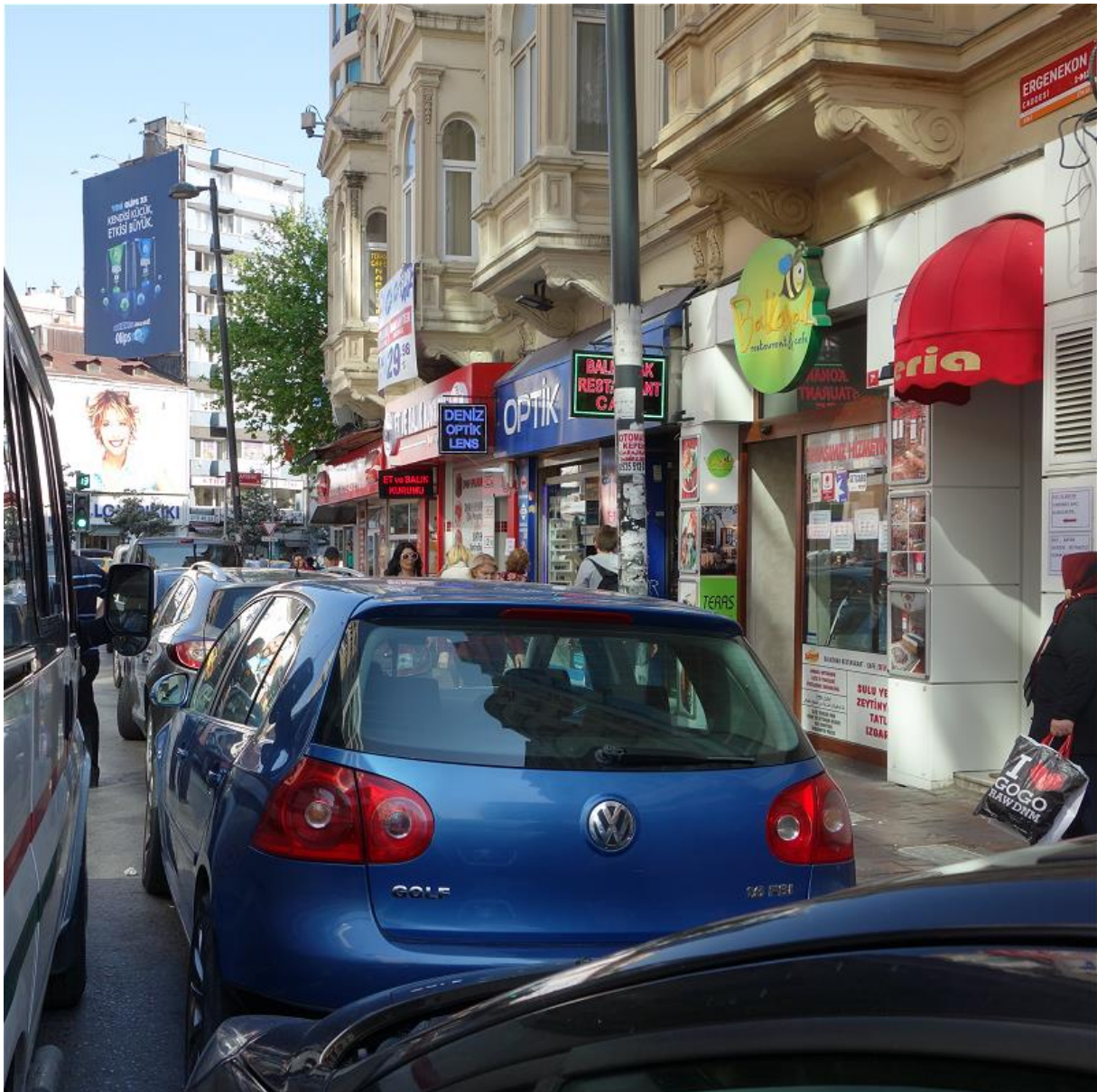
# Instagram



Nine Instagram-pictures from our collection 2013-2015.

Since 2013 our Instagram-project entails images of cycling and cycle situations all around the world, though Dutch cities like Amsterdam, Utrecht and Groningen are our favourite spots. Discover more of our cycle-images at [www.instagram.com/robvanderbijl/](http://www.instagram.com/robvanderbijl/)

# Istanbul (Turkey)



No space for bicycles in Istanbul of today (May 2013)

'Station Central' was the name of an extensive research project, as well as a book with the same name (010 Publishers, Rotterdam 2010, unfortunately in Dutch only) assigned by the government buildings agency (former Ministry of Transport). Aim of 'Station Central' was the reassessment of stations and main stations and their renewed value for cities.

May 2013 the project was again presented and enhanced with Turkish cases in Istanbul, with workshops at the Architectural Faculty and a seminar with aid of the Turkish Railways. Key issue is to establish clear and efficient links with the central city as the new generation of Turkish stations of the high speed train services are situated at the fringe of cities and urban regions. The role of cycling within these links is unfortunately highly underestimated in nowadays Turkey. Moreover, in the city of Istanbul the many station centre nodes are hardly accessible for cyclists. However, Rob van der Bijl could address cycling as topic for the urban agenda of future Istanbul.

