

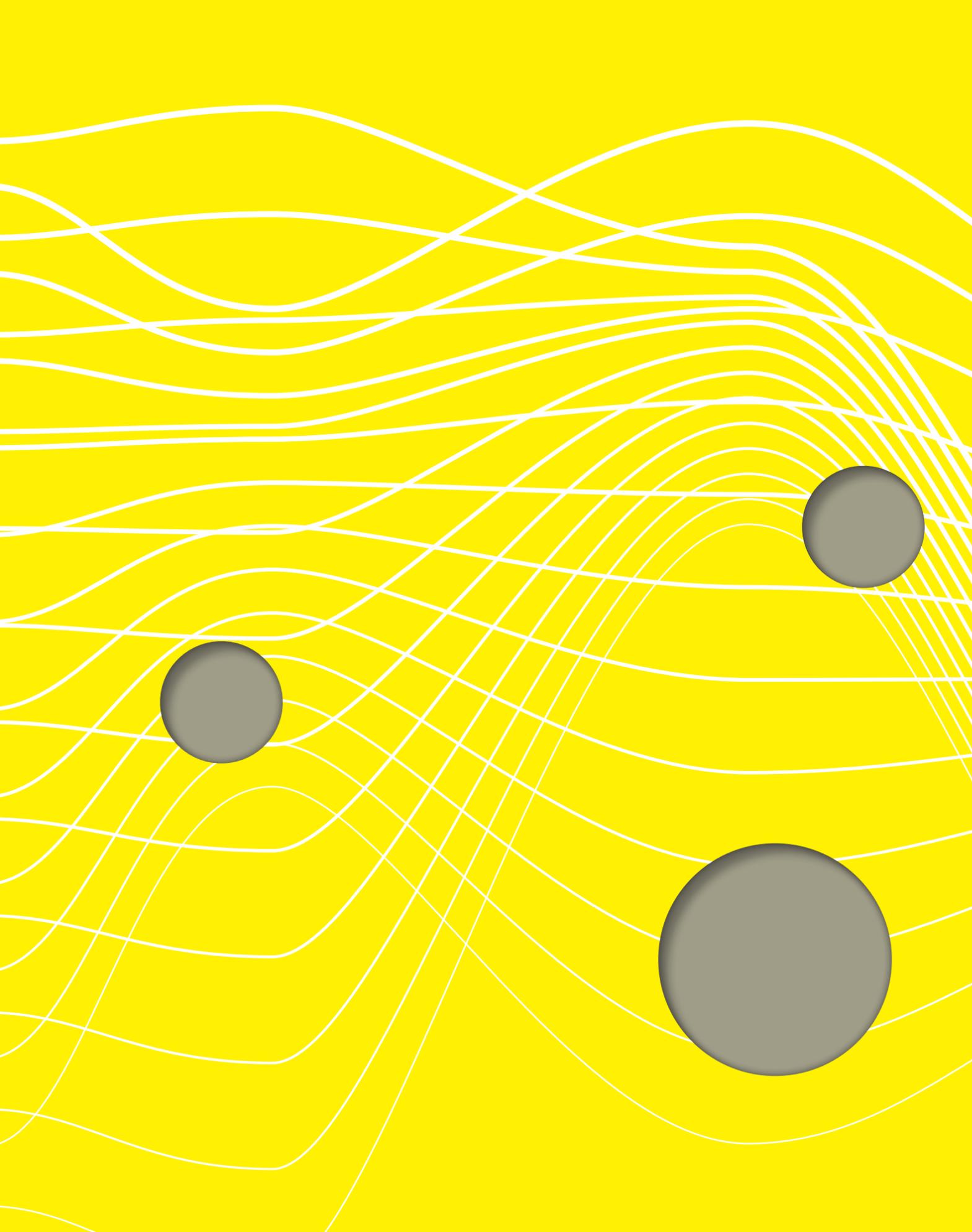
# YOUR GRONINGEN. YOUR CYCLING CITY



**Municipality of Groningen**

**CYCLING STRATEGY 2025 · 2035**





**YOUR GRONINGEN.  
YOUR  
CYCLING  
CITY**

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# FOREWORD

**PHILIP  
BROEKSM**

ALDERMAN MOBILITY

**In Groningen, cycling is much more than just a way of getting from A to B. It's part of who we are. Almost every morning, I see our community come to life whilst riding my bicycle: children cycle to school, students use their bicycles to go to college, employees cycle to work, and seniors cycle through the surrounding area. The bicycle is a familiar sight on our streets and at the same time a symbol of freedom, health and solidarity.**

Cycling runs in our DNA. Most trips in our municipality are made by bicycle. Without the bicycle, the city would literally come to a standstill. And yet the bicycle is also indispensable for our vitality, quality of life, health and the economy.

That's why we now treat cyclists just as seriously as we did motorists in the past. With attention, care and ambition. Because the bicycle deserves that place - not only in traffic, but also in our policies.

Since the launch of our previous Cycling Strategy in 2015, many developments have taken place and circumstances have changed. Our municipality has expanded, partly due to the redivision; the number of residents and jobs has grown. But cycling itself has also changed. With e-bicycles, speed pedelecs and fat bikes, distances, speeds and behaviour on the cycle path have changed. We cycle more, faster and further and this trend continues. Because of this, the cycle path gets busier and vulnerable cyclists sometimes feel unsafe. This requires targeted and well-considered actions, sometimes even drastic measures.

With this new Cycling Strategy we provide direction for the future. We invest in safe and accessible cycling routes, as well as in smart campaigns and targeted communication. All this to ensure that cycling in Groningen remains a logical and attractive choice for everyone who wants and is able to do so. This strategy aligns seamlessly with our Mobility Vision: more space for cyclists and pedestrians, within an infrastructure that encourages healthy and sustainable transport.



# INTRODUCTION

## CYCLING IS A WAY OF LIFE

**Imagine this: a sunny morning in Groningen. The city awakens and the streets fill with pedestrians and cyclists. Young and old, everyone is on their way to school, work or just taking a ride around town. The fresh air, the sound of bicycle bells ringing and the feeling of freedom make every bicycle ride special. In Groningen, cycling is not just a way to get around, it's a way of life. It connects people and makes us healthier and happier.**

Cycling is in the DNA of the people of Groningen. Nowhere in the world do people cycle as much as they do in our municipality. For centuries, the bicycle has been an indispensable part of our daily lives. Old photographs of Groningen show that as early as the beginning of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, people cycled a lot. Bicycles from the famous Fongers bicycle factory in Groningen found their way to the other side of the world.

Cycling is still incredibly important for our residents today. It is the healthiest, most affordable and sustainable way to move around in a busy city. A bicycle is also space-efficient and takes up much less space than a car or bus, which is essential in a compact city like Groningen. Owning a bicycle or using a shared bicycle also ensures that facilities outside your own neighbourhood or village come within reach, without breaking the bank. This makes it easy for everyone to participate in society.

The bicycle is crucial for the functioning of Groningen and ensures that the city and villages remain accessible. Without the bicycle, traffic in the city would come to a grinding halt. More than half of all trips and journeys within the municipality of Groningen are made by bicycle. And the number of trips we make by bicycle continues to increase. We cycle more and more and also cover longer distances.



### From Traffic Circulation Plan to Mobility Vision

The ambitious Traffic Circulation Plan was introduced. Since then, Groningen city centre has consisted of four sectors, each of which can only be reached via the Diepenring Canal. When motorists want to drive from one sector to another, they must do so by crossing the Diepenring Canal. As a result, motorised traffic was reduced to local traffic only and the city of Groningen with restricted car access became an example for many other cities.

