![Palm Beach Transportation Planning Agency logo] PALM BEACH Transportation Planning Agency

2025 Bike Immersion Program Summary

April 14 - 18, 2025

Purpose

The Dutch Bicycle Embassy hosted a delegation of South Florida elected officials and transportation leaders to experience international best practices in bicycle infrastructure, network design, and integrated mobility systems. Participants examined how leading cities such as Amsterdam, Utrecht, Houten, and Paris have used policy, infrastructure, and culture to prioritize safe, efficient and connected multimodal transportation systems.

Background
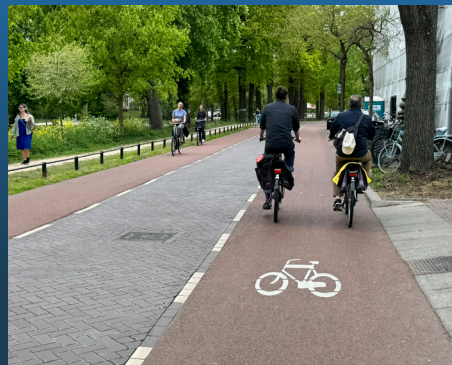
Amsterdam, Houten, and Utrecht are all recognized as prominent bicycling destinations in the Netherlands. Developing their bicycling infrastructure did not occur overnight and required decades of leadership, growth management, and a robust set of policies to support bicycling trips. The City of Paris has only recently begun redeveloping its bicycle infrastructure since the mid-2010s. This infrastructure boom has coincided with water, sewer, and electrical utilities upgrades, while also addressing stormwater green streets. Both the French and Dutch components of the trip provided key lessons learned, summarized in this document.

Key Facts

🚆 **50%** of all train travelers arrive at their station by bicycle

🚲 **43%** of trips under 7.5km (4.6 miles) nationally are completed by bicycle

🗺 Much of the Netherlands' Urban Areas have grown between **20-80%** since 2000

🚲 Paris's bicycle network has expanded rapidly since **2018**, with accelerated deployment since the COVID-19 pandemic

Program Itinerary Overview

Day 1: Welcome in Amsterdam
Participants were introduced to Dutch cycling culture through a walking tour and orientation led by Dutch Cycling Embassy staff.

Day 2: Houten & Utrecht
A field day included presentations on sustainable transport principles followed by a group cycling tour across intercity bike routes, showcasing practical applications of traffic calming and network planning.

Day 3: Amsterdam
Hands-on exploration of urban cycling infrastructure in Amsterdam's city center and its suburbs, including a deep dive into bike-transit integration.
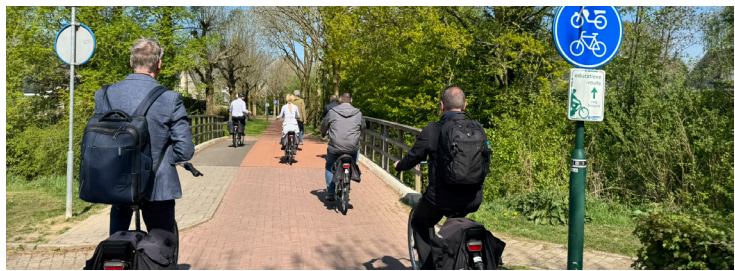
Day 4: Paris
Discussions on Paris' rapid cycling transformation post-COVID, school street programs, and infrastructure developments that reflect tactical urbanism principles.

Day 5: Program Wrap-Up
Reflections on lessons learned and strategies for application in South Florida.

Key Lessons and Observations

Dutch Approach to Network Planning

The Dutch bicycle network is built on these principles: **Directness, Safety, Comfort, Cohesion, and Attractiveness**. These principles guide both infrastructure design and land-use planning, ensuring that cycling is viable, appealing, and safe for all users.

- Develop a **bicycle network grid**, separate from vehicular traffic grids.
- Use **visual design cues** (e.g., red pavement, tactile materials) to manage conflict zones.
- Model networks similar to transit maps—**intuitive and interconnected**.

Integrated Mobility & Modal Prioritization

Dutch cities see the bicycle as a true mobility tool. Cities like Utrecht demonstrate effective **Hybrid Oriented Development**, blending cycling, transit, and housing growth.

