



**Vision for
Sustainable
Recreational
Mobility in
the Utrechtse
Heuvelrug and
its Flanks**

This document presents a summary of the shared vision for sustainable recreational mobility in the Utrechtse Heuvelrug nature area and its flanks. This vision represents a joint regional perspective. Governments, landowners, transport operators, and area stakeholders jointly defined the contents of this vision through official working sessions and administrative consultations. Both public officials and political decision-makers were actively involved, while the relationship with the surrounding areas was considered during the process.

The development of the joint vision was facilitated by the National Park Utrechtse Heuvelrug Foundation within the framework of the Interreg North-West Europe project MONA, with process guidance provided by the consultancy firm Rebel.

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MONA

Cooperating partners:

Gemeente Baarn	Gemeente Utrechtse Heuvelrug	Youth Council NPUH	Regio Amersfoort	Trail & Running Club Utrechtse Heuvelrug
Gemeente De Bilt	Gemeente Veenendaal	MTB Utrechtse Heuvelrug	Routebureau Utrecht	Utrechts Landschap
Gemeente Leusden	Gemeente Woudenberg	Natuurmonumenten	Staatsbosbeheer	Koninklijke Visio
Gemeente Rhenen	Gemeente Zeist	Nederlandse Spoorwegen	Stichting Ruiteren en Mennen Utrechtse Heuvelrug	Wandelnet
Gemeente Soest	Hoogheemraadschap De Stichtse Rijnlanden	ProRail		
Gemeente Utrecht		Provincie Utrecht		

Summary

Vision for Sustainable Recreational Mobility in the Utrechtse Heuvelrug and its Flanks

The Utrechtse Heuvelrug is popular, both as a place to live and to visit. Millions of visitors explore the area annually to walk, cycle or relax. This growing interest is valuable: it strengthens the local economy and contributes to our social health and wellbeing. It positions the Heuvelrug and its surrounding flanks as both a destination and gathering place, highlighting its appeal for living, working, and recreation.

At the same time, this popularity brings risks, such as recreational pressure, traffic nuisance and damage to vulnerable nature. In addition, the region is likely to face increasing mobility pressures in the years ahead. Housing development and economic growth are expected to result in higher population levels, increased employment, and greater travel demand. As a result, visitor numbers to the Heuvelrug area are expected to rise, placing additional pressure on the mobility systems in and around the area.

To find a future-proof balance between the accessibility of the Heuvelrug area and its increasing challenges, a joint vision for the region has been developed. This 2050 mobility vision demonstrates how sustainable recreational mobility can become an integral part of the region. Sustainable recreational mobility serves as an instrument to protect nature, improve the quality of recreational experiences, and safeguard accessibility for all, both now and in the future.

Seven mobility principles form the core of the vision. These principles provide guidance for policy, design, investments, and cooperation, and can be applied flexibly across different parts of the area:

	Nature and recreational trips in balance	1
	Active mobility is the natural choice for nearby visitors	2
	Public transport is the preferred option for visitors traveling from further away	3
	Hubs as smart gateways	4
	Everyone stays included	5
	Innovation and data guide travel and distribution	6
	The journey itself is part of the experience	7

1. Nature and recreational trips in balance	Recreation activities and associated travel are purposely directed to areas where nature is less vulnerable. This approach preserves tranquillity for flora and fauna in ecologically sensitive zones and creates a sustainable balance between visitor experience and protection. In the flanks of the area - in proximity to residential centres - recreational facilities are strengthened so both residents and visitors can recreate closer to home and thereby reduce recreational pressure on vulnerable nature.
2. Active mobility is the natural choice for nearby visitors	Walking and cycling are not only the most environmentally friendly travel options - but they also enhance the nature experience. By 2050, the region will offer an optimized network of walking and cycling routes that connects surrounding areas with the Heuvelrug, enabling an optimal nature-based visitor experience while simultaneously minimizing disturbance. Clear signage, safe crossings, rest areas and facilities make active mobility attractive and accessible for all.
3. Public transport is the preferred option for visitors traveling from further away	Public transport is the preferred option for visitors traveling from farther away or those who have difficulty using active modes of transport. Stations and bus stops are full-service access points (gateways) to the area, offerings logical connections to routes, (recreational) facilities and hubs. Visitors can also directly start their recreation on the station and public transport nodes itself, via attractive walking and cycling routes, in line with the Buitenpoorten (green gateways) philosophy. New public transport services, such as autonomous shuttles and shared mobility, make the 'last mile' to the park sustainable and pleasant.
4. Hubs as smart gateways	Hubs at the edge of the area function as smart gateways to nature. Cars are concentrated at these hubs to reduce car traffic in vulnerable areas. Hubs offer more than just parking facilities: they provide transfer options to shared mobility and facilities tailored to different visitor groups. By strategically bundling these facilities at specific hubs - for example, bike wash stations at mountain biking areas - hubs can also serve as an instrument to distribute visitors.
5. Everyone stays included	Everyone, regardless of age, physical abilities or income, can move independently, safely and comfortably to, from and within the Heuvelrug area. Travel information is clear and accessible, and the area includes designated accessible routes with barrier-free infrastructure. However, not all visitors can easily switch to alternative modes of transport. For families, older adults, people with physical impairments, or visitors carrying belongings, the car often remains the most logical choice. Therefore, it is important that sustainable alternatives are also attractive and accessible for these visitor groups.
6. Innovation and data guide travel and distribution	Technology supports visitors in planning their journeys and making eco-friendly choices, such as opting not to travel by car. For example, real-time information on crowding, routes, transport options, and facilities is available in one user-friendly app. AI-based travel advice, crowd monitoring and geofencing help spread visitors and protect vulnerable areas.
7. The journey itself is part of the experience	The principles outlined above come together here. Sustainable mobility becomes attractive because walking and cycling routes, public transport, and hubs are designed so that the journey itself provides a meaningful experience. Routes are logical and attractive; transport is quiet and clean, while up-to-date information helps avoid crowding. The Buitenpoorten (green gateways) concept reinforces this by allowing the nature experience to start right at the station.