



The Amsterdam Mobility Fund

REPORT September 2014

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Summary

This paper summarises the legal framework and scope of the Amsterdam Mobility Fund. Amsterdam is in some respects a world-leading city when it comes to solutions for urban transport and mobility and cycling. The report gives a brief understanding of one of the policies, the Amsterdam Mobility Fund, underpinning this well recognized success in cycling levels and sustainable urban mobility. A key focus of the Mobility Fund is to manage on-street car parking in the city, a vital resource making use of a considerable amount of urban land.

The overall purpose of the Amsterdam Mobility Fund is to contribute to the transport policy of the city. The transport policy professes to enable Amsterdam residents and visitors to move safely and efficiently around in an accessible, attractive and clean city. The paper outlines that fees applies to 156.000 car parking places, more than half of the estimated total of 250.000 car parking places in Amsterdam. City-wide the gross revenue from paid parking for 2012 was nearly € 160m. Some 38% of that was spent on the management of paid parking and some general costs. About one quarter of the money (€ 37m., 23%) flows into to the Amsterdam central mobility fund.

A considerable part, about 31% of the central mobility fund is spent on bicycle projects, 18% is spent on improvement of public transport and 13% on road safety. Hence a considerable amount of car parking fees (considered to be a tax on land use) goes towards improvements for walking, cycling and public transport infrastructure. A rationale for this is that when offering good services more people will chose to come by bike, public transport or Park and Ride (P+R). This in turn is seen to prevent congestion and thus allow car users that really need their car to effectively reach their destination.

When new car parking spaces in garages are built in a neighbourhood, using money from the mobility fund, districts have been known to remove the same number of on-street car parking spaces. This is in order to use the car parking garage construction not only as a tool to manage car parking but also as a tool to improve public space. Another interesting principle in Amsterdam urban policy is that car users who move in to new buildings can't get a parking permit for on-street parking. Hence residents in new buildings with dedicated car parking on private land need to pay for car parking on-street at the same rate as everyone else.

All in all, car parking fees, less on-street parking, better networks for public transport and bicycles, car limiting circulation and more P+R facilities have led to 30% reduction of car use in the city centre (district Centrum) in the last 20 years. The growth of bike traffic has mostly replaced car traffic. During the same period road safety has improved.

1. Introduction

This report forms part of Innovative Parking, a Swedish research and development project. The study has been produced in response to an instruction from Pelle Envall, TUB, for a paper summarising the Amsterdam Mobility Fund. The report has been prepared by Marjolein de Lange, MLAdvies, www.mladvies.eu.

The Amsterdam Mobility Fund is an important revenue stream for transport improvements in the City of Amsterdam. The paper provides some background on the fund as well as some details regarding the legal framework, its turnover, and the number of parking spaces, residents and jobs in the areas covered by on-street parking fees.

2. Parking in Amsterdam

2.1 Historical and spatial background

Parking of cars has always been an issue in Amsterdam since space is scarce. The massive growth of car traffic since the 1950's caused huge parking problems. Cars were parked everywhere, whether this was legal or not.

However, finding more room for parking was difficult. Plans for filling in canals to make parking space caused overall indignation and building parking garages was not only expensive but politically difficult as well. More room for cars would be counterproductive since it would attract more car traffic, hence worsen the problem rather than solve it. The result is that the majority of parking places in Amsterdam is in the public realm, and that parking space is scarce, especially in the city centre.

With the demand much higher than the number of parking places available pricing would be the option. However it turned out difficult and expensive to regulate this with existing legislation.



Figure 1. On-street parking in Amsterdam

2.2 Fiscal paid parking is cost effective and generates income

Paid parking exists in Amsterdam since the 1960's. But it only became an effective tool to regulate the scarcity of parking place, when it took the form of a municipal parking tax in 1991.

Until then failing to pay for parking was considered a legal offense. The municipalities could enforce it, but the penalties would go into the national treasury.

If parking fees are local tax, municipalities can generate income both from the use of the public parking places and from the penalties for drivers who fail to pay. That makes regulating and enforcement of paid parking cost-effective and even generates local income.

2.3 Enforcement

To enforce paid parking, in the beginning severe measures were needed: wheel clamps and dragging away of cars. These measures were extremely unpopular but succeeded in improving parking behaviour and paying obedience. The last years these measures are hardly needed anymore.

Recently, automatic number plate recognition allows for more frequent surveillance, which has led to a considerable rise in paying obedience, and also in penalizing.

