



# Experiment flexible local transport

Flexbus

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**Hilvarenbeek:**

Rural Municipality

15,000 inhabitants

Six hamlets



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## **Hilvarenbeek**

Socio economic characteristics:

Commuting

Agriculture

Tourism (one of the largest Safariparks in Western Europe:  
over one million visitors per annum)

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## **Local Public Transport system**

Regular service lines; time scheduled

Three lines: working days, in the day time only

Voluntary bases

Buses and facilities provided by the province

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**Hilvarenbeek**

**Aging population**



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## **Background:**

- Signals from the senior citizens council
- Social isolation of the elderly
- Risk of reducing societal participation

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- Not just the elderly: students etc.
- Trends in the passengers profile:
  - More “tailor-made” transport
  - In the evenings and in the weekends
- Servicing tourist attractions

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Risc of streamlining (down sizing)  
of the regional system:

no more busstops in the village but a  
hub at the provincial highway

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## **Experiment Flexbus**

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## Overall goals

- Servicing the target groups
- Boosting the use of local transport facilities  
(minimum 600 passengers per line per month)

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- **Provincial support**

Learning moment for similar situations

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## Neighbourhood Bus Association

- Very efficient
- Traditional conventions based
- Regularity bias: culture

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- Project group put in place by the senior citizens council (ties with NBA)
- Support from **Hilvarenbeek Smart Village**



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**Culture clash:**

**Flexibility versus regularity**

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- Complex and labourious route
  - Creation of a basis of trust: not just regularity  
(mediation by the alderman and HSV)
  - Corona  
(still in fact)

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- **The project group integrated in the neighbourhood bus association**

Appropriate powers

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- **Initial ambitious solution target**

Flexibility on all lines

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- Provincial approach:
  - Experimenting with only a fourth bus **on demand**
  - To be employed as additional support for the existing lines

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Simple coordinating system:

**Smartphones**

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Three years; start in april 2022

Target: 400 passengers per month after  
two years

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- Full support from
  - Province
  - Village cooperations
  - Elderly associations
  - Enterprises
  
  - Local political parties positive



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- Action plan and budget agreed:

€ 260,000 over three years

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- To be examined:
  - Flexibility in the busstop locations
  - Rescheduling existing lines
  - Additional busstops in new residential areas

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- Saturdays between 08:00 AM and 07:00 PM limited transport on the regular lines
- Everyday flexible transport until 10:00 PM (fourth bus)

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## Challenge

Recruiting, selecting and training additional  
voluntary drivers: 20 extra

Municipal labour brokers activated

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- Future disabled transport?

To be explored

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Legal focus: Avoid competition distortion  
with regular taxi transport!!!

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- Evaluation

- Quarterly: Project group:

- Yearly:

- Provincial Tactical Transport Policy Development Team
    - Municipality
    - Neighbourhood bus association

