

Tackling safety and quality of life at Hoog Catharijne and the Station District – a summary

Significant improvement in safety and security Utrecht Station District

Hoog Catharijne and the Utrecht Station District have become significantly safer since the introduction of a wide range of measures, which first started in 2001. Crime and nuisance rates have halved. Security perception has improved by 25%. The district is cleaner and 'more whole'. The living circumstances of addicts have improved significantly. Prompted by the necessity to tackle nuisance caused by addicts, the public-private cooperation initiated also proved useful in dealing with nuisance caused by youngsters as well as calamities and terrorism.

Tough and social policy and intensive public-private cooperation

The improvements in security and quality of life are the result of numerous measures that can be summarized as a 'tough and social' approach: aimed at reducing nuisance and crime rates and improving the living circumstances of addicts in Utrecht. What has made this approach so very effective is the combination of prevention, care and repression. Moreover, the policy is targeted at making the Station District clean and whole again. An intensive cooperation between the public and private sector, supervised by the municipality, has been in place since the middle of 2001. Partners involved are the municipality, the police, the Public Prosecutor's Office, national railway services, Corio, Jaarbeurs, Centrum Maliebaan, Altrecht, Agis, bus companies, shopkeepers, offices, residents and many others.

Crime and nuisance rates halved

The percentage of people who feel safe in the Station District has increased from 4.9 to 6.0. The percentage of people who feel safe at the station has increased by 5% to 89% during the day and 46% at night, which exceeds the big city average for the Netherlands. Nuisance rates have fallen further. The number of tickets issued by the police in Hoog Catharijne and the station has dropped by 36%. The number of thefts has fallen by 51% and violence by 15%. The percentage of passengers that have not witnessed any incidents in the Station District has increased to 74%. The number of offences committed by habitual offenders (about 275) has been reduced by 65%. There has been virtually no transfer of problems to other districts in Utrecht. Nuisance rates caused by drugs-related crime have fallen by 30% city-wide.

Quality of life of addicts improved

The quality of life of 250 Utrecht homeless addicts has improved. Doctors have found a general improvement in their health. Practice has shown that better living circumstances for addicts with good shelter and care leads to lower drug abuse, fewer cases of nuisance and less crime. The referral system for addicts to regular health care and aid organisations has improved. Addicts from outside Utrecht are returned to their original care network. Awaiting further treatment, some are temporarily housed in care centres. This policy prevents the inflow of new addicts from elsewhere.

Wide range of measures

Supervision and enforcement: tit for tat and zero tolerance. Closing the 'junkies tunnel' in Stationsdwarsstraat; Spending the night at Hoog Catharijne abolished after 30 years; Strict enforcement policy on drug abuse, dealing, receiving and loitering. Habitual offenders are banned and appear in court within 2 months, receive heavy sentences and are imprisoned; extension of camera supervision in the inner city and linking of public and private camera systems. Stepping up deployment and cooperation between police, security services, businesses; Tackling and providing information about car burglaries and shoplifting, *Samen Veilig Ondernemen* (Keeping Business Safe Together). Drawing up Contingency Plan

Care and shelter for addicts: 24-hour care for all 350 homeless addicts in 3 care centres; Facilitation of the use of hard drugs: Social-medical addiction care, meals, clothes exchange, syringe exchange, intensive guidance of addicts to care and shelter; heroin and methadone issued under medical supervision.

Nuisance caused by youngsters: No more anonymity; publication of (house) rules; stepping up supervision and enforcement by police and control of disturbing behaviour, violence and theft; Prevention measures in stores; *Samen Veilig Ondernemen*; appointment of youth worker and Moroccan 'neighbourhood fathers', guidance to youth services.

Set-up, management and maintenance: overhaul of bus station for all town and district buses, refurbishment of Plein Vredenburg, Smakkelaarsveld, Jaarbeurs site, the entrances to Hoog Catharijne and Vredenburgpassage, virtually all escalators have been replaced; Strict bicycle parking enforcement and removal of bicycle wrecks; Public and private public areas are kept spotless. Branches of Mediamarkt, H&M and 'AH-to-go' at HC and station.

Continuation of current approach in Station District

The experience and advice from the partners involved in the upcoming large-scale redevelopment of the station district have been laid down as preconditions in the Station District Master Plan. These conditions concern both urban and specific development requirements, and how to organise the management and supervision during and after the construction and redevelopment.

