

Report ThinkBike Workshop Lisboa

On 17 September 2012

Report written by Marjolein de Lange for the Dutch Cycling Embassy with input and comments by Jeroen Buis

ThinkBike workshop

On Monday the 17th of September 2012 a ThinkBike workshop was organized in Lisbon by the Dutch Embassy in Lisbon, the Dutch Cycling Embassy and the City of Lisbon¹.

The objective of the workshop was to let Portuguese traffic professionals taste and profit from the Dutch expertise about cycling-inclusive traffic planning and to exchange ideas about making Lisbon more cycle friendly.

The workshop was led by two bicycle traffic experts of the Dutch Cycling Embassy, and around 40 Portuguese traffic professionals participated in the conference. There were officers from the city of Lisbon and other Portuguese municipalities, representatives of cycling-advocacy groups, academics and a few traffic consultants².

The Dutch ambassador in Lisbon, Mr Soeters, and Deputy Mayor for Mobility in Lisbon, Mr Nunes da Silva, spoke at the opening of the workshop³. Both emphasized the advantages of cycling to make the city more livable, healthy, safe and accessible and the good opportunity offered by this Dutch-Portuguese cooperation.

Next the Dutch experts started off with presentations about cycling, how cycling is included in traffic planning and road design in the Netherlands, and how bicycle friendly design results in safe and pleasant cycling for all.



With the Dutch ideas in mind the group visited the new cycle tracks at Av. Duque d'Avila. The design of this route and of its junctions with side streets triggered lively discussions. The main issue was the interruption of the cycle tracks at the intersections. It means less continuity at the intersection and more conflicts with pedestrians who stop and stand on the cyclist's route, just like the Portuguese-Dutch group did. The thought behind the design turned out to be that pedestrians have priority over cyclists in Lisbon.

The discussion was a good starting point for the hands-on activity in the afternoon in which some actual local traffic situations were discussed and redesigned to meet cyclists' needs.

The traffic situations covered were:

- How the route in av. Duque d'Avila can best be continued towards the east,
- A bicycle connection at the recently redesigned roundabout Rotunda Marquês de Pombal
- How to facilitate cycling on av. de Liberdade, and
- The connection for cyclists between av. de Liberdade and the cycle route along the river Tagus

For the design workshop the participants were distributed over four groups, each covering one or two of the local traffic situations. During the session some other traffic questions were added to the original ones.

¹ The program of the workshop can be found in appendix 1.

² The list of participants is in appendix 3.

³ Speech of ambassador Soeters (in Portuguese) can be found at <http://www.dutchcycling.nl/?page=Downloads>

The participants studied maps, tackled problems, discussed goals and solutions for cyclists, and attempted (sketch) designs. Finally the ideas and designs were presented and discussed in the complete group.



In the process, the participants got more and more acquainted with the Dutch way of cycling-inclusive planning and the required expertise. An overview of the results can be found in appendix 2.

Planning of ThinkBike workshop

The workshop was jointly prepared by three parties:

- The *Dutch Embassy* in Lisbon provided the funding for the work of the Dutch Cycling Embassy, the contacts with the Lisbon parties, the invitation of Portuguese participants, coordination of the work in Lisbon, contact with Dutch Cycling Embassy, publicity and all other things to be arranged in Lisbon. This was realized by Mrs. Anke Schaeffers, Head of Press and Cultural Section of the Dutch Embassy in Lisbon⁴.
- The *Dutch Cycling Embassy* mobilized the Dutch cycling experts, prepared the content of the workshop, led the workshop, conferred with Lisbon municipality about the local traffic policy, the situation for cyclists in Lisbon and the cases to be covered. It also produced this report, which was written by Marjolein de Lange, project manager ThinkBike for Dutch Cycling Embassy and Jeroen Buis of the Dutch consultancy Witteveen en Bos.
- The *municipality of Lisbon* provided a room for the workshop, background information on traffic in Lisbon, content to be covered, maps of traffic situations, participants for the conference, contacts in the municipality etc. This was taken care of by Mrs. Renata Lajas, urban and transport engineer for the municipality of Lisbon. The municipality also provided catering for the participants and a dinner for the organizing parties.