# La Réunion (France, DROM)



La Réunion: work in progress, but still a long way to go for cycling.

As panel member of 'INTA 2007' Rob van der Bijl and some of his international colleagues addressed topics regarding governance of urban planning projects. In 2007 La Réunion's tram-train project was in full swing and served as major case for the governance assessment. Though the project was politically killed two years later, still this case inspires to challenge governance conditions of social and urban renewal, particularly public transport infrastructure and not at least the bicycle mode.

# Maastricht (Netherlands)



Maastricht centre: splendid public realm, hence fine conditions for cycling.

This beautiful Dutch city is known for its excellent public realm. In 2004 Maastricht was nominated by the jury of an architectural competition (OAP, 'Omgevingsarchitectuurprijs') with the design of city centre's public retail area. As member of the jury Rob van der Bijl enjoyed layout and organisation of this public realm within a vibrant and historic centre which very well accommodates the growing number of cyclists ever since.

# New York (New York, USA)



New York: bikeway along waterfront according the 'Greenway' plan of 1995, April 18, 2015.

New York's 'Greenway' plan was topic of research during 1995. This plan entailed a huge cycling network along New York's waterfront, including routes into the city. Rob van der Bijl interviewed involved professionals, like professor Robert Geddes (e.g. known from 'Cities in our Future: Growth and Form, Environmental Health and Social Equity'). Rob published about his research and the plan in 'Blauwe Kamer', the leading professional magazine for landscape architecture and urban planning in the Netherlands.

Several field trips in New York during the past twenty years proved the slow but steady progress of the project. April 2015 GoDutchCycling spotted much cycling in New York, including the new 'citibikes', and concluded that eventually the greenways are really successful.

# Portland (Oregon, USA)



Portland: Sunday morning action during the start of the Providence Bridge Pedal (August 9, 2009).

Known for its high quality public transport (i.e. light rail), Portland is becoming more and more famous as 'bicycle capital city' of the United States. In co-operation with his Portland-based friend-colleague Martin Glastra van Loon (OTAK), Rob van der Bijl has been using this vibrant city as an urban planning laboratory 'precedent' since 1998. In 2009, Rob experienced Portland's massive Providence Bridge Pedal in person and the Amsterdam-Portland bicycle connection was cemented. More to come... (see also Seattle).



# Seattle (Washington, USA)

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It's Fall, the days have been beautiful lately but we're all aware of the November rains about t...

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Public Service Announcement! This is the season when we hear about a fair amount of people ...

**Food Network At Dutch Bike Co.**  
This coming Friday August 9th the Food Network will be filming an episode of Eat St! (<http://www...>)

**Dutch Bike Co's New Shop**  
We're happy to announce we're moving the bike shop just around the corner onto Leary Ave.

Seattle's Dutch Bike Co. – [www.dutchbikeseattle.com/](http://www.dutchbikeseattle.com/)

A professional study tour in September 2012, compiled and guided by Rob van der Bijl, marked the start of in-depth analysis of USA's state of the art cycling (r)evolution. Seattle plays a leading role in America's rising 'bike' culture. An interview with David Schmidt, founder of 'Dutch Bike Co' during the Seattle tour, revealed recent trends in emerging markets: hipsters in gentrified neighbourhoods like expensive Dutch bicycles, while middle class citizens in suburbia prefer cheap Chinese bikes. This pending research will entail many other American cities such as Boston (Massachusetts), Chicago (Illinois), Detroit (Michigan), Los Angeles (California), Miami (Florida), New York (New York) and Portland (Oregon) – but also smaller towns like Boulder (Colorado), Davis (California), Eugene (Oregon).

# Singapore



Singapore: cycle amenity. Still bicycles happen to exist in this Asian metropolis (January 2013).

Many Asian cities used to be very bicycle-oriented. However, with the rapid transformation of their economy and social fabric, including the fast shift to car-use, the role of bicycles in transport became marginal (see also Bangkok). Singapore in this respect is unfortunately no exception.

January 2013 Rob van der Bijl and his friend-colleague Jaap Modder (Brainville) joined as invited experts a mission of the University of Amsterdam to Singapore. They grabbed the opportunity to assess Singapore's state of the cycling-art and were surprised by the many relics, notably freight cycles. Singapore still has a long way to go. Meanwhile the Dutch team prepares research and activities. To be continued...