The 2021 Mobility Vision 'Groningen Well on the Way' builds on this. Motorised traffic currently still driving straight through the city and between neighbourhoods is increasingly being persuaded to use the ring road, partly through the use of traffic management measures. This creates more space in the neighbourhoods for playing, meeting and greening.



# CYCLING RUNS IN OUR DNA

## GRONINGEN, CYCLING CITY WITH TRADITION

**Groningen has a long tradition of progressive mobility policy. With the introduction of the Traffic Circulation Plan in 1977, accessibility for cyclists, pedestrians and public transport was significantly improved. We were the first municipality in the Netherlands to no longer allow through traffic in large parts of the city centre. This groundbreaking measure made time spent in the city centre more pleasant and safer.**

From that point onward, the bicycle became even more important as a means of transport. An extensive cycling network of more than 300 kilometres of cycle paths was rolled out and public bicycle parks started popping up. At the beginning of this century, the Netherlands' first large underground and easily accessible bicycle park, Stadsbalkon, appeared in front of the Central Railway Station. Nowadays, good cycling facilities in our municipality are commonplace and indispensable.



Grote Markt, Groningen



## A compact city and characteristic villages

Groningen's strength lies in the unique combination of a compact, vibrant city and the surrounding landscape with its characteristic villages such as Garmerwolde, Onnen and Hoogkerk. The bicycle is indispensable for the functioning of our municipality, together with walking and public transport.

Thanks to the short distances, residents can easily cycle to work, amenities or sports, without being dependent on the car. This not only promotes a healthy and sustainable way of living and travelling, but also ensures that our municipality remains easily accessible. In addition, its compact layout contributes to the conservation of the surrounding nature and recreation areas. The 15-minute city in its purest form.

Cycling improves the liveability, accessibility and attractiveness of the city and villages. Better cycling connections make villages and nature and recreation areas more accessible, while the city retains its compact and easily accessible character. This is where Groningen excels: a dynamic municipality where you can be in the city or the countryside within cycling distance - thanks to the bicycle.

## A changed cycling world

Much has changed since the 2015-2025 Groningen Cycling Strategy. Haren, Ten Boer and Groningen have merged, making us one of the largest municipalities in the Netherlands. New cycling routes have been constructed to residential areas that are currently under development. You can now cycle to De Suikerzijde in no time thanks to the Suikerzijde route. And soon towards the districts of Stadshavens and Meerstad via new bicycle bridges at the Oosterhaven marina and across the Eems Canal. Groningen now also has an extensive network of cross-regional cycling routes to surrounding villages such as Zuidhorn, Winsum, Bedum, Ten Boer, Thesinge, Haren, Eelde-Paterswolde, Roden, Leek, and even the city of Assen.

Groningen is growing and the city centre has become increasingly busy over the years. To respond to this, the restricted car access in the city centre has been further tightened. Buses have been assigned new routes, creating more space for cyclists and pedestrians. In addition, high-quality indoor bicycle parking facilities have been and are being built at Nieuwe Markt, Grote Markt, Herestraat, Westerhaven and in the vicinity of Vismarkt for long-term parking, while short-term bicycle parking remains possible in many places. We continue to be fully committed to achieving this in the coming period.



A decade ago, no one could have predicted that the number of electric bicycles would grow so quickly. More than half of all bicycles sold today are e-bicycles. But the diversity on the cycle path has also increased with speed pedelecs, shared bicycles, cargo bikes and fat bikes. Cycle paths are also used more often by businesses that deliver their goods to their destination using small electric vehicles or cargo bikes, thus increasing efficiency. Bicycles are increasingly different in size and speed. This diversity affects capacity and traffic safety on the cycle path. Many cycle paths were constructed at a time when there were fewer cyclists, with less difference in mass and speed between cyclists. This congestion can lead to conflict and discomfort.

In short, there are plenty of reasons to safeguard and continue to promote the bicycle's position as the main local mode of transport, and to put new important themes on the agenda for the next decade. Responding to these changes in mobility is a permanent challenge.

## Policy framework

A Cycling Strategy for Groningen is not a standalone initiative. Its implementation is in line with European, national and provincial cycling policies. By signing the European Cycling Declaration, we have agreed to the ambition to further promote cycling as a healthy and sustainable mode of transport. The National Vision for the Future of Cycling provides direction for the sustainable development of the Netherlands, of which the bicycle is already a natural part in Groningen.

In addition, our Cycling Strategy aligns with the cycling policies of the provinces of Groningen and Drenthe, particularly when it comes to encouraging cycling, creating cross-regional cycling routes and improving cycling safety. Within municipal policy, this Cycling Strategy is a policy intention to be incorporated in the policy structure of the Environmental Act.





In the coming years, we will be working on creating a new cycling route along the Oosterhamrik Canal towards sports centre Kardinge.

**7.6**

Groningen residents rate cycling in our municipality with an average of 7.6 out of 10.

**WE AIM FOR**

**10!**

In addition, we will create an attractive continuous cycling route along the quay near the Stadshavens district.

### Korreweg

Korreweg will become a bicycle street. The cyclist will have right of way, the car adapts - this makes it more pleasant and safer for cyclists. This is already one of the busiest cycling routes in Groningen!

Layout of the Korreweg bicycle street, Groningen

### Gerrit Krol Bridge

The Gerrit Krol Bridge is an extension of Korreweg. It's an important link for cyclists, pedestrians, people with reduced mobility and motorised traffic.

Design future Gerrit Krol Bridge. RIJKSWATERSTAAT

### Paddepoelster Bridge

The Paddepoelster Bridge is an essential link between the City and the Surrounding Area, for both cyclists and pedestrians. The new design means the bridge benefits from a fixed, high structure with comfortable access ramps, offering a safe and smooth crossing over the Van Starckenborgh Canal.

Design Paddepoelster Bridge. NEY & PARTNERS



Eikenlaan, Groningen

# CHALLENGES

## A Growing City

## FOR GRONINGEN CYCLING CITY

**With nearly 250,000 inhabitants, Groningen is the sixth largest municipality in the Netherlands. And it doesn't stop there, because over the next decade, the population is set to increase towards 300,000 inhabitants. To accommodate this growth, construction is in full swing in districts such as Meerstad, De Suikerzijde, De Nieuwe Held and Stadshavens. In addition to an increase in the number of inhabitants, employment will grow by approximately 30,000 jobs in 2040.**

**In addition, Groningen continues to attract large numbers of students.**

The growth in the number of inhabitants and the number of jobs, as well as an increase in the number of visitors, naturally have consequences for the accessibility of Groningen. Cycling routes to important economic areas such as Europapark, Zernike Campus, the UMCG (University Medical Centre Groningen) and the city centre will become increasingly busy. More cyclists will also use the Europapark, North, and soon De Suikerzijde railway stations, as regional train services are extended and no longer end or begin at the Central Railway Station. Groningen is preparing for a future in which cycling will play an even more important role in the daily lives of our residents.

## Cycling for everyday Life

The bicycle is much more than just a means of transport; it's a basic necessity. For people on a tight budget, cycling is the best way to get around and about. It enables them to use facilities outside their own neighbourhoods. In addition, having a bicycle increases people's chances of participation in society and promotes social contact.