During the preparation, the program and the content for the workshop were discussed and decided upon. The day before the conference, the Dutch team was shown around in Lisbon by Renata Lajas, thereby explaining the local traffic situation. The tour included a visit to an exhibition about urban and traffic planning and policies in Lisbon.

Some observations about the traffic situation in Lisbon: challenges and opportunities

In rush hour there is a lot of motorized traffic and serious congestion in the streets of Lisbon. Lisbon has wide roads with a lot of space for car-traffic. The road design gives priority for a free and fast flow of car-traffic: not only are the roads at times extremely wide, also the radii at junctions can be very wide. All this is at the expense of pedestrians, cyclists and road safety. Also, in less busy streets car-traffic has two lanes available leaving very little space for sidewalks and/or cyclists.

⁴ www.emb-paisesbaixos.pt

Furthermore, parking takes up a lot of space, partly so because there is little or no prevention of illegal parking. A serious problem is the application of parking at an angle (rather than parallel) even in wide roads with a flow function. This not only disturbs the flow of traffic, but also leads to very dangerous situations when cars exit or enter the parking spaces.

The policy is to concentrate car traffic on main routes, but on parallel streets there is a lot of space for cars as well, often 2x2 lanes for car traffic. In rush hour the latter are mostly fully used.

Clearly promotion of alternative modes of transport such as the bicycle can help to reduce car-use, hence less congestion, parking problems, air pollution and noise pollution.

Lisbon has a good climate for cycling, and although there are some very steep roads large parts of the city are relatively flat. There are some bicycle tracks, like the bicycle track in av. Duque d'Avila, but these often lack continuity.

In everyday traffic cyclists are a rare phenomenon, and the ones that do cycle are mostly very experienced cyclists. On Sunday, however, on the cycle track at Av. Duque d'Avila there were more cyclists, among them even children. Hence it is clear that people in Lisbon do want to cycle, and that there is potential.

An increase of cycle use is to be expected due to several trends: higher prices of fuel and public transport, a worsening economic situation and more congestion. However without better facilities for cyclists, such as lower car speed and car volumes in the quieter streets, separate cycle tracks in busy roads and safer junctions, growing levels of cycling may result in more road accidents with cyclists.

For the future

More cycling, and less car-use, can help to make Lisbon a nicer and safer city, which moreover is better accessible as well.

But in order to make cycling in Lisbon an option for everybody, street design is necessary that meets the needs of all cyclists.

The workshop served to give an impression of what bicycle inclusive road design can mean for some streets in Lisbon. But in order to improve the situation all over the city, a long term and persisting policy is needed. A network for cyclists that can be developed and implemented step by step is essential to such a policy. When bicycle inclusive road design is realized every time a street of the network is renovated, cycling will become more and more a serious option for all in Lisbon.

This ThinkBike workshop focused on some very large and busy streets. With the current number of cars in such streets it is difficult to make room for bicycle facilities. However, smaller streets can offer good opportunities for cyclists as well, if they are well designed and well connected.

A follow-up of the workshop could involve a design of an integrated network for cyclists in Lisbon, and the policy implications that come with it. A bicycle friendly design for smaller streets could also be a good case for further work on bicycling in Lisbon.