The Station District project will be terminated in the short term and continued from within the regular organisation.

For more information: www.utrecht.nl/stationsgebied, buttons 'Aanpak /beheer en veiligheid'.



EUROPEAN CRIME PREVENTION AWARD **2005**

Entry Form

The theme for this year's European Crime Prevention Award is **violent crime on the streets**. Projects may therefore wish to focus on areas such as alcohol and drug-related crime, the use of weapons (eg knives, firearms), street robbery etc.

Please complete the attached form (the boxes are expandable) and send your entries, **together with a one-page description of your project** to:
eucpn@homeoffice.gsi.gov.uk

Entries should be in English, but may be accompanied by a version of the entry in the national language if wished. Each country may enter one project only. Projects should be submitted only through the National Representatives. The full ECPA rules and procedures may be found at www.eucpn.org

The deadline to send in your entry is **1 November**.

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact us at the above email address, or telephone Angela Fever on +44 (0) 20 7035 0142.



ECPA 2005

Please answer the following questions in English.

1. What is the title of the project?

Tackling safety and quality of life at Hoog Catharijne and the Station District in Utrecht

2. Please give a short general description of the project.

Project name: Tackling safety and quality of life at Hoog Catharijne and the Station District in Utrecht
Start date: March 2001
Website: www.utrecht.nl/stationsgebied (under *Aanpak / management+veiligheid*)
Contact: Eelko van den Boogaard, Station District district manager
Address: Municipality of Utrecht, Administration, Postbus 16200, 3500 CE Utrecht
Telephone number: +31 (0) 30 2861027
Email address: eelko.van.den.boogaard@utrecht.nl

When did the problem first present itself?

- The problem of nuisance and crime caused by addicts and homeless people first materialised soon after Hoog Catharijne opened in 1973. Around 1999, the municipality, the NS (Dutch Railway Services) and Corio decided enough was enough. The dispatch road running underneath Hoog Catharijne (officially named Stationsdwarsstraat, but commonly known as 'junkies tunnel') had become an uncontrollable 'free state', housing more than 400 addicts, dealers and receivers who were responsible for the many incidents of crime, violence, nuisance, pollution and degrading circumstances in which addicts lived.
- Since mid 2003 the nuisance caused by some 100 Moroccan youths has increased, particularly during or near Islamic holidays.
- Since 2003 there has been a higher threat of/ attention to calamities, bomb scares and terrorism.

Are there any quantitative and/or qualitative data regarding the problem?

When the project was first started, there were some 400 homeless hard drug addicts; 6,600 reports of theft; 400 reports of violence; 50% of all passengers felt unsafe; 60% witnessed vagrant behaviour, 25% was harassed. Addicts were living in the most miserable circumstances. Damage to society caused by addicts involving the police and insurance companies in particular was estimated at 500 million euros per year. The highly negative image regarding Hoog Catharijne and Utrecht had a significant economic impact as it kept tourists and shoppers away.

A description of the offenders.

Addicts, homeless, psychiatric patients, dealers, receivers, Moroccan youngsters.

How do they operate?

Addicts: Loitering and sleeping in large groups; yelling, theft, violence, receiving, begging, dealing, drug abuse in public.

Moroccan youngsters: loitering, intimidation, theft.

Who are the victims?

Every year some 65 million residents, employees, shopkeepers, offices, travellers, shopping and partying public and passengers; addicts (attacking each other).

What are the problem's main causes?

- The urban planning (providing plenty of recesses and nooks and lack of proper functions on ground level);
- The derelict condition of the public space, poor maintenance;
- Comfort provided by the environment (indoor, warm, economic activity)
- Presence of homeless and addicts;
- Lack of (24-hour) care and shelter;
- Insufficient cooperation between public and private parties for control and supervision;

What are the project's targets?

- Reducing factual and experienced crime and nuisance
- Improving living circumstances of addicts
- Later also: Preventing and adequately dealing with disasters and calamities

Provide a brief description of the project.

- Tough and Social: Combination of prevention, care and repression;
- Clean and whole: overhaul, management and maintenance
- Pragmatic and goal-driven: wide range of measures in the field of supervision & enforcement, care & shelter and management & maintenance.
- Intensive public-private cooperation supervised by municipal district manager
- Bring experience and advice to the attention of urban developers and planners redeveloping the Station District.