Cycling is also healthy. It improves fitness levels, provides relaxation and reduces the risk of illness. For example, employees who cycle to work are less likely to become ill. Oh, and cycling makes you happy! Research shows that children are happier when they cycle to school. Cycling widens the daily experience of our children and, as cyclists, they are in direct contact with their environment. Cycling encourages social interaction in public spaces, making the streetscape appear friendlier and calmer compared to motorised traffic.

**3-14 months**

People who cycle/exercise daily live 3 to 14 months longer.

## It's getting busier and busier

The cycle paths in Groningen, Haren, Ten Boer and Hoogkerk are being used more and more intensively. Especially during rush hour. While new cycle paths are often wide enough, many older cycle paths, designed in the 1970s or 1980s, are not wide enough to accommodate the growing number of cyclists. Bicycles, such as cargo bikes, have become wider and heavier over the years. And electric bicycles ride a lot faster. The combination of more cyclists and greater mass and speed differences on the cycle path has consequences for road safety. That's why it is more important than ever to invest in maintenance, wider cycle paths, alternative cycling routes and encouraging good cycling behaviour.

We therefore strive to ensure that everyone can cycle safely and comfortably in our municipality, regardless of the type of bicycle they have. We want wide, well-maintained cycle paths that offer sufficient space for all bicycles, from cargo bikes to electric bicycles.

## Sharing the City

In Groningen, more and more people are cycling, and our bicycles are becoming faster and heavier. This leads to more conflicts with other road users and sometimes even tensions among cyclists. Larger speed differences lead to more frequent and faster overtaking or sometimes even people being cut off, which can cause irritation. Using mobile phones and headphones while cycling can cause accidents. And some of us have a short fuse from time to time, we are people after all. Unfortunately, breaking traffic rules seems to have become more acceptable for a small group of people.

Of course, the law of the strongest does not apply. It's important that we take each other into account, especially on the bicycle. That's the message we want to convey: together we ensure a safe and respectful environment for all.

**91%**

of our residents consider the bicycle to be the most important means of transport in Groningen.

## Keeping it safe

After years of decline, the number of bicycle accidents in Groningen is rising again. This increase is related to the rise of the electric bicycle. In addition, the number of residents, employees and visitors is growing, which in turn leads to more cyclists on the streets. In addition, we started cycling a lot more together in general.

Every accident is one too many and we strive to reduce the number of accidents. In the coming years, we want to improve cycling safety in Groningen. We will therefore work towards a safer cycling environment for everyone, together with our residents.

**48.5%**

of all trips are made by bicycle; nowhere in the world is this figure as high as in Groningen!



Rode Weeshuisstraat, Groningen



Wilhelminakade, Groningen



Walfridusbrug, Groningen



# FUTURE PROOF

## GRONINGEN CYCLING CITY FIVE STRATEGIES

**The bicycle is inextricably linked to Dutch culture. Cherishing this and strengthening this sentiment even further is important. This Cycling Strategy aims to prepare Groningen as a cycling city for the future, thus responding to the future needs of cyclists as much as possible.**

**In this strategy, we emphasise creating a pleasant and (socially) safe cycling environment in which everyone can participate. We want a cycling network that is logical and connected, one that responds to the needs of different cyclists. We believe it is important that cycling remains the most attractive mode of transport and contributes to the quality of life of all our residents and visitors. We will achieve this based on five strategies.**

# Strategy 1

## BICYCLES FIRST

**In the municipality of Groningen, we travel by bicycle most of the time. We can easily find our way from A to B via bicycle highways, main cycling routes and the basic network. In recent decades, significant investments have been made in connecting neighbourhoods, villages, tourist attractions and economic areas. Many new cycling routes have been created so that cyclists can reach places easily and effectively.**

**But with a growing number of inhabitants, it is necessary to continue investing in new cycling facilities. It is essential to connect new districts such as De Suikerzijde and Stadshavens, as well as Meerstad, with the rest of the municipality and to connect them well. In a new district, the first route is a bicycling route. This means that new residents can cycle out of their neighbourhoods or villages from day one. A good example of this is the Suikerzijde route, which is even extended to Hoogkerk. From Grote Markt, a new resident can cycle to the new urban district in 8 minutes!**

## Bicycle highway

Our cross-regional cycling routes offer commuters and students a fast and comfortable alternative to the car or public transport. They provide fast and direct cycling connections between the city of Groningen and the surrounding villages. Thanks to the right of way cyclists enjoy in most places, they can continue cycling as much as possible without having to stop. Once in Groningen, the bicycle highway ends at the edge of the city centre.

Together with the provinces of Groningen and Drenthe, we continue to invest in our cycling routes. This effort is paying off, because more and more people are choosing to cycle to the city from the surrounding villages. This will reduce traffic congestion and improve accessibility to our city and region. Moreover, these routes are highly appreciated by users. In general, cycling routes in rural areas are not illuminated to preserve nature and dark areas as much as possible, unless social safety or road safety requires this. In addition to traditional lighting, we also use alternative solutions such as reflectors, light points or orientation lighting to mark the cycle path.

## Main cycling routes

Within built-up areas, main cycling routes are the most important cycle connections. These routes are used intensively and must therefore be comfortable, (socially) safe and direct. The current quality of the main cycling network still shows room for improvement in some places. Some cycling routes are not suitable for large volumes of cyclists. That's why we are going to further improve the existing network.

In our municipality, many cycling routes are still focused on the city centre of Groningen. Destinations like Karding, Zernike Campus, the University Medical Centre Groningen, The Martini Hospital and De Suikerzijde are becoming increasingly important and therefore busier. Railway stations such as Europapark, North and soon De Suikerzijde will also be used more frequently, as trains continue their journey and the Central Railway Station is not or no longer automatically the departure point or final destination. In addition, more and more people are cycling from the villages to the city (and vice versa). We are joining the missing links in the cycling network to better connect these destinations. This way, we ensure that bicycle traffic is better distributed over different cycling routes. Cyclists will no longer have to cycle through the busy city centre to their destination.

**More and more people are cycling from the surrounding villages to the city.**



## WHAT DOES THE GRONINGEN MAIN CYCLING NETWORK LOOK LIKE?

**Our main cycling routes connect villages and residential areas with important destinations. The main cycling routes consist not only of cycle paths, but also of cycle streets and sometimes residential streets. Because these routes are busier than those within the basic cycling network, they deserve extra attention.**

**We therefore apply high quality standards to the main cycling network with regard to design, lighting, management and maintenance. This ensures that main cycling routes are (socially) safe, comfortable and attractive for cyclists at all times.**

### **Main cycling routes:**

- are preferably at least three metres wide, in case of a one-way cycle path, so that cyclists can easily overtake each other;
- are at least 4.5 metres wide, in case of a two-way cycle path, so that cyclists can pass each other safely;
- are preferably dual-sided, meaning that there are one-way cycle paths on either side of the road;
- benefit from closed surfaces to ensure cycling comfort and safety;
- preferably do not have curbs to reduce the consequences of steering errors. If a curb is nevertheless necessary, we opt for cycle-friendly curbs to reduce the consequences of an accident;
- comply with the guidelines set by CROW (information and technology centre for transport and infrastructure) regarding slope severity and slope percentage;
- are coloured red as cycle paths within built-up areas, so that they are noticeable and recognisable;
- are always illuminated by public lighting when in urban areas;
- have right of way where cyclists cross motorised traffic, provided that this can be achieved without compromising traffic safety;
- are gritted as a priority during winter weather, so that cyclists can use the routes safely in every season;
- are maintained as a priority, as part of which wear and tear, roots heave, excessive roadside growth, broken lighting and other problems and issues are addressed quickly and effectively;
- are attractive and can sometimes be a bit curvy, as that keeps cycling varied and fun.





