

By Michiel Modijefsky / Updated: 14 Feb 2019

Netherlands to develop “metro-like” urban rail system to handle up to 40 percent growth in public transport until 2040

Submitted by Michiel Modijefsky on 12 Feb 2019

Picture:



Region:

Western Europe

Country:

Netherlands

Topic:

Urban mobility planning

Body:

Trains should run every ten minutes between nine large cities. Passengers should be able to change seamlessly from the train on the metro, tram or bicycle. All public transport will be zero-emission and customer satisfaction ratings should reach an average of eight out of ten.

These are among the key objectives for the Future of Public Transport 2040, a vision document presented on 06 February by State Secretary Van Veldhoven (Ministry of Infrastructure and Water Management). A document that also predicts the number of public transport users will increase by 30 to 40 percent in key urban areas over the next 20 years.

The [vision document](#) has been developed by the Ministry in cooperation with local and regional transport authorities, transport operators and the rail network manager. The purpose is to provide a strategic vision for the development of the public transport system. It foresees the development of the railway system as the backbone of the public transport system in the country, which is highly urbanised. The centres of its four largest cities are within a 30-60 minutes commuting distance and can be considered one large agglomeration.

A ring-shaped rail network is to connect nine major cities, with trains running between them every ten minutes, reducing average waiting times for a connection to a maximum of 5 minutes. The railway stations are to develop into the major nodes in a network of multimodal nodes for public transport as well as a whole range of other mobility services.

Van Veldhoven: *“In 2040 I would get a shared taxi to the station in the morning. Without having to wait more than 5 minutes the intercity would take me to Amsterdam where I could get a shared bike to get me to my next appointment. To get to my*

afternoon appointment in another city, I could leave the bike on one of Amsterdam other stations to take another train from there. From the next station, I could take a shared car to get to my appointment in the business park on the outskirts of the city. All connections would be seamless, with reservations and payments running through a Mobility as a Service provider, using blockchain technology."

Mixed response

While most stakeholders agree with the main objectives of the strategic vision and welcome the ambition, the strategy received a mixed response. Passenger organisations believe that the investments required to materialise the ambitions from the plan are at odds with reality: up to 2030 no extra funds are available. Passenger organisation Rover called on the cabinet, provinces and municipalities to quickly make decisions and to make the necessary investments by 2030.

Van Veldhoven acknowledges that more budget will be required to reach the strategic ambitions vision than the ten billion Euro that is currently allocated from the national budget. *"This vision goes far beyond the budget that the government has set aside for public transport. But you first have to know what you want before you make the decision what you want to invest. This strategic document provides such a shared vision."*

In addition, the strategy highlights the need to find alternative financing sources to provide additional funding to that raised by the taxpayers. Amongst others, mechanisms are explored to capture increased land and property values that may result from public transport development.

What about the region?

The strategic vision clearly highlights the importance of developing urban nodes. Too much, according to some critics, who feel the strategic visions holds very little for public transport in more peripheral regions and fear public transport services will further decline in these areas.

"We cannot just forget the three northern provinces and large parts of the East and South of The Netherlands. We are not just a cabinet for the Randstad [the urban agglomeration in central-western Netherland]" criticised Gert-Jan Seegers (CU), party leader of one of the four government coalition parties, the strategic vision.

Despite the criticism, regional transport is part of the public transport vision. To maintain or even improve transport services in the region and smaller urban centres, re-orientation of the public transport system is required in these areas.

Regional stakeholders will have to get the most out of their regional mobility systems by, for example, demand management, priority for spatial development around public transport locations and by providing opportunities for innovative service providers. Van Veldhoven: *"Currently, buses drive around empty too often, while at the same time people miss out on transport services that suit their needs. Here, innovations are required, for example by organising small-scale first and last mile transport connects seamlessly to faster local buses or railway stations."*

Hence, demand-responsive transport and Mobility as a Service (MaaS) are important mobility concepts that need to be developed as part of the strategic vision. The private sector should play an important role. Still, there is also a role for public authorities here, because at the moment many demand-responsive concepts mainly arise in the city. That is why public authorities have to deal with setting up new transport concessions and bundling money flows for, for example, target group transport. In addition, the central government and regional authorities will make national agreements about interoperability and regulation, including accessibility and affordability.

Next steps

As part of the strategic vision, an action plan has been developed containing 50 actions to transform the mobility system. This includes the development of more detailed regional and local mobility plans. The progress and results of the actions will be discussed by a steering committee every six months and by the national stakeholder committee that meet in a round table on a yearly basis.

Further

information: <https://www.rijksoverheid.nl/onderwerpen/openbaar-vervoer/betere-verbindingen-openbaar-vervoer/ov-in-de-toekomst>

Sources:

Ministry of Infrastructure and Water management, Letter to Parlement, 6 February 2019

Rover: OV toekomstbeeld 2040 vraagt actie vandaar. 6 February 2019