- Prioritize **first/last-mile access** for transit riders through bicycle highways.
- Invest in **secure bike parking** at major nodes.
- Ensure **data-driven multimodal planning**, with consistent tracking of all modes.

Storytelling and Cycling Narratives

The Dutch planning professions emphasized the importance of **public communication and cultural framing**. Melissa Bruntlett highlighted how cycling fosters autonomy for youth, independence for seniors, and mobility for all.

- Create emotionally-engaging, **one-minute videos** highlighting personal stories.
- Use **affirmative language** —focus on gains, not restrictions.
- Frame bicycling as part of a **healthy family lifestyle** or a tool for economic access.

French Tactical Urbanism & School Streets

Paris' response to COVID-19 created a surge in cycling infrastructure through rapid "Coronapistas" deployment and **low-speed zones**. Traffic reduced in the City by 40% since 2011, due in part to Mayor Hidalgo's accelerated infrastructure deployment program.

- Implement **pilot programs**, limiting car access during school hours.
- Combine street redesigns with **green infrastructure upgrades** (e.g., bioswales, permeable surfaces).
- Use **temporary infrastructure** to test changes before permanent investments.

Field Design & Best Practices

- **Start Small, Build Bold:** Quick wins with temporary materials can evolve into permanent networks.
- **Green + Active Design:** Combine greenery and bicycle facilities to enhance comfort.
- **Landmark Designation:** Use gateways, plazas, and vistas to signal transitions in context.
- **Layer Modal Access:** Ensure vertical elements like stairs are accessible via ramps or wheel channels for bikes/scooters.
- **Design for All Ages:** Streets must be inviting to children, families, and older adults alike.

Delegation Members

Elected Officials

- Chelsea Reed, City of Palm Beach Gardens
- Michael Napoleone, Village of Wellington
- Yvette Drucker, City of Boca Raton
- Christy Fox, City of West Palm Beach
- Rob Long, City of Delray Beach
- Tanya Bhatt, City of Miami Beach

Partner Agencies

- Valerie Neilson, Palm Beach TPA
- Brian Ruscher, Palm Beach TPA
- David Dech, South Florida Regional Transportation Authority
- Eulois Cleckley, Friends of The Underline
- Robert Wolfarth, Miami-Dade Citizens' Independent Transportation Trust
- Alexandria Ayala, Chamber of Commerce of the Palm Beaches

Program Experts

- Skadi Tirpak, Chris Bruntlett, and Margot Daris, Dutch Cycling Embassy
- Melissa Bruntlett, Modacity Creative
- Richard ter Avest, Goudappel
- Erik Tetteroo, HODworks
- Benjamin Schaipp, City of Utrecht
- Arjen de Boer, City of Houten
- Anne Hovingh & Jon Mouter, City of Amsterdam
- Clotilde Imbert & Kassandra McCleery, Copenhagenize
- Andoni Briones, City of Paris
- Brigitte Jimenez Montoya, City of Paris

A Way Forward for South Florida

Hardware (Infrastructure Solutions)

1. Build a **cohesive, regionally-connected** network of protected bicycle lanes.
2. Use **pilot projects** and tactical urbanism to build public support.
3. Design facilities that serve short trips (<3 miles) effectively, reducing auto reliance.

Software (Education & Engagement)

1. Implement **bicycle education** in schools, driver training, and law enforcement programs.
2. Deploy **positive messaging** around bicycling benefits—economic, environmental, health.
3. Highlight bicycling success stories as essential to improving **public health and economic resilience**.

Orgware (Governance & Institutional Tools)

1. **Host a workshop** with municipal partners to share multimodal transportation best practices.
2. Build coalitions to foster **political will** and cross-sector partnerships.
3. Institutionalize **bike bus programs**, enforcement of traffic rules, and promote participation in planning.

Next Steps

1. **Host a Delegation Debrief**
   - Prioritize opportunities for implementation and create actionable next steps.
2. **Organize a Local Think Bike Design Workshop**
   - Use local case studies to model Dutch and French techniques.
3. **Engage the Community**
   - Center educational campaigns around stories of transformation to humanize infrastructure investments.

Conclusion

The Dutch and French experiences offer a roadmap for transforming South Florida into a safer, healthier, and more connected region. By fostering a bold vision, political leadership, and people-first design, the region has the opportunity to develop transportation systems that serve all residents, reduce car dependency, and elevate quality of life.