## The basic network

Cycling routes other than bicycle highways or main cycling routes are part of the fine-meshed basic cycling network. These cycling routes form an essential link between residential areas, neighbourhoods and the main cycling network. They ensure that residents, students or employees can easily access the main cycling network from their home, school or workplace.

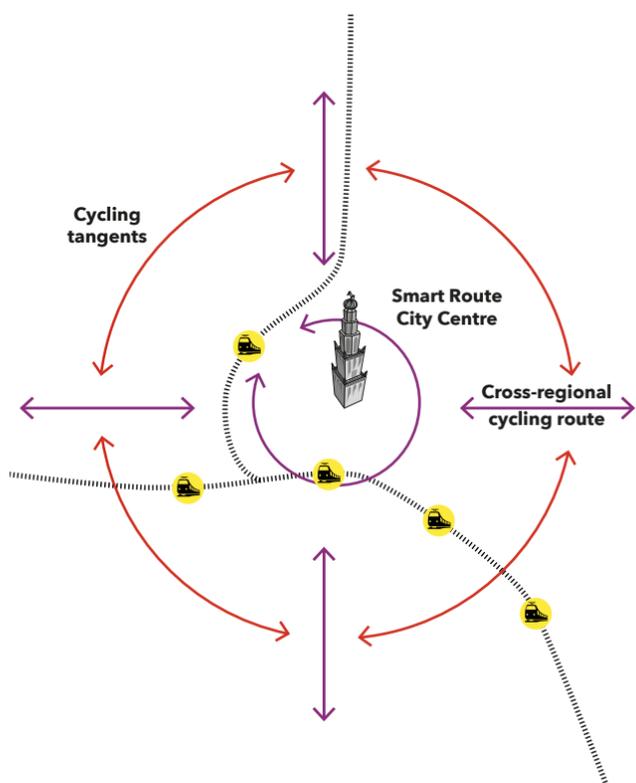
In this basic network, bicycle and motorised traffic often converge; separating the two is often not feasible and usually not necessary. That is why we pay extra attention to road safety and the quality of life within this network, so that safety and comfort are guaranteed for all users. This also means that we apply a maximum speed principle within built-up areas of 30 kilometres per hour.

## The Smart Route City Centre

Groningen has traditionally played a central role in the Northern Netherlands. This is clearly visible from the many roads and cycling routes that lead to the heart of the city in the form of radials. For many cyclists, this means that their route often runs via Grote Markt, even if the city centre is not their final destination. This leads to unnecessary congestion and conflicts. So, for through-cycling traffic that does not have a destination in the city centre, we focus on high-quality alternative cycling routes, so-called tangents.

We are developing the Smart City Centre Route around the city centre, making it more attractive to cycle via the canals and the Diepenring Canal. We also deploy this cycling route when certain cycling routes in the city centre are unavailable due to, for example, the weekly market or an event. Having a good alternative cycling route in hand ensures that bicycle traffic in and around the city centre is better distributed, making the centre more accessible and safer for everyone. We are also improving the cycling tangents between neighbourhoods further away from the city centre, such as between Vinkhuizen and Haren via De Suikerzijde, where there is no direct connection. This means you do not have to cycle to your destination through the lively city centre.

We naturally want to continue to facilitate cyclists departing from or with a destination in the city centre as best as possible. Cyclists should be able to reach their destinations as easily and efficiently as possible, even if it is sometimes a little slower, and they should feel welcome. That is why we are creating a new north-south connection via Pelsterstraat and Guldenstraat. This way, a student can easily cycle from the Central Railway Station to the Academy Building. All this while an east-west connection for cyclists remains necessary in the city centre as well.



**312km**  
Groningen's cycling infrastructure measures no less than 312 kilometres.



## All cyclists are given green lights simultaneously

Traffic lights are a source of frustration for many cyclists. Cycling smoothly without having to stop is much easier. That is why we design new cycling routes without traffic lights, as much as possible. However, in some places they are indispensable to ensure road safety.

In our municipality, cyclists are often in the majority. That's why we strive to give cyclists green lights more often than cars. We apply a maximum waiting time of 60 seconds and, where possible, we will even shorten it to 40 seconds.

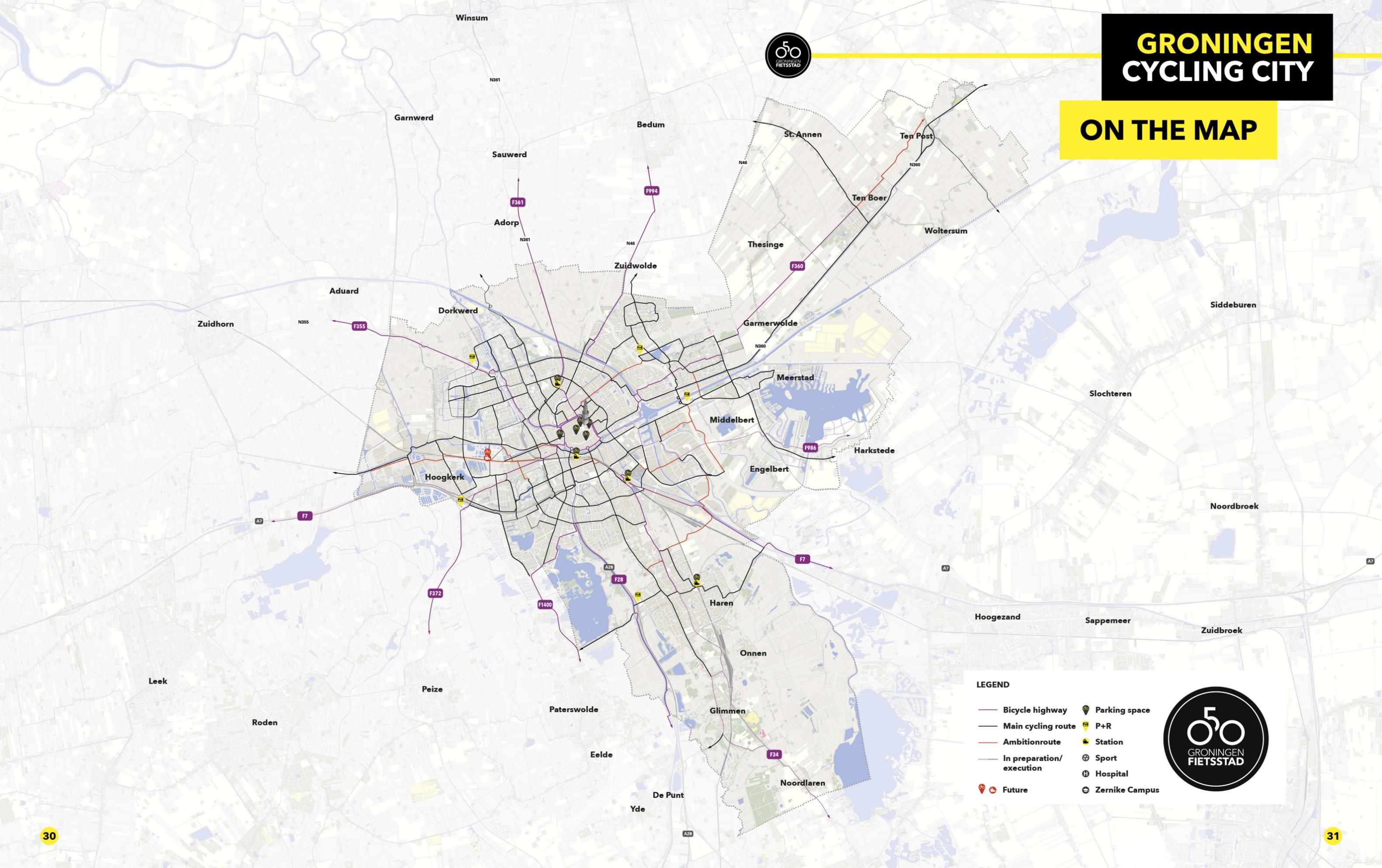
Since 1989, we have applied the 'all cyclists green simultaneously' principle in many places. Fatal accidents between cyclists and (turning) motorised traffic at these intersections have been eliminated. The benefits of 'all cyclists green simultaneously' are clear:

- cyclists can now turn left in one go, without having to do this in two stages, i.e. no need to wait for another red traffic light;
- there is no intersection with (heavy) motorised traffic, which means cyclists can cross much more safely;
- many cyclists can reach the other side simultaneously in a short period of time.