2.4 Where, how much and how many paid parking

Paid parking as a tax, fiscal paid parking, started in Amsterdam with 6000 places in the city centre. Since then the area had to be extended continuously to take care of the drivers who would move to the nearest areas with no paid parking.

At present there are about 156.000 paid parking places, more than halve of the estimated total of 250.000 parking places in Amsterdam. The areas of paid parking comprise about 485.000 residents and about 292.000 jobs. Both, coincidentally, about 60% of Amsterdam's total.

What one has to pay for paid parking is not the same in different parts of the city. This can best be seen in the interactive map of Reference 1 (p. 13).

3. The Amsterdam Mobility Fund

Municipalities can decide freely on the destination of the revenues of fiscal paid parking. Amsterdam chooses to dedicate the income specifically to transport projects that contribute to the goals of the city's transport policy.

In order to establish a clear relationship between revenues of paid parking and the projects paid from it, the mobility fund is made as a designated reservation in the municipal budget. (Reference 2, p.13)

Amsterdam is governed on two levels and both the central city and the seven city districts have their own mobility fund. The gross income of paid parking is divided between the funds in a regulated way. The city districts can make their own choices within the bandwidth set by the central city.

3.1 Who decides upon the mobility fund

The board of mayor and aldermen (the elected city board) determines which specific activities will be paid by the mobility fund. The city council can also have a say in designating money from the mobility fund. Since many projects in the mobility fund take several years and are part of long-term traffic policy, the room for political choices is limited. At the level of the city districts the procedure is quite the same.

3.2 Targets of Amsterdam traffic policy

The transport policy of Amsterdam professes to enable Amsterdam residents and visitors to move safely and efficiently around in an accessible, attractive and clean city (Reference 3, p.13).

The agreement for the present political coalition (the city board of 2010-2014) specifically aims at reducing car traffic in the area within ring road A10, a.o. by making more space for cyclists and pedestrians and promoting car parking and Park+Ride near the ring road (Reference 4, p.13).

By making car parking expensive, and at the same time offering good alternatives more people will choose to come by bike, public transport or Park+Ride. This prevents congestion and thus allows cars that really need to be there to effectively reach their destination. The revenue of paid parking invested in alternatives for urban car traffic is well spent.

3.3 Income and spending from the central mobility fund

City wide the gross income from paid parking in 2012 was nearly € 160m. Some 38% of that was spent on the management of paid parking and some general costs; 39% goes to the mobility funds of the seven city districts and 23% flows into to the central mobility fund.

The central mobility fund feeds about 15% of the transport budget of the central city of Amsterdam.

A considerable part, about 31% of the central mobility fund is spent on bicycle projects, 18% is spent on improvement of public transport and 13% on road safety.

This doesn't mean that less money is spent on car projects than on projects for bikes. Projects for cars and public transport are for a large part paid for from other sources than the mobility fund. Thus the total budgets for cars and public transport exceed the ones for bikes and road safety enormously.

Overview of the central mobility fund spending - 2012-2016		
	av. € m./year	%
general	4,9	17,0%
road safety	3,7	12,7%
traffic management	0,5	1,8%
bike and foot	2,2	7,6%
bike	8,6	29,7%
public transport	5,0	17,0%
car	1,9	6,5%
car alternative	0,5	1,8%
taxi	1,7	5,8%
total	29,1	100,0%
Reference 5a+b		

3.4 Projects paid by the central mobility fund

Some examples of projects that are paid by the mobility fund:

- Bicycle projects:
 - A new tunnel for cyclists and pedestrians under central station, costs about €10m., opening in 2015
 - A new connection crossing the Noordhollands kanaal, costs about €7m., opened in 2013
 - Bicycle parking at Leidseplein, costs about €20m., opening in 2020
 - Exploitation of the ferries crossing de river IJ, about €7m./year
 - Exploitation of bike parking, nearly €9m./year
- Road safety projects:
 - Road safety programs: €1m./year
 - Solving black spots and red routes, €2,2m./year
 - Road safety policy, €0,3m./year
- Public transport (PT) projects:

- Contributions to the construction of several fast PT lines
- (Contribution to) a new bus station in Amsterdam Noord, €5m., opening in 2017
- Dynamic information system for PT, €3,2m.
- Car projects:
 - Contribution to a new car tunnel, €4m.
 - (Contribution to) new car connection, €2m.
 - Campaign about accessibility, €0,8m.
 - The costs of new Park+Ride, €13,6m., are paid from a different source than the mobility fund

3.5 Differences between city districts

39% of the gross income of paid parking flows into the mobility funds of the seven city districts of Amsterdam. The city districts set different targets for their mobility fund. The more right wing district South, for example, has a parking policy which mainly aims at improving car accessibility and spends a large part of its mobility fund to make more car parking places.