Appendix 1 Program of ThinkBike workshop

Program Think Bike Workshop Lisboa

On: Monday 17 September May 2012

At: Centro de Informação Urbana de Lisboa

- 9.30 arrival at Centro de Informação Urbana de Lisboa**
- 10.00 opening by Dutch Ambassador in Lisboa mr. Soeters**
- 10.15 Opening speech by deputy mayor for mobility in Lisboa
mr. Fernando Nunes da Silva**
- 10.30 Introduction of the Dutch team and the participants**
Dutch team will consist of:
Jeroen Buis, bicycle specialist at Witteveen+Bos
Marjolein de Lange, bicycle specialist at Dutch Cycling Embassy
- 10.45 Cycling in the Netherlands as an international example**
Marjolein de Lange, Dutch Cycling Embassy
Past, present and future of cycling in the Netherlands.
- 11.00 Bicycle basics**
Marjolein de Lange, Dutch Cycling Embassy
Insights in basic ergonomics and design for cyclists: Curves, widths, visibility, pavement, etc.
- 11.15 Cycling-inclusive planning and design**
Jeroen Buis
Introduction to the Dutch way of cycling-inclusive urban traffic planning and road design. Sustainable road safety, bicycle facilities, Dutch principles for cycling-inclusive design
- 12.00 Coffee/tea break**
- 12.15 Introduction of the group assignments**
Marjolein de Lange and Jeroen Buis
Applying Dutch design principles for cycling-inclusive planning to projects in Lisboa:
- 1. Bicycle connections of Av. Liberdade:** How can the bicycle route of av. de Liberdade be connected to the to the cycle paths along the river (Av. Infante D. Henrique and Av. da Índia), and to the Av. Noves.
 - 2. Av. Noves:** How can the new circulation plan (one-way traffic in most streets in the area of Av. Noves) be combined with better facilities for cyclists?
 - 3. Av. de Liberdade:** What is a good solution for the cyclists in the bus lane at the bus stops?
- 12.30 Visit to Av. de Liberdade** to investigate the situation for cyclists
- 13:15 Pause**
- 14.00 Groups work on the 3 projects of group assignments**
Investigating the needs for cyclist and other road users and sketching design solutions.
- 16.15 Tea Break**
- 16.30 Bicycle policy**
Marjolein de Lange, Dutch Cycling Embassy
Comprehensive bicycle policy to make a cycling city..
- 16.45 Presentation of the results and discussion**
Groups present their designs, Dutch Cycling Embassy gives comments and discussion about bottlenecks and opportunities for the designs. **(in presence of city of Lisboa)**
Moderated by Jeroen Buis
Presentation of the design solutions and the ideas behind it
- 17:45 Discussion on what participants have learnt and what they can do with it**
- 18:00 Closing**

About the team of the workshop:

Marjolein de Lange is an independent traffic consultant specialized in design and policy for bicycling and road safety. She works for organizations such as the city of Amsterdam and the Dutch Cyclists Union. For the Dutch Cycling Embassy she is leader of the ThinkBike project.

For 10 year she has been an employee of the Cyclists' Union in Amsterdam, advising the municipality on traffic design and policies for cyclists. At present she is part of the strategic board of the Cyclists' Union in Amsterdam and chair of its traffic technical committee.

Jeroen Buis is a traffic engineer and works as senior consultant urban mobility and cycling expert at Witteveen+Bos Consulting Engineers. He has more than 10 years of international experience consulting cities in Latin-America, including Brazil, and Asia with their urban mobility and cycling policies, plans and designs.

In the past 7 years Jeroen conducted more than 20 multi-day training courses on cycling-inclusive traffic and transport planning and design in Brazil, Chile, Ecuador, Thailand, Turkey, Australia, and South-Korea.

Appendix 2 Overview of sketch designs and discussion of the actual traffic situations

Below a short overview of the results of the hands-on work of the groups:

Group 1 first focused on the **bicycle connection between Pombal and Saldanha**. This is the narrowest stretch of the northbound route of av. de Liberdade, Pombal, av. Fontes Pereira Melo, Saldanha, av. da Republica. The session started with a discussion about the best location for a cycle connection. Should this go through the very busy and narrow av. Fontes Pereira Melo or would it be better to take another street?

One participant suggested that cyclists could serve to calm down car traffic but the majority was of the opinion that on a busy route like av. Fontes Pereira Melo a separate bicycle facility would be needed. Also, the Dutch principles recommend separate facilities for cyclists in streets like this. However, the majority of the group thought that, at the moment, this would not be feasible. As an alternative they proposed a bicycle route through the quiet av. Duque Loule and r. Eng Veira instead and cycling facilities around Saldanha. The group sketched a connection between that route and Saldanha.