**31**  
Cyclists are given the green light simultaneously at 31 intersections, this is more than anywhere else in the Netherlands.

# GRONINGEN CYCLING CITY

## ON THE MAP



### LEGEND

- Bicycle highway
- Main cycling route
- Ambitionroute
- In preparation/execution
- 📍 Future
- 🚗 Parking space
- 🚗 P+R
- 🚉 Station
- ⚽ Sport
- 🏥 Hospital
- 🏫 Zernike Campus





# SAFETY FIRST



# Strategy 2

## SAFE CYCLING FOR EVERYONE

**We cycle more and more in our municipality.**

**Our cycle paths are becoming busier and the number of accidents is rising again after years of decline.**

**This causes irritation and people feel unsafe, which is a shame, because cycling is healthy and fun and it should stay that way. That's why we're taking various measures to make cycling safer.**



## Management and maintenance

In the coming years, we are committed to improving the quality of our cycle paths. We will provide comfortable, safe and clean cycle paths, making problems such as poor or uneven road surfaces, worn-out signs, root heave, annoying manhole covers, poor or broken lighting, and excessive roadside growth a thing of the past. With additional financial resources, we can carry out minor maintenance faster and better, while performing major maintenance more frequently. We naturally opt for sustainable and high-quality solutions. Whilst performing major maintenance, we at the same time check whether we can widen cycle paths and install cycle-friendly curbs to improve road safety. We proactively plan cycle path maintenance, paying special attention to winter measures and long-term protection of the road surface. Main cycling routes are always gritted first in winter conditions. We actively respond to reports from residents and visitors, so that we can work together to ensure optimal quality of our cycle paths. This way, we make Groningen even more bicycle-friendly!

## Separating and spreading

We strive for cycling routes that are safe and accessible for everyone, from young to old and from commuters to residents of Groningen. Many cycle paths in our municipality are so busy that cycling is no longer a pleasant experience. This is partly caused by the increased speed differences on the cycle path. Cyclists overtake each other more often, which leads to conflicts. Because everyone should feel safe on the cycle path, we focus on spreading out the bicycle traffic. The cycling network will undergo a scale increase in the coming years, with the addition of new routes, including a connection between Karding and the city centre, and between Vinkhuizen, De Suikerzijde and Haren. We are creating better connections between villages, neighbourhoods and destinations outside the city centre, so that cyclists are no longer dependent on routes through the busy city centre. This will ensure that bicycle traffic is better distributed across the municipality, thereby reducing pressure on individual cycle paths or at least not compounding the issue.

In the coming years, we will be lowering the speed limit on more and more roads in Groningen from 50 to 30 kilometres per hour. At the same time, we are making these roads friendlier to use. Many of these roads have separate cycle paths. A speed reduction offers the opportunity to safely move fast speed pedelecs, (light) mopeds and other fast cyclists from the cycle path to the main road. On the main road they can continue their way uninterrupted, while there is more space left on the cycle path for more vulnerable cyclists. This means that on many cycle paths within the built-up area of Groningen, cycling speeds are limited to 25 kilometres per hour. Faster cyclists will be given the choice to cycle on the main road.

**We will provide comfortable, safe and clean cycle paths.**



The installation of the bicycle bridge over the ring road, part of the Winsum - Groningen continuous cycling route. PHOTO: PETER WASSING

## Consistency in traffic design

Cyclists being able to accurately assess the traffic situation from a distance is helpful. In certain places in the cycling network within our municipality, the right of way rules are inconsistent. For example, cyclists have right of way on one roundabout but not on another. This can cause confusion among road users and create unsafe situations.

In the coming years, we will revise the design of intersections, roundabouts and the moped and scooter network, where possible. We will also remove as many bicycle posts as possible. We only leave these in those places where it improves cyclist safety and prevents cars from using the cycle path as a shortcut.

### School Plan

All primary schools are approached by the municipality to work together and think of a safer design of the school environment.

## Cycling safely to school

Research shows that children who cycle or walk to school are happier. As a result, Dutch children are often happier and more independent than children in many other European countries. Every child in our community should be able to walk or cycle to school safely! Together with Traffic Guide Groningen, we are committed to making school environments for both primary and secondary schools safer through our School Plan. Measures are primarily aimed at reducing the number of cars in the school environment itself, lowering the speed limit, making school routes safer and entering into behavioural agreements with parents. We will also pay extra attention to creating sufficient waiting and parking spaces at schools for parents who pick up and drop off their children by bicycle.

In addition, we offer educational children's cycling routes for schoolchildren, such as in Ten Boer. These routes are specially designed to ensure the safety of children, with lower speeds and clear intersections. This way, they can cycle safely to school without being endangered by motorised traffic. Plus, there are educational elements along the way!

## Safe routes and quiet times

The liveliness and bustle of the city centre give Groningen its charm. However, for a growing group of residents, this hustle and bustle can sometimes be less pleasant. That's why we're committed to offering quiet and safe cycling routes to important destinations such as the city centre, the University Medical Centre Groningen (UMCG), and shopping centres in neighbourhoods and villages.

We ensure that these cycling routes are clear and suitable for vulnerable cyclists, without unnecessary detours. We provide insight into which routes are quiet and at what times vulnerable cyclists are safest. Where possible, we link up with existing programmes, such as Keep Peddling, to promote cycling for vulnerable groups.

## Social safety

In Groningen, social safety on the cycle path for all is important. We are therefore committed to well-lit and safe cycling routes, where it is essential that the lighting always works. Busy cycling routes benefit from more social control, thus contributing to a safer feeling for all road users.

On quiet routes, such as outside built-up areas, social safety is often less. Instead of the obvious, we opt *not* to illuminate routes in rural areas, to avoid a false sense of security and to limit light pollution. When designing new cycling routes, we ensure visibility from homes or activities along the cycle path, thereby increasing social control. We design tunnels and underpasses with sufficient space and openness, and clear starting and ending points. Of course, the lighting must be excellent here, so cyclists always feel safe.