Districts Oost, West and Centrum, on the other hand, have parking policies that aim for liveability and alternatives for car traffic. They, for instance, promote parking in P+R near the ring road. When new car parking places in garages are built, they remove the same number of on-street places in order to improve public space (Reference 6, p.13).

3.6 Results of fiscal paid parking and the mobility fund:

Fiscal paid parking has helped to reduce the parking pressure (occupancy): in 1990 the parking pressure in the city centre was 90%, in 2008 it was about 75%.

Also the mode of transport people use has changed: for trips within Amsterdam the share of cars went down from 39% in 1990 to 31% in 2008, while the bike share has grown. For trips between Amsterdam and the region the car share shrank from 67% in 1990 to 60%, mainly in favour of public transport (Reference 7, p.13).

The discussion paper Car in the City of 2009 (Reference 8, p.13) states:

All in all, higher parking fees, less on-street parking, better networks for public transport and bicycles, car limiting circulation and more P+R places near the ring road have led to 30% reduction of car use in the city centre (district Centrum) in the last 20 years. Most of that reduced car traffic was replaced by cycling. At the same time, road safety improved and the city centre remained an attractive area for commerce and tourists.

The graphics show that the development of the modal splits of trips within the ring road, and of trips within the city centre show even higher rates of cycling.

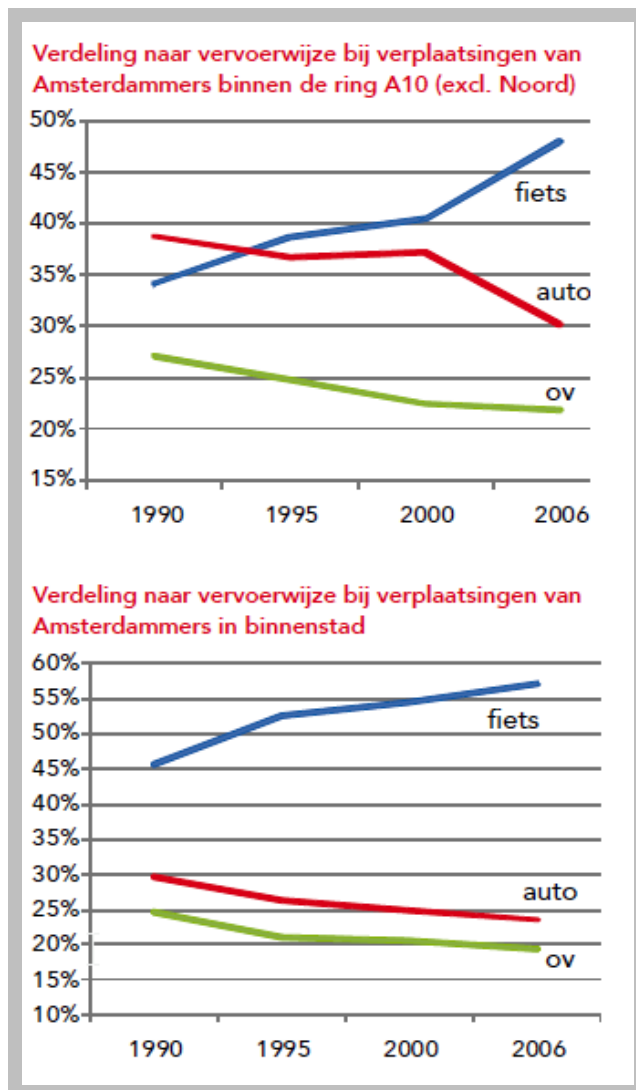


Table 1. Modal split. Blue line = bike, red line = car, green line = public transport.

Top picture is for trips within the ring road, bottom picture for trips within Centrum district]

3.7 Results in the streets, the example of Furore garage

In 2008 a new parking garage with 364 new parking places was opened under the new building Furore in city district West. The same number of on-street parking places was removed in several places. About 70 were removed from 1stConst.Huygenstraat and Bilderdijkstraat when these streets got a new layout with segregated bike paths and a free lane for public transport.



Figure 2. 1st Constantijn Huygensstraat with bike paths

More parking places were removed in several smaller streets in the area to improve public space with green, bike parking, side walks with terraces etc.

Potgieterstraat, a side street of Bilderdijkstraat, was turned into a playground and a bicycle path by removing cars. This resulted in a better public space, a circulation that favours cycling and walking and better road safety.



Figure 3. Potgieterstraat has now a playground and a bike path.

