

Hub programme Groningen – Drenthe

State of the hubs, governance and future outlook

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Background and Aim

Mobility hubs contribute to shared mobility and multimodal trips, which contribute to lower carbon emissions, reduced congestion and air pollution, better accessibility and increased quality of life. Hubs can be train stations, P+Rs, bus stations or smaller neighbourhood hubs.

Since 2018, the provinces of Groningen and Drenthe have an extensive network of hubs across their urban and rural landscape. To continue the developments at individual hubs and across the hub network, the Hub Programme collaborated with the University of Groningen (RUG) for reflection and policy considerations to ensure long-term sustainable and inclusive accessibility.

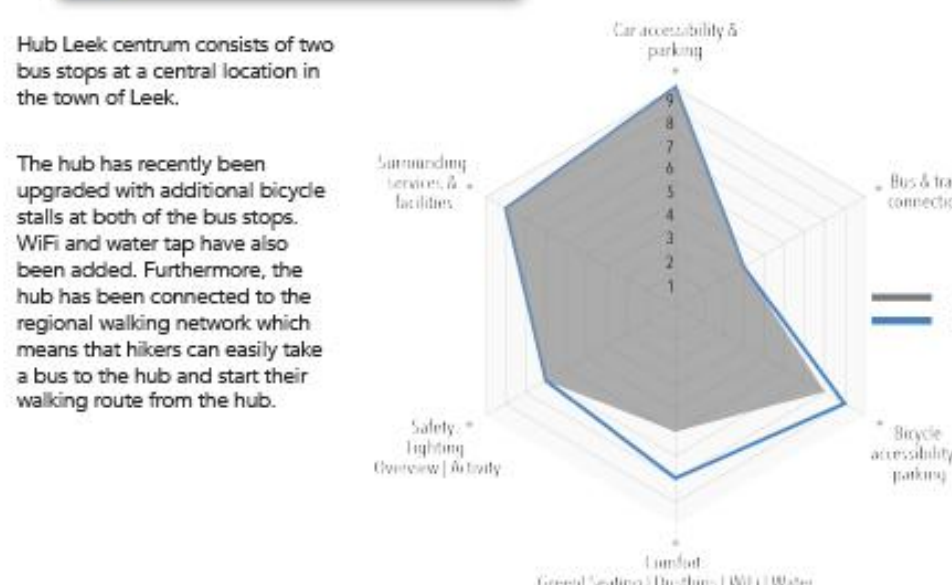


Analysis of Dutch policy context

- Inter-modality is seen as crucial for realizing sustainability and good accessibility
- Inter-modality comprises at least two different transport modes – in NL only 4% of all trips are intermodal (e.g., train and bike)
- Inter-modality is facilitated through multimodal hubs that provide high quality transport (punctual, frequent, fast, comfortable) and different sharing systems
- Public transport accessibility and inclusiveness are key. Spatial functions, such as multifunctionality, densification and good infrastructure for active travel modes can help to reduce car use.

Evaluating Hubs

As part of the project we did a node-place evaluation of all 57 hubs comparing the changes between 2017 and 2021 – resulting in a ‘hub evaluation booklet’. Below an example:



KEY FACTS	
Municipality of Westerkwartier	100 uncovered stalls
Province of Groningen	2x Q-link, 4 regular
250 daily bus boardings	66 parking spots
	WiFi, water tap, walking routes