**Children who cycle or walk to school will be happier!**



Sportlaan, Ten Boer



Lake Paterswoldsemeer, Paterswolde

# Strategy 3

## SPACE TO PARK SPACE TO MOVE

**Nowhere in the world do people cycle as much as they do in our municipality. And yet the bicycle is idle and parked most of the time. Parked bicycles are part of the charm of Groningen Cycling City. In places where the sheer number of parked bicycles causes a nuisance in the public space, we provide additional parking spaces. We do this both in the city centre and at major destinations and public transport hubs outside the centre. We believe it is important to create sufficient parking spaces, because it contributes to an easily accessible and pleasant public space for all. In Groningen, quality of life is paramount in everything we do!**

**A pleasant place to park makes it more attractive to travel by bike.**

A pleasant place to park your bicycle makes it more attractive for people to take the bicycle. It must be possible to park the bicycle safely and comfortably, whilst providing easy access. This applies not only to regular city bicycles, but also to tricycles, children's bicycles, sports bicycles and other types of bikes. Clear rules for parking bicycles are not only beneficial to cyclists themselves, but also contribute to better use of public space. The freed-up space will benefit pedestrians, families with prams, and wheelchair users and mobility scooters, among others.



## Our calling card? Free parking in the city centre

For many people, a visit to the city centre begins and ends with a visit to one of our bicycle parking facilities. They are our visiting card and that is why we strive to keep them accessible, safe and clean. When cyclists travel to the city centre, there must be attractive places to park their bicycles.

In the coming years, we will be developing new parking facilities at Herestraat, Westerhaven and the area around Vismarkt. These facilities are designed as pleasant and safe places offering a large number of parking spaces. In addition to indoor bicycle parking, we will continue to offer parking spaces on the street. They are easy-to-find and clearly recognisable bicycle compartments and racks. They are mainly intended for short (shopping) visits and for people who cannot walk long distances to ultimately reach their destinations. This way, we take different needs into account. Every cyclist, regardless of the type of bicycle or personal situation, can find a suitable parking space. During busy periods, we respond to needs by providing pop-ups or other temporary parking spaces. We provide special parking spaces for non-standard bicycles, such as cargo bikes, fat bikes and bicycles with three or four wheels. By specifically encouraging specific target groups to park their bicycles in the most suitable place, we contribute to creating an attractive and accessible public space.



Nieuwe Markt, Groningen



## Bicycle parks as part of spatial development

In our municipality, bicycle parking forms an integral part of spatial planning. During redevelopment plans, we work with developers, for example, to ensure that parking facilities are properly integrated. We take into account factors such as distance to existing bicycle parking facilities, bicycle flows, the intensity of bicycle traffic, the available space and the needs of the surrounding area. By structurally incorporating bicycle parking facilities into our plans, we ensure suitable, easily accessible facilities. This way, we contribute to efficient use of space, ease of use for cyclists and a more attractive living environment.

## Bicycle parks for residents

Outside the city centre, there's often plenty of space to park your bicycle in a shed, garden or at your front door. However, this is not possible in the city centre, leaving public spaces often as the only option for parking bicycles. We use bicycle platforms to convert car parking spaces into bicycle racks, thereby offering a smart and flexible solution for bicycle parking.

Even in new area developments, space is sometimes scarce. That's why bicycle parking should always be an integral part of new construction and redevelopment projects, large or small. We are working on new Groningen bicycle parking standards in new construction projects, so that future residents can store their bicycles safely and dry in their own parking facilities. We also look for solutions for parking facilities during renovations and at and near existing buildings. Existing and new bicycle parking facilities in the neighbourhood can play an important role in this.

## Parking at destinations

Our municipality has many regional facilities that serve the entire Northern Netherlands, such as higher education institutions, top sports facilities and event venues, as well as the University Medical Centre Groningen (UMCG) and the Martini Hospital. Together with these partners, we ensure that there are sufficient numbers of safe bicycle parking spaces, so that visitors can comfortably park their bicycles without compromising public space. This applies to locations both in the city centre and outside.

In the coming years, major public spaces such as Karding, Oosterpoort and Martiniplaza will be renovated, rebuilt or even relocated. Many visitors come by bicycle and therefore these areas need proper bicycle parking. We will ensure that there is sufficient parking capacity available to cycle to these destinations.

## Parking at events

Numerous events are organised annually in our municipality, both in the city and in the villages. Many visitors travel by bicycle and we would like to keep it that way. We strive to make every event a success, which includes offering comfortable and safe parking spaces. By working together with the organisers, we ensure that bicycle parking at events is always properly arranged. This contributes to a positive experience for all event visitors.



Impression of the new bicycle park, Herestraat, Groningen



Event in Stadspark, Groningen



P+R facility, Hoogkerk

# Parking of shared bicycles

An extensive network of shared bicycles ensures that residents and visitors can use an electric shared bicycle or scooter available within walking distance, without having to buy one themselves. They offer a flexible and sustainable way of travel, ideal to cover the last few kilometres from, for example, P+R facilities, railway stations and other public transport stops. Strategically placed digital parking zones and physical shared mobility hubs create recognisable and well-organized parking spaces. This makes door-to-door travel easy, even without your own bicycle or scooter.

# Transfer points

In Groningen, cycling can be perfectly combined with other means of transport. For example, many commuters use the P+R facility to park their cars and continue their journey by bicycle. Others take the train and from there cycle to their final destination.

Our Europapark, North and Haren railway stations plus soon, the new station at De Suikerzijde have grown in importance as regional train services are extended and no longer start or end at the Central Railway Station. Departing from a railway station other than Central Station has become more attractive and draws in additional passengers. At the same time, this requires additional parking spaces at these railway stations. We are therefore fully committed to better cycling routes to railway stations and more parking capacity.



# Bicycle parking in figures:

## Bicycle parks City Centre:

|                                |       |
|--------------------------------|-------|
| Nieuwe Markt                   | 1,500 |
| Grote Markt                    | 1,500 |
| Westerhaven                    | 1,000 |
| Herestraat                     | 500   |
| Haddingestraat                 | 1,000 |
| City Centre West (search area) | 2,000 |

## At railway stations:

|                 |        |
|-----------------|--------|
| Central Station | 17,500 |
| North           | 470    |
| Haren           | 570    |
| Europapark      | 1,300  |

## P+R facility:

|          |     |
|----------|-----|
| Reitdiep | 100 |
| Kardinge | 110 |
| Hoogkerk | 540 |
| Haren    | 305 |
| Meerstad | 220 |

# Strategy 4 GRONINGEN CYCLING CITY

**In the municipality of Groningen, we cherish our love for our bicycle. On the bike you can reach the beautiful surrounding area and be immersed in nature within fifteen minutes. Our municipality offers an attractive living and working environment, in which proper cycling facilities make life even more enjoyable.**

**Cycling contributes to the economic growth and vitality of our municipality, because everything is easily accessible by bicycle. Living and working in Groningen, with cycling as an indispensable part of our daily lives. Groningen therefore leads by example for all other municipalities in the Netherlands and abroad.**



## Promotion and communication

The cycling policy of the municipality of Groningen has been internationally leading for years. We want to further strengthen this status by actively promoting our position as Groningen Cycling City. We regularly receive visitors from across the globe who want to learn from our cycling approach. And vice versa, we generate new ideas from them.

Knowledge sharing and international cooperation not only strengthen our image as a cycling city, but also contribute to the local economy, for example, through hotel stays and other economic activities. We also use the Groningen Cycling City brand to raise positive awareness among residents and visitors about important topics such as bicycle parking, traffic rules and road behaviour.

## Smart campaigns

In Groningen it is self-evident that everyone is well informed about the traffic rules and has also learned to cycle safely. Traffic Guide Groningen provides information and organises educational programmes and campaigns that encourage correct cycling behaviour.