3. Please describe the objective(s) of the project?

What are the project's targets?

- Reducing factual and experienced crime and nuisance
- Improving living circumstances of addicts
- Later also: Preventing and adequately dealing with disasters and calamities

4. How was the project implemented?

Which measures and activities are being carried out during the project?

- **Supervision and enforcement:** tit for tat and zero tolerance. Closing the 'junkies tunnel' in Stationsdwarsstraat; Spending the night at Hoog Catharijne abolished after 30 years; Strict enforcement policy on drug abuse, dealing, receiving and loitering. Habitual offenders are banned and appear in court within 2 months, are given heavy sentences and are imprisoned; extension of camera monitoring in the inner city and linking of public and private camera systems. Stepping up deployment and cooperation between police, security services, businesses; Tackling and providing information about car burglaries and shoplifting, *Samen Veilig Ondernemen* (Keeping Business Safe Together).
- **Care and shelter for addicts:** 24-hour care for all 350 homeless addicts in 3 care centres; Facilitation of the use of hard drugs: Social-medical addiction care, meals, clothes exchange, syringe exchange, intensive guidance of addicts to care and shelter; heroin and methadone issued under medical supervision.
- **Nuisance caused by youngsters:** No more anonymity; publication of (house) rules; stepping up supervision and enforcement by police and control of disturbing behaviour, violence and theft; Prevention measures in stores; *Samen Veilig Ondernemen*; appointment of youth worker and Moroccan 'neighbourhood fathers', guidance to youth assistance services.

- **Design, management and maintenance:** Overhaul of bus station for all town and district buses, refurbishment of Plein Vredenburg, Smakkelaarsveld, Jaarbeurs site, the entrances to Hoog Catharijne and Vredenburgpassage, virtually all escalators have been replaced; Strict bicycle parking enforcement and removal of bicycle wrecks; Public and private public areas are kept spotless. Branches of Mediamarkt, H&M and 'AH-to-go' at HC and station.

Provide a brief description of the set-up and history of the project.

- An attempt was made to start a sample project within the framework of the government memorandum 'Society and Crime' in 1987, but it failed. In 1997 a cooperation project was set up, and supervision was stepped up. The project, however, failed following discussions and court cases regarding the actual approach and responsibilities.
- In March 2001 the Municipality, Corio and the NS signed a declaration of intent, while a safety effect report was adopted in May 2001. These laid down the basic principles regarding the approach, measures, organisation and funds.
- In November 2001 the municipality appointed a district manager for the Station District. His tasks included the improvement of safety, quality of life and living circumstances; the organisation of public-private cooperation and decision making; the initiation of concrete measures; the supervision of observance of agreements; result monitoring; the improvement of communication; short lines to the administration, management and operational staff.
- Since the beginning of 2002 ad-hoc project groups have been preparing a large number of measures in the field of supervision & enforcement, care & shelter and management & maintenance. All parties sharing a task in taking measures met for each single measure or project. Following the decision, they would take responsibility for the execution and implementation. The district manager monitored the observance and overall coherence.
- The Safety and Management Report Station District was adopted in June 2003, and the Station District Management and Safety Redevelopment Memorandum was adopted in January 2005. They set out the basic principles for a safe, liveable station district during and following its large-scale redevelopment. The recommendations from the 'people in the field' were submitted to the urban developers and planners.
- In 2004 it was decided to use the partner network for other areas, too. For example, in December 2004 a Station District Contingency Plan was drawn up, specifying the measures and organisation in the event of calamities and cooperation with emergency services and ProRail.
- Nuisance caused by Moroccan youngsters led to an expansion of the cooperation with youth workers and Moroccan 'neighbourhood fathers'.

Is there a project plan?

- A safety and quality of life plan was adopted by the general administration in September 2003. It describes the approach and organisation and sets out the various measures and projects already in place as well as their mutual cohesion. It also specifies any (remaining) improvement projects.

5. Were partners involved in planning and/or development and/or implementation of the project? If so, who were they, and what were their roles?

Which public and/or private partners are involved in the various phases of the project?