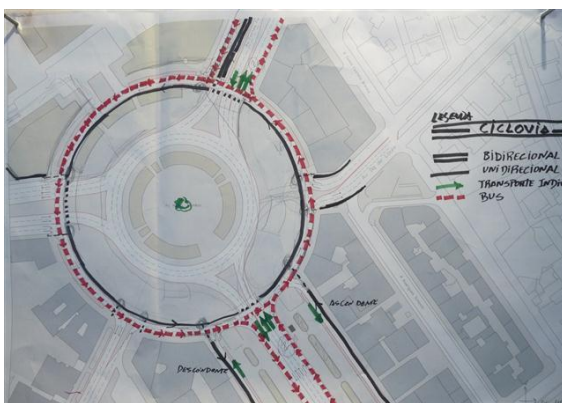


Connection to alternative route for cyclists



Cycling facilities on Saldanha

Cycling facilities at the Pombal roundabout were discussed in groups 2 and 3. One proposed a segregated cycle track in 2 directions around the large roundabout, located between the inner and the outer circle roundabout. The other group suggested a one-way cycle path around the outer circle of the roundabout. Arguments for the first option (directness and fewer crossings) and the second (less risky one-way crossings and how it looked) were exchanged in a lively discussion at the presentation.



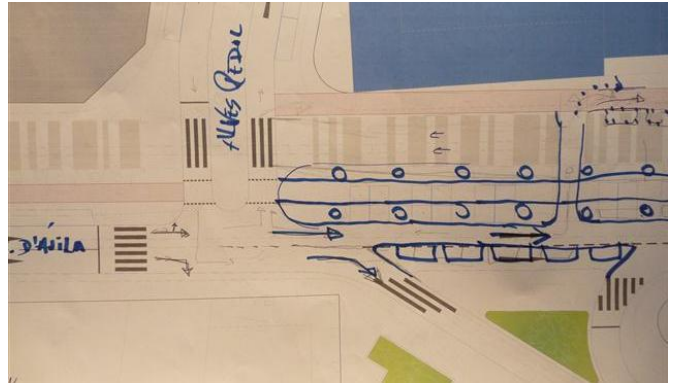
Bidirectional cycling at Pombal



One-way cycling at Pombal

Group 4 discussed the **extension of the bicycle route along av. Duque d'Avila**.

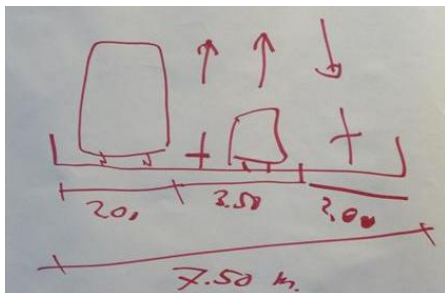
Instead of the existing proposal for a bicycle track very close to the wall of the university, the group suggested to make space for a better location for the bicycle track by redirecting one lane of car traffic.



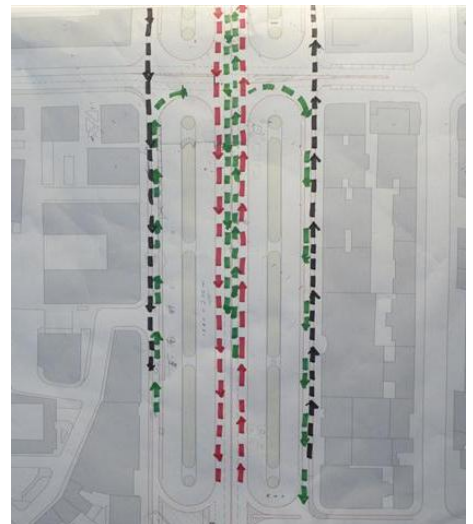
Group 3 also worked on **av. de Liberdade**. First they discussed the possibility of providing cycling facilities at the main central road. The option of making a shared bus-bike lane was discussed, but the group felt that that was not a very safe and comfortable option for cyclists. Then cycle tracks were proposed, but because av. de Liberdade is a cultural heritage street the curbs cannot be changed, and hence, even with narrowing down the traffic lanes to a minimum, the cycle tracks would end up rather narrow. Also, someone in the group mentioned, it is not allowed (because of the cultural heritage and special events) to put 'obstacles' such as curbs or dividing verges on av. de Liberdade. This makes creating segregated cycle tracks at the main road of av. de Liberdade de facto impossible.