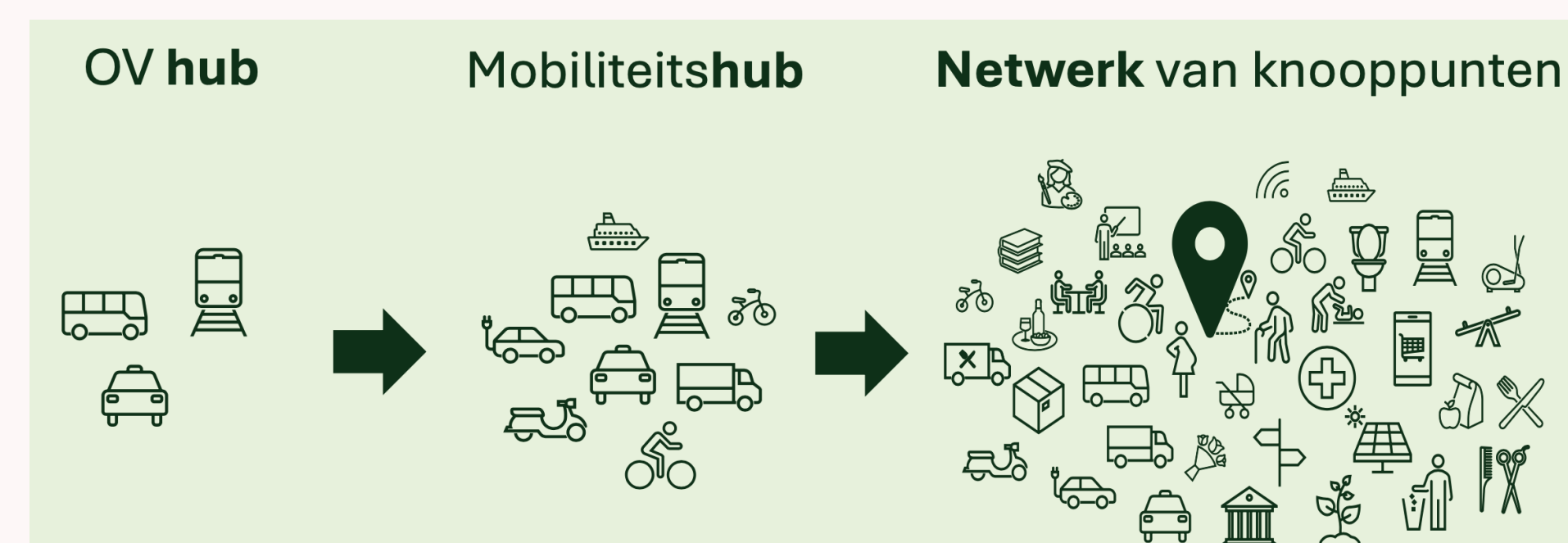
Main take aways because of this evaluation:

- **Node value:** improvements node value (accessibility for car, bike and PT) of bike and car parking at some hubs, also some have bike lockers. However, minimal change occurred in public transport provision (as there was no change of the concession).
- **Place value:** in most hubs place value (comfort, safety and facilities) has improved. Comfort has been improved by WiFi, water taps, and also seating and waste bins. Increasingly, hubs have parcel lockers. Some hubs saw improvement in safety (lighting). At a few hubs the environment was redesigned, expanded.