Corio (Hoog Catharijne), Netherlands Railway, Jaarbeurs, Police (district + railway), Municipality of Utrecht, Public Prosecutor, Centrum Maliebaan (addiction psychiatry), Altrecht (mental healthcare), Goud (self-organisation addicts), Agis (health insurer), Connexion, GVVU, ProRail, shopkeepers, offices, residents, Rover, Bestuur Regio Utrecht, Fire Brigade, GHOR, Cumulus (youth work), Youth Assistance, Moroccan 'neighbourhood fathers', and others.

What are the roles and tasks of the various partners?

- In principle, all parties have retained their responsibilities and tasks; Private parties arrange for the management and supervision of private spaces; Triangle for public order and prosecution; Care partners for the care, shelter and guidance of addicts; the Municipality for the management and maintenance of public areas.

Who provided the input with regard to the expertise required?

- The expertise required came mostly from the collaborating organisations.
- The partners involved got together for each bottleneck/measure. Problems were analysed in ad-hoc project groups, after which execution-oriented measures were set up.

Manner of consultation and decision-making

- The overall supervision is in the hands of the municipality: the Station District for the district and the Mayor for the administration. The District Manager submits proposals, progress reports and bottlenecks to the partners at all levels.
- A management meeting takes place every quarter to adopt all measures.
- An administrative meeting is held at crucial points (ad hoc) to take decisions requiring drastic measures or to discuss bottlenecks that require a breakthrough.
- An implementation progress report is presented and any adaptations are made in the monthly security meeting.
- Creating a single vision and execution, while respecting each others possibilities and individual priorities.

How is the project financed?

- All parties pay their own project costs and any resulting measures.
- NS, Corio, Jaarbeurs invest in additional control and supervision and provide the space required; BRU has paid for the reorganisation of the bus stations; Agis pays for care to addicts; and the Municipality carries the costs for the District Manager, outdoor camera supervision, care centres and refurbishment of public areas.

6. How did you build in plans to measure the performance of the project?

Has the project been evaluated?

- An administrative adoption of a progress report takes place every year. The progress is discussed with the management every quarter and every month with the operational supervisors. The final evaluation is expected to be adopted in October 2005, after which the project will be terminated and the Station District Project will be continued from within the regular organisation.
- The approach and working method will be laid down in a process description at the end of 2005 to be able to use the same working method elsewhere.

7. Has the project been evaluated? How, and by whom?

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What has been evaluated?

- Results: Crime, nuisance, perception of security, living circumstances addicts
- Approach: Observance of arrangements made, execution of measures, organisation, cooperation

Who carried out the evaluation?

- Study of perception by Intomart and, in part, by NS
- Crime and nuisance by the police and Municipality (administrative information)
- Living circumstances by Centrum Maliebaan and GG&GD (Area Health Authority)
- Other evaluations by district manager in collaboration with partners involved

8. What were the results? How far were the objectives of the project achieved?

What are the results obtained?

- Incidents of theft have fallen by 51% and violence by 15%.
- The number of police tickets issued in Hoog Catharijne and the station has dropped by 36%.
- The feeling of security has increased by 25%: from 4.9 to 6.0
- The number of passengers who have not witnessed any incidents has increased from 65% to 74%
- The number of crimes committed by habitual offenders (around 275) has been reduced by 65%.
- The some 100 addicts who used to spend the night in HC or the station have been banned from doing so.
- All 350 Utrecht homeless addicts are now registered with the 24-hour care centres, 70% visit these centres on a regular basis. The remaining 30% are in detention, staying in a clinic or are temporarily outside Utrecht.
- The living circumstances of the addicts have improved further.
- The better living circumstances have led to less drug abuse, nuisance and crime.
- There has been *no* transfer to other districts.
- The area is cleaner and more whole: the overall rating has gone up from 5 to 6.

Has the project had the desired results? Has it also had any other results (bonus)?

- Target (safety/security, quality of life, living circumstances) has been realised.
- Additional result of the cooperation, also in other fields:
 - The Station District Contingency Plan lays down the organisation, communication and approach by emergency services, municipality, private parties and bus companies in the event of disasters and calamities.
 - Dealing with nuisance caused by youngsters by police, shopkeepers, youth work, NS, Córío, neighbourhood fathers.

Have the project's targets been reached?

- Yes
- The project will be terminated at the end of 2004. The station area will remain a priority. The project will be continued from within the regular organisation. An enforcement policy will be set up, amongst other things, laying down further arrangements regarding cooperation and deployment.