



Connected cities @ high speed

(photo: Peter Hilz / Hollandse Hoogte)

**Frank van der Hoeven, Delft University of Technology/Urbanism,
Lead Partner Connected Cities**

The way people move about in urban areas has a significant impact on the spatial development and the ecological performance of cities and regions. For two years Connected Cities has been sharing experiences, knowledge and best practices in this field. There seems to be a common misunderstanding that sustainable mobility means public transport and building housing, offices and services next to stations or other public transport hubs. This prevailing perception is caused by the dominance of North West European practice in this field, in which government authorities and urbanists put much weight on environmental issues. During our 'round trip of Europe' we discovered that social issues (excluded from transportation), efficiency issues (dependent on slow services at a low frequency) and economic issues (pricing and development opportunities) are as much a part of the equation as environmental issues. Armed with this insight, we return this autumn to North West Europe, starting in London in September, then moving to the French new town Sénart before rounding off the operation in Paris in late November.

This Nova Terra is all about South East England and High Speed Train related projects. Detlef Golletz kicks off with AirTrack. The main task of AirTrack is providing South East England with a much needed rail link to Heathrow, Europe's busiest airport.

The South East England Development Agency (SEEDA), one of the partners in AirTrack, is working resolutely to improve the high speed train (HST) network. Detlef Golletz and Egon Walesch report on the investments and related studies undertaken in SEEDA's HST projects:

HSTintergration and HSTconnect. These two Interreg IIIB projects will improve the connectivity of the High Speed Train network in order to deliver successful and sustainable economic growth.

The arrival of HST is also a much needed catalyst for the regeneration of existing rail terminals and their surroundings. Henk Bouwman and Henco Bekkering of HKBS describe their involvement in the masterplan for the Utrecht railway station area, a showcase project that was subject to several (design) workshops during the course of SEEDA's HST projects.

The Utrecht article is about the planning process and the instruments or methods involved. The article on Milton Keynes shows that making England's largest new town more sustainable requires changing the hearts and minds of the residents. Convincing them that change is necessary is no easy task when the reason for this change is not clear for all to see.

We close this issue with an interview with Floris Alkemade. It touches on many of the issues raised by the other articles, but one in particular: the process of adapting a town or an urban area for more sustainable development may fall back on traditional city forms or design solutions.

Is this the only way? Should we feel at ease with this, or go for more radical approaches? Is the traditional city the only sustainable city we know? Connected Cities facilitates the discussion to allow you to make up your own mind. You can draw your own conclusions.