3.8 Some typical themes

3.8.1 Illegal parking, on sidewalks, bike tracks, bridges etc.

Drivers can commit two types of offenses when they park their car in an area of paid parking. Firstly they can fail to pay the required tax. This is enforced with fiscal paid parking. Secondly, they can park in a place where it is forbidden, such as sidewalks, bridges and bike paths. Before 1989 it took a lot of work for the authorities to enforce illegal parking and make trespassers pay their penalties. The Mulder law of 1989 made offenses such as illegal parking (that don't cause direct danger or injuries) easier to enforce by relabeling the penalties as administrative sanctions. These sanctions can be easily imposed and collected by officials lower ranked than policemen.

Before the Mulder became effective, law Amsterdam had to put up thousands of bollards and high curbs to prevent cars to park illegally.



Figure 4. Street without anti parking curb



Figure 5. Street with anti parking curb

3.8.2 Parking permits

In the areas of paid parking, residents can get a parking permit, which is a lot cheaper than what visitors have to pay. The fee ranges from €24/year in the district Noord to €440/year in some parts of the Centrum. This amount hardly covers the actual costs of producing the permit, let alone the value of the space it implies.

With such low rates the demand for a permit greatly exceeds the number of parking places available. To regulate this, no more than a fixed maximum of parking permits will be issued yielding long waiting lists for parking permits, especially in the busy areas. In Centrum one has to wait nearly four years to get a permit.

This leads on the one hand to low car ownership (in Amsterdam only 28% of residents >18 years owns a car). But once people have a parking permit they will not easily do away their car, since they are unwilling to lose their parking permit. Finding solutions for the long waiting lists is a new topic of political debate.

3.8.3 New building

The parking of new buildings has to be taken care of on the spot, mostly in garages. Users of new buildings can't get a parking permit for on-street parking. The building regulations for new developments, set by the city council, always include a parking standard, i.e. the number of parking places to be built per home or working place.

The parking standard is often the subject of intense political debate. A high parking standard makes the new building attractive for families that own more cars (a trend among residents where partners both have a paid job). High parking standards make new buildings easier to sell, is the idea. On the other hand, more cars lead to more car traffic, hence induces congestion and therefore is considered undesirable.

The considerable price of indoor parking (starting from €20.000/parking place) has up till now not yet been an important issue in Amsterdam developments.

4. References and further reading

Reference 1: Tariffs and times for paid parking in Amsterdam

<http://www.amsterdam.nl/parkeren-verkeer/parkeren-amsterdam/parkeren-straat/parkeren-straat/kaart/>
<http://www.iamsterdam.com/en-GB/experience/plan-your-trip/getting-around/parking/parking-in-amsterdam>

Reference 2: Regulation of the Mobility Fund Amsterdam 2011

<http://decentrale.regelgeving.overheid.nl/cvdr/XHTMLoutput/Actueel/Amsterdam/110272.html>

Reference 3: The Amsterdam budget for transport in 2014, and an overview of the spending in the years ahead, can be found here. Paragraph 5.8 of the document is dedicated to the Mobility Fund.

http://www.amsterdam.nl/publish/pages/576129/webpack/GEM2014_B/pdf/05_Verkeereninfrastructuur.pdf

Reference 4: “Kiezen voor de Stad”, agreement of the present coalition for the City Board for 2010-2014

http://www.amsterdam.nl/publish/pages/285204/programakkoord_amsterdam_2010-2014.pdf

Reference 5a: More-yearWorking- and investment Plan 2012-2016, DIVV/PRO, 2012

http://www.amsterdam.nl/publish/pages/393905/mwp_2012-2016_i.pdf

Reference 5b: The Amsterdam budget for transport in 2014. Paragraph 5.8 of the document is dedicated to the Mobility Fund.

http://www.amsterdam.nl/publish/pages/576129/webpack/GEM2014_B/pdf/05_Verkeereninfrastructuur.pdf

Reference 6: Audit of parking policies of the city districts, Rekenkamer Amsterdam, 2013

http://www.rekenkamer.amsterdam.nl/wp-content/uploads/2013/09/parkeerbeleid_ONDZrapport.pdf

Reference 7: Report “Mobiliteit in en om Amsterdam”, p. 21 and p. 60, DIW, 2010

<http://www.amsterdam.nl/publish/pages/393911/mobiliteitinenomamsterdam-dvnnovember2010.pdf>

Reference 8: “Auto in de Stad”, discussion paper about the car in the city

http://www.amsterdam.nl/publish/pages/393911/auto_in_de_stad_2009.pdf

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