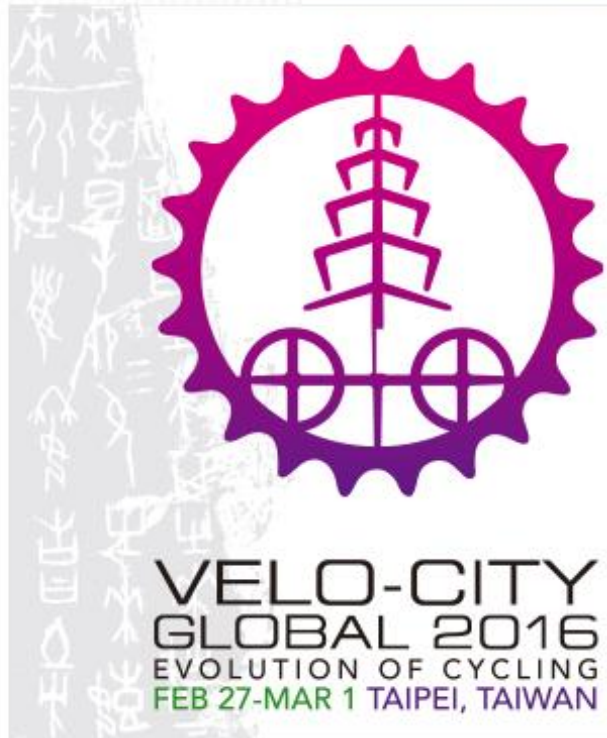
# Taipei & Kaohsiung (Taiwan)



RVDB Urban Planning  
城市規劃公司  
Go Dutch Cycling Taiwan



Taiwan is focus country for GoDutchCycling.



Since 2013 GoDutchCycling and RVDB urban Planning are involved in cycling research, events, initiatives and projects in Taiwan. For instance, for the cities of Taipei and Kaohsiung they delivered presentations and workshops, including meetings and study tours for Taiwanese delegations in the Netherlands. March 2015 Rob van der Bijl delivered a presentation at the Asian Cycling Forum. Various activities are planned for 2016, particularly focused on VeloCity2016 in Taipei.

# The Hague (Netherlands)



One of the many projects in The Hague: new tunnel for cyclists and pedestrians under main railway station. Complicated project regarding social safety (tunnel structure) and traffic safety (tram crossings).

For many years Rob van der Bijl was assigned by Dutch police as an urban safety expert. Among others he assessed urban schemes all over The Hague (1990-1999) regarding social safety and traffic safety. Both types of safety happened to be very relevant for cyclists. Particularly plans and projects regarding public space are very relevant for safety performance of cycle infrastructure.

# United Kingdom



Student-cycle city Cambridge is an exception.

It's sad but cycling in urban United Kingdom is a rather dangerous activity. During his involvement as appointed expert in Interreg project HiTrans (2002-2005) Rob van der Bijl reviewed several cities (Birmingham, Cambridge, London, Sunderland) and spoke with some officials. Conclusion: potentially cycling can be a serious contribution to transport (commuting, recreation, etc.) but so far hostile environments (aggressive behaviour of car drivers, insufficient infrastructure, etc.) and incoherent policies (no sound plans, no fare trade-offs, etc.) prevent a sensible breakthrough. Recent experiences during the 'Go Dutch' campaign in London (2013) sadly underline the uncertain future for cyclist in the UK.

# Vancouver (British Columbia, Canada)



Vancouver's Seawall Path that lines 22 km urban waterfront.

Several professional study tours during 2000-2012, compiled and guided by Rob van der Bijl, highlighted Vancouver as American cyclist pathfinder city. These tours systematically tested the waterfront's accessibility by bicycle. Vancouver like many USA cities will be subject of in-depth analysis of America's state of the art bicycle (r)evolution.

## Wadden (Netherlands, Germany, Denmark)



Biker kids around the lighthouse of Ameland, NL (May 2009).

For many years the Wadden Islands are Rob van der Bijl's favourite topic of research. June 2011 the intermediate results were published and supported by a series of images by the famous photographer Theo Baart. Pending research focuses on economy and logistics of the islands and their mainland. Cycling gets special attention. Future challenge is a modal shift from car to bicycle on islands like Texel (NL), Norderney (DE) and Rømø (DK).

## Warsaw (Poland)



This Veturilo cycle station in the centre of Warsaw shows the new status of cycling in the Polish capital city (November 2013).

Since the first professional encounters in Warsaw (during 1978) it took 35 years before Rob van der Bijl and his friend-colleague Kazimierz ('Kaz') Olszaniecki could witness a real change in Polish cycle culture. Now cyclists become rapidly a common feature of Warsaw's public realm. November 2013 they decided to establish a co-operation aiming on enhancement of cycling and culture. Meanwhile Warsaw-based architect Olszaniecki experiments frequently in using his new bicycle for commuting. This Warsaw-Amsterdam co-operation will soon be coming up with new bicycle initiatives. To be continued...



# Willemstad (Curaçao)



Willemstad is still very much car-oriented. It seems cycling is something for small boys only (January 2010).

Rob van der Bijl did cycle research and moreover, assigned by the Public Works Department (DOW), compiled and chaired a workshop (Willemstad, January/March 2010) on 'shared space', the famous Dutch traffic principle. Unfortunately bicycles are hardly used on Curaçao, thought at least the rapid increase of obesities would justify a large scale introduction of cycling. The enhancement of existing road infrastructure with shared space solutions could be very helpful in this respect.

## GoDutchCycling – Lightrail.nl/bicycles

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Participant in the Dutch Cycling Embassy.



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