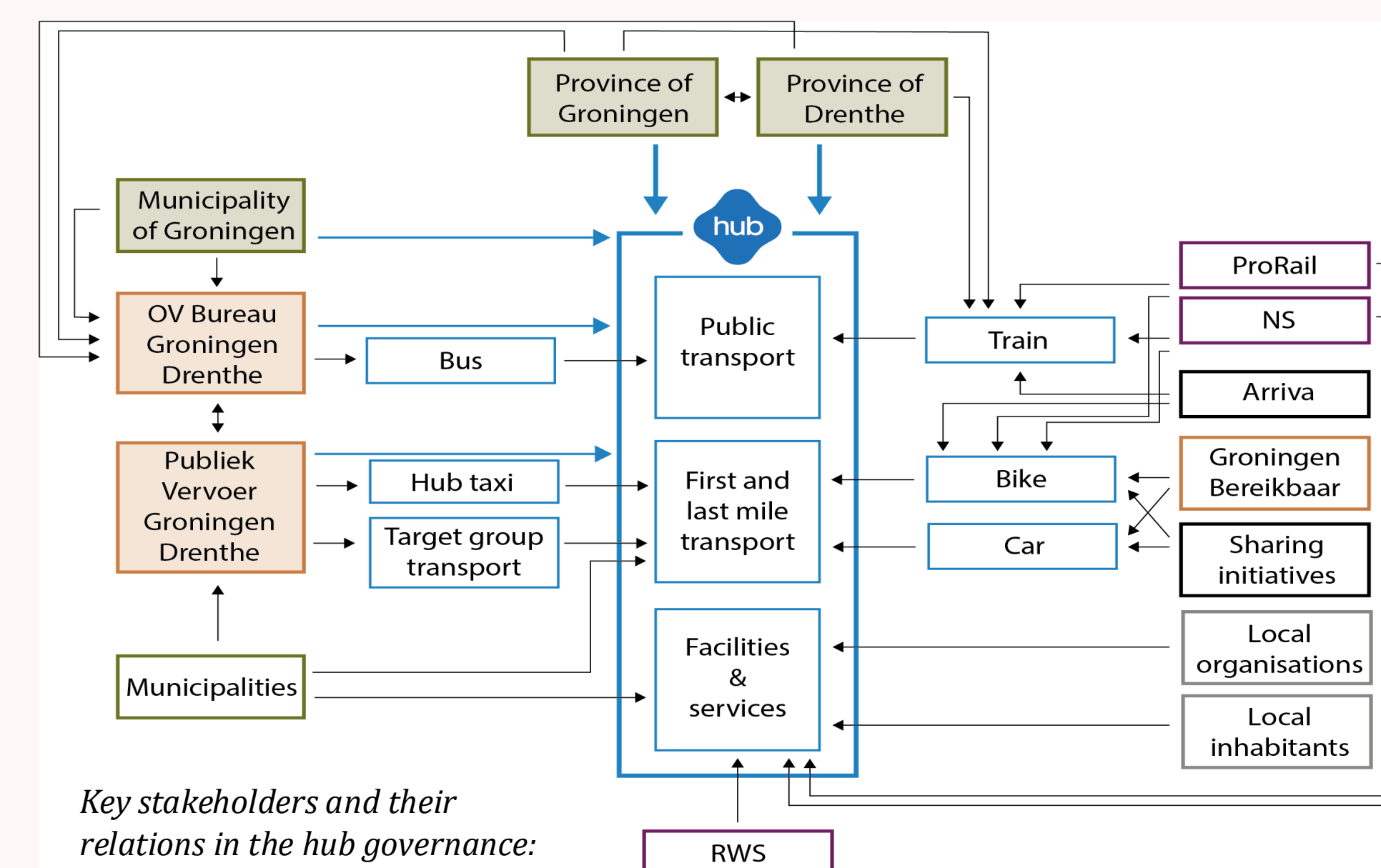
In Groningen and Drenthe, hubs are the outcome of stretching public transport lines and of collective management of on-demand and target group transport. Overall, the result is a hub network that is considered successful and gained national attention (e.g. in the Mobility Vision).

Governance hub network Groningen Drenthe

The hub network in Groningen and Drenthe was not the result of pre-determined policy goals but an ad-hoc, organic, bottom-up approach characterised by pragmatism, experimentation and learning.



Meanwhile, fragmented land ownership has proven to be an essential yet challenging factor in hub developments. The land where a hub is located belongs to others – municipality, province or asset managers (ProRail, NS or Rijkswaterstaat). A mismatch between the policy goals of these organisations can lead to a halt in hub developments. The result is a quite complicated, fragmented governance situation.



Key stakeholders and their relations in the hub governance:

Overall issues in practice

- Municipalities lack financing
- Municipalities have other priorities
- Mismatch between policy goals
- Unclear expectations
- Not every pilot is a success story
- Landownership a crucial challenge



Future Outlook

The governance of the hub program resulted in a successful network so far. However, many of the ‘low-hanging-fruit’ opportunities have been seized, and a more comprehensive approach is needed. The program itself has little influence on improvements at hubs where the municipality must take the lead. The OV Bureau can only invest into bus lines, and the provinces can implement water taps, WiFi and a hub bench, and invest into pilot projects. To do more, support and financing from municipalities, asset owners Rijkswaterstaat, ProRail, NS, local organisations (library, health care) and businesses is needed.

Next steps:

- Collaboration with local and national stakeholders is key considering the interdependencies (collaborative governance)
- Guidelines and subsidy programme could accelerate developments
- Showcasing results for wider support (how does the hub programme benefits urban and rural accessibility).

Future: Building towards an inclusive hub network that focuses increasingly more on spatial developments at hubs and its surroundings rather than mobility alone.