



**Sustainable**  
URBAN FRINGES  
SURF

# Almelo Reflection Report



# Partner Reflection Report Almelo:

## 1. Introduction

The Almelo Master Plan (2004) stated that, to enhance the town centre as a recreational focus it should be connected to the green belt which stretches far beyond the city. This, among other things, entails connecting the Noorderpark with the outskirts by means of bicycle and walking routes that have to be constructed under and over a number of infrastructural barriers.

The plan for the Almelo Noorderpark slow moving traffic thoroughfare was worked out in detail following participation in the Interreg 111/ Urban development programme. Following this vision, the vision of a connection for slow-moving traffic via the City Centre with the Eastern Green Lung was presented. The vision should enable bicycle, pedestrian, and also canoe connections, taking the current barriers into account (among other things, a lot of traffic in the City Centre and water).

The connection can serve as a catalyst for further developments and projects that will be implemented in and around the City Centre and the Eastern Green Lung and will provide an impulse for new activities in the fringes of the city, to stimulate recreation and tourism. Hence a flourishing urban fringe economy can then develop.

### a. Aims

The question was taken up as an integral task and took into account the functional connections and the spatial perception for cyclists, pedestrians and canoeists, as well as the coherence of the routes with their environment. The aim of this project therefore is to tackle the subject, covering the country side and traffic, for the purpose of, among other things, recreation and tourism.

In addition, specific attention was paid to the possibilities of presenting works of art in the public areas to emphasise the possible connections.

A pragmatic approach was taken by using the available information (among other things, the existing plans and policies) and to use them as a basis to formulate specific starting points.

### b. Change of focus

During the start up phase, meetings were held with the stakeholders, and all the available information was reviewed and a site visit took place. The information was incorporated onto an up to date zoning map and the vision was instigated. The results were discussed periodically with the stakeholders. Based on this, two routes were drawn up, in stead of one, with a plan to investigate the routes once again based on the accessibility and the appropriate measures. In order to obtain an idea of the existing facilities along the route, photos were taken of sections of the route to get an idea of the slow moving traffic on the road and an idea of the missing bicycle facilities. The tentative reports have also been submitted to the stakeholders.

Strengthen the urban fringe economy in the Eastern green lung has been added during the project time; by constructing more coherent routes, drawing more people to the area by creating a pass at the Van Rechteren Limburgsingel at a different level and by permitting more activity in the area.

This was done on the basis of conversations with stakeholders and with the SURF partners, but also because of the departure of a farmer from a farm tenancy, and the need to provide new economic carriers in the area is necessary.

Curiously enough, our participation in SURF has made it possible to start projects outside the SURF project area (spin off).

## **2. The opportunity for change**

### **Strength**

The same strength exists from the original SWOT analysis. In SWOT 1 we wrote that annexed to urban extension new economic activities appear like recreation, tourism and care. But during the process, there is yet another strength added, the question of new entrepreneurs for development space in the Eastern Green lung.

### **Weaknesses**

Unlike during the start of the project, there is now proportional attention for the rural area (besides the urban area).

### **Opportunities**

There are a lot more opportunities now, there is a vision, there is awareness and there is a good flow in the urban fringe. There are new have been started and even Beter Wonen Housing Association wants to take participate in new initiatives (in combination with care).

### **Threats**

The threats are still there. But the interests in the region are increasingly shared which will make the development of new initiatives possible. There is a new threat. The national Government has no more money available for developments in the green space. On the other hand: grant (free-money) can make people lazy. The inhabitants became involved by the SURF project opportunities.

## **3. Unlocking the potential of the urban fringe**

### **The approach**

*The approach is already explained on the first page. Much more important is that we've approached stakeholders from outside the project area. The new entrepreneurs and inhabitants and tourists, we've discovered, are not present yet in the project area.*

*We have learned a lot from the SURF green spaces theme group, the stories of Antwerp, Bradford and Hamburg.*

### **The Projects Teams View**

*We have learned a lot and now know that many people want to help us further develop the urban fringe.*

*New projects and ideas thanks to SURF. We were too modest when submitting our project proposal 3 years ago. We wanted to create a vision for the Eastern green lung. We did. But it's become so much more*