

THE SOLUTION FOR THE DISTURBANCE CAUSED BY SCHIPHOL

A second airport at an isle in the Markerwaard and a fast train connecting the two airports. That in the essence is the plan of Willem van der Pol, inhabitant of Leiden. This advisor on innovation, air quality and environmental rural planning sent his idea's to the departments of transportation and water (V&W), and environment and spatial planning (VROM).

As final and structural solution for the disturbance caused by Schiphol I have forwarded at the beginning of 2006 a plan to the departments of V&W and VROM, which frees up extra flying space for Schiphol, so the hotly disputed reservation for another landing strip alongside the Kaagtrack (Kaagbaan) which otherwise would be needed for the expansion of Schiphol is no longer needed. The proposal consists of the following components:

- 1) The shift of (low cost) charters and vacation flights to a second airport at Lelystad. With this shift at least a 100.000 flights will be transferred to a place in the Netherlands where they won't cause noise hindrance of any kind. The separation of the intercontinental and European flights yields a much easier air traffic handling.
- 2) Re-establishing Lelystad airport on an artificial isle in the Markerwaard. This isle is created by damming off drowned land in the Northern part of the lake Markermeer.
In an initial stage the current airfield of Lelystad can be temporarily enlarged. But to avoid hindrance in the Flevopolders in the long run, a second new airport is necessary. Additional advantage of the new position of this proposed airport is that it lies at a central crossing, with direct connections leading to the Northern provinces of Friesland and Groningen and the region of West-Friesland. This causes a large reduction of kilometres that have to be travelled by car. The shifting of jobs to the Flevopolders will greatly diminish the car traffic between Amsterdam and Almere/Lelystad, reducing daily traffic jams.
- 3) The two airports will be interconnected by a fast train, a Maglev Shuttle. This Maglev train with a maximum velocity of 250 km/hr provides a direct 10 minutes connection between the airports, taking off every 2 minutes. This connection creates no environmental disturbance whatsoever.
- 4) Schiphol will become a European Hub for high speed trains. In this scenario of development Schiphol gains a function: being focal point for European high speed train connections. This creates more economic stability because ups and downs of air traffic can be compensated for. The current plans in fact only lead to further development of office and business functions, causing that the airfield area is only during parts of the day fully utilized.