Therefore the group decided to study the possibility of providing cycling facilities at the laterals of av. de Liberdade. Currently there is parking at both sides of the laterals. By taking out car-parking at one side of the laterals it is possible to create a contraflow cycle lane (or even a segregated cycle track) and a shared lane for car traffic and cyclists.

Of course an important part of the design will be the design of the intersections. This was not discussed in the group.



Cycling at laterals of av. de Liberdade (arrows should point the other way: cyclists away from you and cars towards you)



Group 1 discussed a design for the **lateral north of Saldanha**. Their idea was to take out one car lane of the lateral to make space for a cycle path.



Conclusions and comments about the workshop

A number of comments can be made about the workshop part of the day:

- After the workshop various participants commented that the workshop had been very useful because people that normally worked in different departments, and sometimes “against” each other worked together in the assignments and learned about their different viewpoints. This is very valuable since a good cooperation between different people and departments is essential to be able to develop and execute a cycling policy and good quality cycling facilities.
- Many different and creative solutions were developed during the workshop. Detailed design will still be a challenge. Obviously the ThinkBike workshop was too short to go into detail in this respect.

Appendix 3 List of participants

	Nome	Instituição
1	Ana Oliveira	CMSeixal
2	Ana Pereira	Cenas a Pedal
3	António Sérgio Manso Pinheiro	IMTT
4	Bernardo Alves	IZIMOOVE
5	Carlos André Costa Rodrigues	Câmara Municipal de Loures
6	Carlos coração	CML-DMAU
7	Carlos Gaivoto	
8	Carlos Rua	CML - DMMT
9	Catarina Marcelino	IMTT
10	DANIEL HENRIQUES DE BASTOS	Câmara Municipal da Murtosa
11	David de Sousa Vale	Faculdade de Arquitectura da UTL
12	Eduardo José Santos	CML - DMMT
13	Fernando Pedro Moutinho	CML - Vereação Urbanismo
14	Filipe Moura	IST
15	Francisco Peixoto	
16	Gabriel Oliveira	Câmara Municipal de Amadora
17	helenalves	CML-DMAU
18	Inês Frade	U Coimbra
19	Isabel cunha	Donauer
20	Isabel Soares	CML-Gpresidente
21	João Barreto	MUBI
22	João Castro	CML
23	JOAQUIM MANUEL DOS SANTOS BAPTISTA	Câmara Municipal da Murtosa
24	Jorge Manuel Lopes Batista e Silva	Instituto SuperiorTécnico / SUTVS
25	José Jorge	CML - DMMT
26	José Manuel Caetano	FPCUB
27	José Trigos	Prevenção rodoviária Portuguesa
28	Maria fundevila	CML-DMAU
29	Miguel Barroso	FPCUB
30	Paula Azevedo	CML - DMMT
31	Paula Bastos	CML - DMMT
32	Paulo Jorge Gomes Ribeiro	Universidade do Minho
33	paulo pereira	CML-DMAU
34	Pedro Barreto	CML - DMMT
35	Ricardo Sobral	Jornal Pedal
36	Rita Castel Branco	CML - GVFNS
37	Rosa Melo Félix	Ciclo oficina /IST
38	Rui Daniel Pereira Lourenço	Universidade do Minho
39	Rui pires	CML-DMAU
40	Sergio Oliveira	CMSeixal
41	Sofia Bento	IMTT
42	Vanda Dias	TIS.pt – Consultores em Transportes, Inovação e Sistemas