

How offices can empower sustainable mobility

Office buildings located near transport hubs will encourage employees to use their cars less, reducing CO2 emissions.

By Alexandra Rosian

Mobility generates a quarter of the total generated greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions in the Netherlands. Passenger car traffic is part of this, and more than half of the road kilometres travelled are work-related. This means employers have a significant role to play in making travel more sustainable. They can achieve this by choosing an office location near a public transport hub, for example.

The ASR Dutch Mobility Office Fund empowers sustainable mobility to and from its assets, through both its office locations close to public transport hubs and additional measures, such as adding shared mobility or electric charging points. The Fund thus provides the opportunity for CO2 emission reductions for tenant employee mobility.

THE CO2 FOOTPRINT OF MOBILITY AND PASSENGER CAR TRAFFIC IN THE NETHERLANDS

In the Netherlands, the two largest sectors in terms of GHG emissions are industry and mobility. Together, these generate around 60% of the country's GHG emissions (in Q2 2023 it was 58.2%, according to Statistics Netherlands). Almost a quarter of the total GHG emissions in the Netherlands are attributable to travel (23.5% in Q2 2023).

Through the Climate Law of 2019, the Netherlands aims to reduce GHG emissions by 49% by 2030 (against 1990 levels). For mobility, this means reducing GHG emissions by 1 megaton, which will require work-related car kilometres travelled to be reduced by 8 billion by 2030.

Under the Dutch Climate Agreement of 2022, the Netherlands will focus on two main themes regarding passenger car traffic for the period until 2030:

- Stimulating electric passenger car traffic:



The CubeHouse in Amsterdam will be located in front of Amsterdam Zuid (South-Axis) station, allowing tenants to reduce mobility-related carbon emissions

aiming for 100% zero-emission new electric or hydrogen-powered passenger car sales by 2030;

- Making passenger traffic more sustainable (this includes car traffic, public transport and cycling).

THE ROLE OF EMPLOYERS IN REDUCING CO2 EMISSIONS OF MOBILITY

As more than half of the road kilometres travelled in passenger traffic are work-related, employers have a major role to play in making mobility more sustainable. This not only involves managing the (lease car) fleet, but also getting employees to travel or work in a sustainable way.

More than 70 large companies have formed the Anders Reizen (Travelling Differently) coalition (www.andersreizen.nu) with the ambition of halving CO2

emissions from business travel by 2030 (versus 2016). Business travel refers to commuting and travel on behalf of the employer, including air travel, per employee.

The coalition members combined have more than 550.000 employees. Each member company has signed the Sustainable Mobility Pledge and is responsible for its implementation. The coalition supports its members in various ways, including providing a list of the most effective measures translated into a front-runner programme with "best practices". One of the top 10 best practices is an office location near a public transport hub.

HOW OFFICE LOCATION HELPS DECREASE THE CO2 FOOTPRINT OF MOBILITY

‘Research shows that offices located on public transport hubs result in employees making fewer car trips, in favour of cycling and using public transport.’



Alexandra Rosian, ASR Dutch Mobility Office Fund

ASR Dutch Mobility Office Fund invests exclusively in offices located on public transport hubs, with a focus on the G5 Intercity stations of the Netherlands.

In 2021, the Fund commissioned mobility specialist Goudappel to calculate the reduction in CO2 emissions made possible by the Fund’s buildings through their public transport hub location, compared with other office locations: city centre, metropolitan ring and suburban location. The research was performed for three Dutch cities: Utrecht, Rotterdam and Eindhoven.

The research shows that offices located on public transport hubs result in employees making fewer car trips, in favour of cycling and using public transport such as the train, leading to an average of 27% reduction in CO2 emissions for the three cities (see graph).

A large part of the reduction in CO2 emissions can be achieved through the switch from the car to public transport, and especially the train. Since 2019, travel by train with the Dutch railway operator NS has been carbon neutral.

The differences per city are mainly related to the degree of development of the public transport hubs. Utrecht Central Station has more sustainable mobility options than Rotterdam or Eindhoven Central Stations, enabling a greater potential to reduce CO2 emissions.

Therefore, by choosing an office location on a public transport hub in Utrecht, Rotterdam or Eindhoven, companies can potentially reduce the CO2 emissions of employees’ travel by 27% on average.

HOW ASR DUTCH MOBILITY OFFICE FUND EMPOWERS SUSTAINABLE TRAVEL TO AND FROM ITS ASSETS

The ASR Dutch Mobility Office Fund provides the opportunity for a positive environmental impact, namely a reduction in CO2 emissions from tenant employee mobility to the Fund’s office buildings. This is very important, especially for companies with more than 100 employees, which in the Netherlands will be required to report on the CO2 emissions from mobility from 1 January 2024.

The potential reduction in CO2 emissions for tenant employee travel can be attributed to:

1. Locating office buildings on a public transport hub;
2. Specific measures stimulating sustainable travel, which can be taken by either the Fund or by its tenants.

To stimulate sustainable mobility, and therefore empower a potential reduction in CO2 emissions, the Fund has the following approach for each of its buildings:

- A mobility analysis leading to a mobility plan, inventorying measures designed to stimulate sustainable travel, such as shared solutions, electric vehicle parking places,

(electric) bicycle parking places, or office building amenities such as lockers, or showers.

- Implementing new sustainable measures inventoried in the mobility analysis. Specific measures the Fund can take are, for example, adding shared mobility solutions or electric charging points to a building. Communication with the building tenants on the mobility plan will be key for taking the tenant feedback into account and for motivating tenants to internally promote the use of sustainable mobility solutions.

In addition, the ASR Dutch Mobility Office Fund is adding new office stock on mobility hub locations through its forward funding projects Wonderwoods in Utrecht, The CubeHouse in Amsterdam and Tree House in Rotterdam. These will enable a reduction in CO2 emissions for the future tenants’ employee mobility on those locations. ■

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