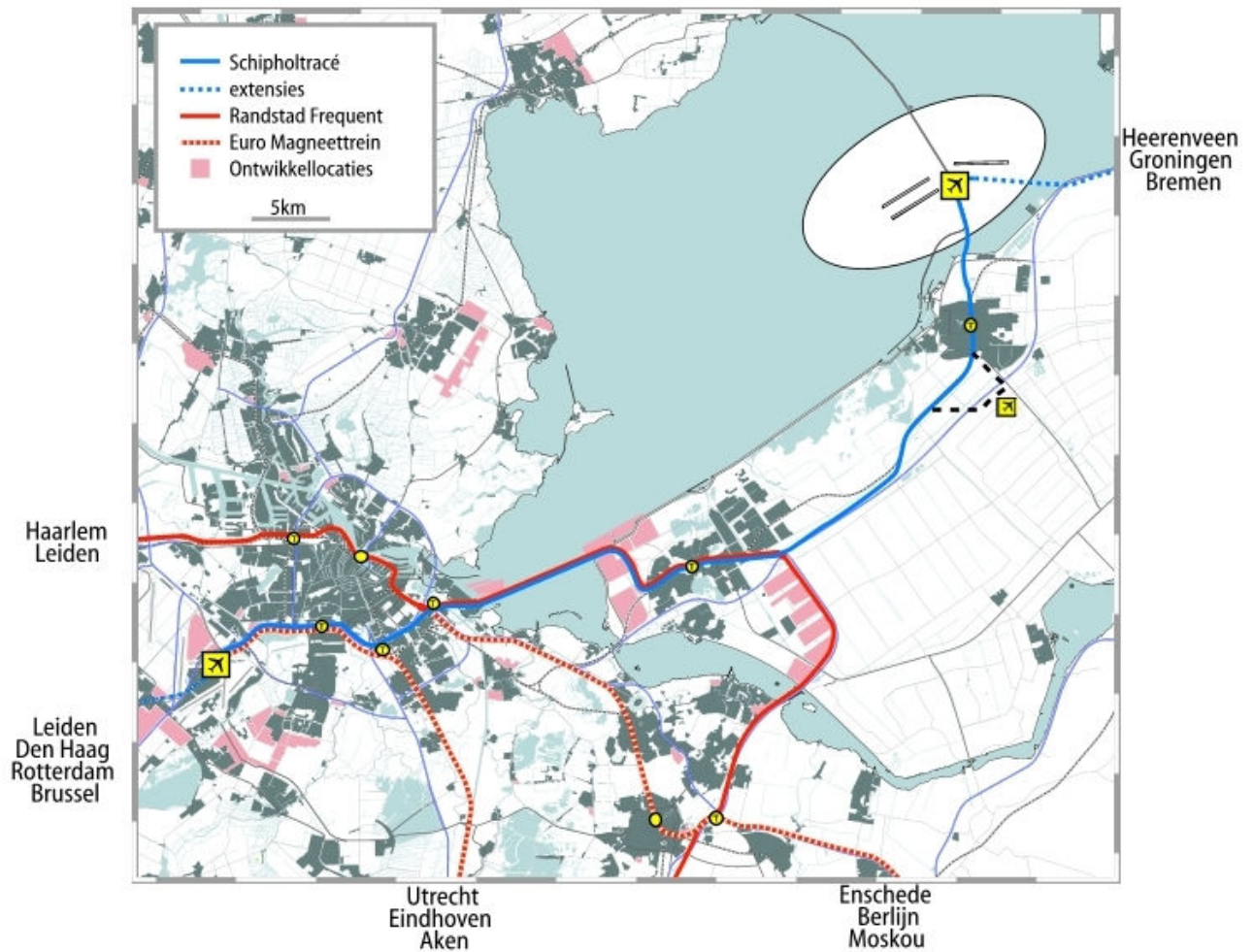


Fig. 1 The proposed new situation

An important notice is that the proposed solutions form together one united solution.

With a dedicated Maglev shuttle that interconnects both airports, the secondary airport will function as an extended terminal of Schiphol. This frees charter companies from the difficulty that they must choose between two airfields. They are able to maintain part of their operation at Schiphol and all the same make good use of Lelystad. This solution removes an important obstacle so the final decision can be made to actual shift flights.

The Maglev has the advantage of being able to provide a reliable 24 hour connection, at low energy costs. This solution can't be realised with a classic train connection by the Dutch national railway company NS.

Then there is a huge difference in financing possibilities. The construction of the Shuttle connection can totally be paid for by private money; the classical train solution requires a huge, lasting government budget spending.

The Maglev shuttle has additional environmental advantages: it fits to a new climate neutral way of transportation, by which people and goods can be delivered. Connecting to under-ground logistic solutions, the Amsterdam freight trams and the regional light-rail.

Since the time of my first proposal to the government in 2006 all my plans have gained in strength considerably. Airport Schiphol has announced that pre-terminal check-in posts will be created. A concept already present in my plans. The aviation branch nowadays objects to paying CO₂ tax without receiving anything in return. I assume that the branch won't object at all if the money is spend on realisation of the presented plan, which gives such a great improvement of the landside approach to the airport.

The AMT train is by no means a futuristic train. The introduction of the AMT train is in preparation in America in a completely comparable setting: for passenger travel to and from LAX airport at Los Angeles.

Out of economic point of view it can be attractive that our country plays part in assembling the trains and maglev's elevated guided tracks. The many win-win situations that I have sketched prove that is justified if the proposed solution are realised as a whole.

Though it is possible to treat each solution according to its own timing, the total benefit for society is far greater when it is introduced as a whole.

I conclude with mentioning the most important benefits of my plan:

- a decrease of environmental pressure in the Haarlemmermeer and the Rijnland region;
- freeing up of space for urban development in the Haarlemmermeer;
- air traffic to Schiphol can grow again;
- more safety by creating a secondary large airport in an unpopulated area;
- departure of flights at day-time in stead of early in the morning, or late at night;
- alleviation of road congestion towards the airport and around Amsterdam;
- upgrading of the public rail service to a truly Metropolitan system;
- introduction of high-frequency, comfortable, public service for transportation of goods and people;
- Schiphol becomes a central hub in European high-speed train traffic.

Willem van der Pol

(Source: Haarlems Dagblad, opinion section, 3 May 2008)