For example, we focus on primary school children making the transition to secondary education. They switch to a new, sometimes electric bicycle, and have to get used to a new school route with often more traffic. In addition, new residents, such as foreign students and employees, as well as children and the elderly, receive help in learning to cycle. They learn about right of way rules, the use of bicycle lights and where you are and are not allowed to cycle. These programmes also increasingly pay attention to the use of bicycle helmets.

We believe it is important to treat each other politely in traffic. This also applies to parking your bicycle. You should be able to quickly park your bicycle in a rack or space in front of the shop, but of course not on a zebra crossing, guide lane for the blind or walking route. Through smart campaigns, we will remind our residents and visitors to continue to take each other into account.



Emmalein, Groningen



Groningen Cycling City is on social media, follow us on Instagram! @groningenfietsstad

## Strict supervision

If we obey the traffic rules, cycling becomes a lot safer. However, deploying campaigns alone is not always sufficient. Enforcement by the police and special enforcement officers can increase safety on the cycle path. They can ensure that traffic rules, such as not cycling through red lights, not using your mobile when cycling and correct use of bicycle lights are observed.

This contributes to a community where we take each other into account and where cycling is safe, pleasant and responsible.

The rise of the fat bike also requires targeted attention. In particular, the use of illegally tuned fat bikes and unsafe driving behaviour are being addressed to improve road safety.

**The world looks to Groningen as a cycling city. We keep moving forward and sharing what we learn.**

## Leading by example

Groningen people are known for their down-to-earth attitude. We are proud of what we achieve, but we don't shout it from the rooftops. However, it is important that Groningen Cycling City remains on the map, both nationally and internationally. In recent years, our progressive cycling policy has attracted a lot of international attention. Visits by various (international) experts and delegations not only provide inspiration, but also offer valuable examples of what works or doesn't work elsewhere. This keeps us sharp, ensures we stay informed of new developments and opens the door to collaborations, subsidies and knowledge exchange. By actively continuing to emphasise our position as a cycling city, we not only retain our leading position, but we also contribute to better cycling facilities elsewhere. That's why we like to share our lessons learned with the outside world, for example at a national or international cycling event.

## Promoting cycling

The saying 'Once learned, never forgotten' certainly applies to cycling. We attach great importance to our youngest residents learning to cycle safely to school as early as primary school. That is why we continue to invest in offering cycling competency lessons through Traffic Guide Groningen.

In our municipality, we want employers to lead by example when it comes to sustainable mobility. In the coming years, we will therefore actively work to further promote the use of bicycles as a means of transport. Cycling not only contributes to a more accessible municipality, it's also sustainable and promotes a healthy lifestyle. To support this, we encourage employers to make cycling financially attractive for their employees. This makes the choice to leave the car at home even easier. The result? Less traffic congestion in Groningen, a cleaner environment and healthier residents.

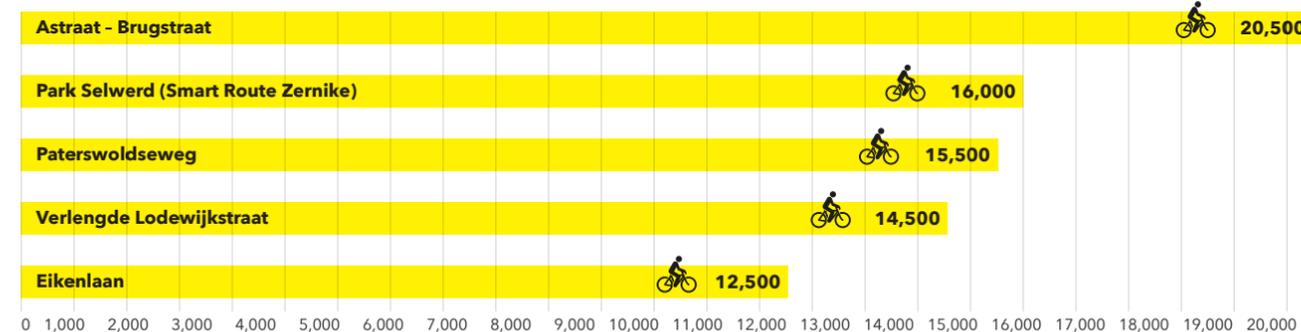
## Data and monitoring

A decade ago, we couldn't have predicted how popular electric bicycles would become, just as we couldn't have predicted the popularity of the smartphone. The future is difficult to predict, but one thing is certain: in ten years, we will likely have access to much more cycling data than we can imagine today. This offers opportunities for improving data and the monitoring of projects and cycling infrastructure. A road safety monitor will soon provide us with better insight into cycling intensities, bottlenecks and cycling accidents. At present, the number of traffic accidents is still being under-reported, especially among cyclists, but we expect to gain more insight in the future. In addition, we will continue to closely monitor levels of satisfaction with cycling routes and bicycle parking facilities through biennial surveys. This allows us to take targeted measures and improve safety for all cyclists. Naturally, we ensure that this is done whilst respecting the privacy of our residents and visitors.



Penningsdijk, Groningen

### Top 5 busiest cycling routes



# Strategy 5 CYCLING FOR RECREATION AND WELL-BEING

**Cycling is fun and connects us with nature and with each other. Whether it's a relaxing ride from home or an adventurous day trip, cycling gives us a sense of freedom and joy. In recent years, we've seen an increase in recreational cycling: we're cycling more often, longer and further.**

**The group of racing cyclists is growing steadily in our municipality, whilst mountain biking is gaining in popularity as well. In addition, we welcome thousands of cycling tourists from across the border each year who go on to spend more than one hundred Euros per person per day on our local economy. We therefore continue to invest in the leisure economy and in initiatives that make cycling even more attractive.**

## Popular and recreational cycling routes

Tour around Lake Paterswoldsemeer

Cycling route through Noorderplantsoen

Along Reitdiep

## Opportunities for recreation

The province of Groningen, and our municipality in particular, has a great deal to offer in terms of tourism. We are blessed with enormous cultural and landscape wealth and diversity. We also have plenty of space where it's pleasant to stay. A large and comprehensive network of provincial cycling routes of over two thousand kilometres ensures that many kilometres can be covered by bicycle. Cycling routes take you past the most beautiful places in our municipality and beyond. Tourists, holidaymakers and our own residents can all enjoy themselves to the fullest. Cycling in our province is currently rated at 7.8, while nationally this figure is 8.2.

## Accessibility of our landscapes

From our municipality, various cultural landscapes are easily accessible by bicycle. Think of the Reitdiepdal river valley, the secluded landscape in southern Westerkwartier, the endless views in the peat districts or the most beautiful nature reserve in the Netherlands: UNESCO world heritage site Wadden Sea. You can also cycle to the Drentsche Aa National Park, Hondsrug Geopark and the Onlanden nature reserve in Drenthe.

There is of course much beauty to discover closer to the city of Groningen: characteristic farms, medieval churches, stately castles and beautiful villages (including Winsum, voted the most beautiful village in the Netherlands in 2020). Two long-distance cycling routes, known as LF routes, pass through our municipality: the LF14 Saxon Route from Lauwersoog to Enschede and the LF9 NAP route from Bad Nieuweschans to Breda. In addition, the EuroVelo 12 route runs along the municipality of Groningen, thus offering opportunities for the local economy by attracting more cyclists to the municipality.





## Impulse for recreational cycling

Together with the province of Groningen, we want to give tourism in our region a significant boost in the coming years, in line with our neighbouring provinces of Friesland and Drenthe. We want to take maximum advantage of our tourist potential. The Nij Begun economic agenda offers us great opportunities and resources to further develop recreational cycling policies and products.

