



Breda University: how cycling infrastructure can unlock the future of urban mobility

Descrizione

COMUNICATO STAMPA - CONTENUTO PROMOZIONALE

BREDA, Netherlands, Sept. 22, 2026 /PRNewswire/ - New light electric vehicles (LEVs) could cut car use but they also put more cyclists at risk, according to research conducted at Breda University of Applied Sciences (BUas).

As European Mobility Week closes with Car-Free Day, the Netherlands' cycling model faces a new test.

The world's blueprint for cycling

The Netherlands built the world's reference model for cycling: 28% of all trips by bike, 22 million bicycles for 18 million residents, and a 153,000-kilometre network that is increasingly studied and copied by cities worldwide.

Lower car use

Light electric vehicles - e-scooters, e-cargo bikes and fatbikes - are arriving on Dutch cycle paths in growing numbers. Research from the LEVERAGE project of BUas and partners shows the upside: in a survey of nearly 2,000 residents, a quarter are considering a small LEV soon, and three-quarters expect to drive their car less as a result. Interest spans suburban and rural areas equally, suggesting LEVs can extend cycling-based mobility beyond conventional bikes, contributing to decarbonising the wider mobility system.

It's behaviour, not the vehicle

But LEVs also bring more varied speeds and masses to the same narrow cycle paths, and safety research finds this is pushing up cycling accidents. Using eye-tracking, skin-conductance sensors and surveys with cyclists, researchers found that legal fatbikes and other LEVs draw more visual attention

than ordinary bicycles. Yet this does not translate into measurable stress or unsafety, as long as LEV users behave predictably and keep to legal speeds.

“It is not the vehicle itself that creates danger, it is how it’s used,” says Paul van de Coevering, professor of Urban Mobility Planning at BUas. Even participants with negative prior attitudes towards LEVs reported no unsafe experiences when encountering them riding calmly. Infrastructure matters too: separated cycle paths consistently produced higher feelings of safety.

The policy fix

Enforcing behavioural standards like age limits, speed controls and predictable riding is more effective and receives more public support than banning specific vehicles. Combined with investment in well-designed infrastructure, these measures can keep the Dutch cycling model safe as it absorbs a new generation of electric vehicles.

Note to editors

Breda University of Applied Sciences is an internationally oriented university with study programmes in Built Environment, Logistics and Hospitality.

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