Drenthe's Citizens' Assembly on Mobility (2026)

Province of Drenthe

INTRODUCTION

In 2026, the Province of Drenthe ran its **second citizens' assembly**, this time on **public transport and mobility**, running from 16 March to 13 June. The province chose **accessibility** as its specific focus: how can we together make Drenthe accessible for everyone.

Mobility wasn't a random choice. **A 2023 citizen survey had already flagged several priority topics**: housing came out on top, and became the focus of Drenthe's first citizens' assembly in 2024, while energy, mobility, and healthcare followed close behind. In December 2025, following a preparatory workshop, the Provincial Parliament picked mobility for this second edition, since it fit especially well with policy work already underway.

The province is currently developing a **new mobility programme**, and plans to fold the assembly's proposals directly into that programme in autumn 2026.



THE NETHERLANDS



ENGAGEMENT LEVEL

- ○ Inform
- ● **Consult**
- ● **Involve**
- ○ Collaborate
- ○ Empower

MANDATE

This second assembly exists because the first one worked. After Drenthe's 2024 citizens' assembly on housing, **an evaluation recommended running another assembly** during this same legislative term, before the next provincial elections in March 2027, this time carrying forward what the province had learned.

The Provincial Parliament agreed, and used the opportunity to test whether the format could become a more regular instrument, not just a rare, one-off event. To make that realistic, the province **lowered the budget to €300,000**, which meant **scaling other things down too**: 80 participants instead of 150, and all five sessions held at the Provinciehuis, the province's own building, rather than renting theatres and venues across the region.

Not everything shrank though. Based directly on participant feedback from the first assembly, the province added a **fifth session**, giving this group more time to actually develop their proposals.

RECRUITMENT AND PARTICIPATION

Participants were selected through a **civic lottery**. The province sent **15,000 invitation letters to randomly chosen residents**, spread evenly across the region, with a 10% heavier weight toward **rural areas**, since rural residents are a particularly important group on the topic of mobility specifically.

Out of 816 people who volunteered, the province used stratified sampling to select **80 participants**, chosen to mirror Drenthe's population across age, gender, municipality, education level, and use of public transport, adding that last criterion specifically because of the topic at hand.

To keep participation accessible, participants **received €100 per full day**, roughly €500 in total across the five sessions, plus **reimbursement for travel costs**.

PROCESS DESIGN

The process ran over **five months**, in **five full-day sessions**: a Monday evening, two Fridays, and two Saturdays, each running from 10:00 to 16:00.

The **first session** focused on getting acquainted: setting ground rules, introducing the topic, and sharing personal stories in small groups, before agreeing on topics for the next meeting. The **second session** took participants out into the field, with two excursions to real-world examples, a transport hub and an accessible bus station, followed by an afternoon of expert sessions covering a range of mobility topics. The **third session** shifted into small-group conversation, helping participants pin down what mattered most within the topic, and shaping the questions they would later ask other residents through a survey. The **fourth session** focused entirely on writing proposals, and the **fifth and final session** finished and voted on which proposals would actually go forward to the province.

OUPUT AND FOLLOW-UP

The assembly put forward an **advisory report** which contained a **number of considerations** and **12 concrete policy recommendations**, covering a **wide range of topics**: uniformity of infrastructure, accessibility of local facilities, communication and safety measurements.

The **final report** was handed to **parliament d**uring a **public session** on 1 July 2026, and was **published online**. In autumn 2026 the **implementation process of the advisory report** will begin.













STRENGHTS

- **Early alignment** between the Provincial Parliament and the executive board, before the process even started.
- **An intensive communication campaign**, supporting both recruitment and public awareness throughout.
- A participant group with a **genuine mix of educational backgrounds**, including many with practical rather than theoretical training.

CHALLENGES

- **Building internal facilitation skills** takes real practice. The province is training its own discussion facilitators, but participants can clearly tell the difference in skill level.
- **A largely practical, rather than theoretical, participant background** meant the standard discussion-heavy programme needed real adjustment.

FINAL RECOMMENDATIONS

- Secure **political commitment** before launching.
- Invest in p**rofessional facilitation**, or provide training well beyond a single one-day workshop, before giving someone facilitation responsibility during an actual assembly.
- **Adapt your methods to your participants.** When most people bring practical rather than theoretical backgrounds, build in more visual and interactive formats, not just talking.
- Be transparent about **financial and legal constraints** from the start.
- **Plan follow-up** mechanisms early.



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