Together with our partners, we lift recreational cycling to a higher level. We are improving the (cycling) infrastructure with projects such as the new Paddepoelster Bridge, a unique connection within the Pieterpad walking route. We are also adding recreational cycle paths, such as between Woltersum and Ten Boer, renewing the road surface quality and maintaining the verges. We also keep the cycling junction network up-to-date and integrate it better with the local economy, thereby encouraging recreational cyclists to stop at local shops and restaurants. This not only enhances the route experience, but also provides an economic boost to the region.

Recreational cyclists in our municipality are often attracted by the special landscapes near Haren, Glimmen and Onnen, Kardinge, Thesinge and picturesque Reitdiep. These areas are loved for their character and tranquillity. When maintaining recreational cycle paths, we ensure that the quality of these unique areas is preserved, with a focus on experience and safety rather than speed and width. We strive to keep signs and signposting to a minimum and combine them where possible, so that the natural experience of the landscape is not disrupted.

# GETTING STARTED!

**WE HAVE TRANSLATED THE FIVE THEMES OF THE NEW CYCLING STRATEGY INTO CONCRETE MEASURES, AS SHOWN IN THE OVERVIEW ALONGSIDE.**

## BICYCLES FIRST

- Smart cycling route around the city centre
- New cycling routes from Kardingse to the city centre, Haren to Vinkhuizen via Stadspark and Suikerzijde, and Meerstad to Groningen South/Haren
- Improving cycling routes to and from our villages
- Improving cycling routes between destinations (tangents)
- Designing Pelsterstraat as a new cycling route in the city centre
- New bicycle highway to Zuidlaren, Harkstede and Delfzijl
- Bicycle bridge 'Reitdieploer' between Vinkhuizen and Paddepoel
- More right of way for cyclists at traffic lights

## SAFE CYCLING FOR EVERYONE

- Mopeds are given more opportunities to use the main road
- Working towards a more consistent traffic design (roundabouts, right of way)
- Cycling facilities are being constructed in a 'cycle-friendly' manner
- The quality of management and maintenance of cycling facilities is high
- Increasing cycling safety, especially among vulnerable groups such as children and the elderly
- More traffic education in collaboration with Traffic Guide Groningen

## SPACE TO PARK SPACE TO MOVE

- New bicycle parks at Herestraat, Westerhaven and around Vismarkt
- Developing Groningen bicycle parking standards
- Bicycle parks in public spaces
- Bicycle parks at Suikerzijde station
- Parking at new crowd-pullers and events
- Strategy for parking bicycles in and around the city centre
- Sufficient parking capacity at (new) railway stations, P+R facilities and important bus stops

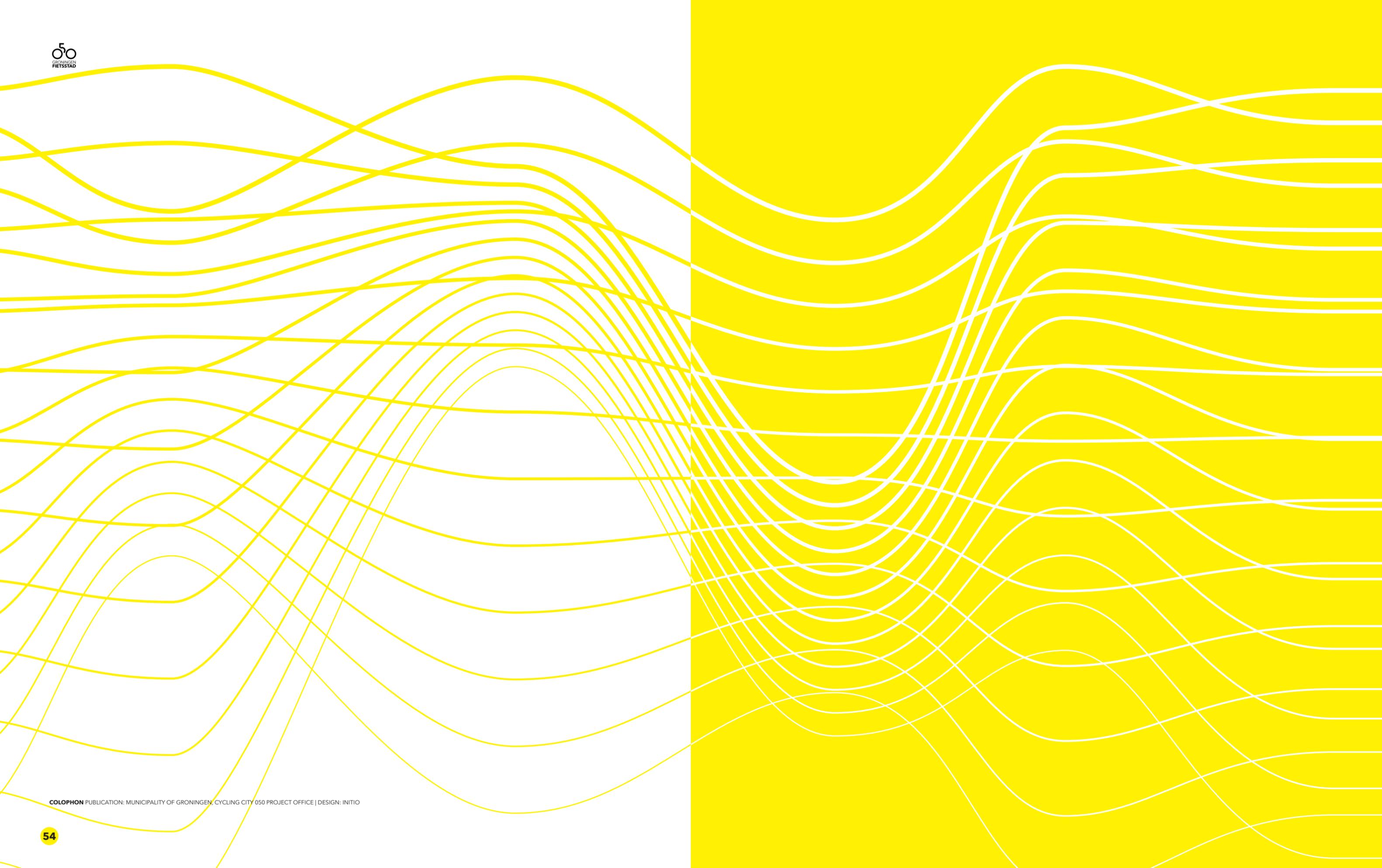
## GRONINGEN CYCLING CITY

- Positive behaviour campaigns to encourage correct cycling behaviour
- Informing city centre visitors about cycling facilities
- Promoting Groningen Cycling City at conferences and events
- Promoting cycling among target groups (children, elderly, employers)
- Increased enforcement of dangerous cycling behaviour
- Organisation of a large (inter) national cycling conference
- Diversions are short, logical and clearly indicated

## CYCLING FOR RECREATION AND WELL-BEING

- Improving existing recreational cycling routes and creating new ones
- Promoting cycling recreation in Groningen
- Improved information provision for recreational cyclists
- Construction of the Paddepoelster Bridge
- Update of the cycling junction network in our region

**IN THE COMING YEARS, WE WILL WORK HARD ON THE IMPLEMENTATION TO MAKE THIS STRATEGY A SUCCESS.**



**YOUR GRONINGEN.  
YOUR  
CYCLING  
CITY**



**Municipality of Groningen**

**CYCLING STRATEGY 2025 · 2035**