City Centre Rotterdam

THE CITY LOUNGE
The following ambition was formulated by the city council in the 2008 City Centre Plan and in their 2010 implementation programme:

‘We wish more people living and working in the City Centre and more people visiting the inner city, staying longer and spending more. To achieve these objectives we keep on developing the City Centre into a place of quality for local residents, businesses and visitors to meet, spend time and enjoy themselves.’

The monitor 2013 shows the growth of the City Centre in several ways. Not only the number of residents is growing, the number of employees and visitors of the City Centre has also increased.
The number of cyclists in Rotterdam has increased with 21% since 2008. About 213,000 cars are driving on the inner city ring every day. The number of business establishments in the city centre is about 4,060, mostly business services.

In 2012 740,000 hotel guests stayed 1,172,500 nights in Rotterdam.

Rotterdam The Hague airport handles 1,298,000 passengers yearly and has flights to approximately 40 destinations.

Rotterdam is one of the leading shopping cities of the Netherlands. Yearly, 30 million people are visiting the City Centre, who collectively spend an average of 1,3 billion.

Rotterdam has four star restaurants: Parkheuvel, Fred, Amarone and FG.

Rotterdam is the third student town of the Netherlands with approximately 80,000 students (Erasmus University, Hogeschool Rotterdam, INHolland, University College).

Rotterdam attracted 16,531,030 visitors to attractions, museums and events.

In 2013 27 cruiseships docked at the Wilhelminapier.

In 2012 Rotterdam counted 176 different nationalities.

Rotterdam was voted fourth in the European Green Capital Awards 2014.

The Rotterdam City Centre had 12,400 residents by the 1st of January 2013.

Rotterdam is the Dutch architecture city, with among others the New Institute and the International Architecture Biennale. The city of leading design agencies.

More than 100 events are organized in the City Centre during the year. Examples are the World Port Days, Film Festival, Shanty Festival, China Light and Museumnight.

100+

On a workday +/- 115,000 people are boarding the train in the inner city train stations and approximately 217,000 people at the metro stations. This is about 86,000,000 people yearly.

About 213,000 cars are driving on the inner city ring every day.

The number of cyclists in Rotterdam has increased with 21% since 2008.
Increasing liveliness

Attractiveness

Residents

Businesses

Visitors

LIVELY CITY CENTRE
Visitors of events are spending almost 200 million euro in the city.

The focus of the Cultural plan is on the City Centre.

More than 60% of the Rotterdam inhabitants visits culture and leisure facilities in the city centre.

The City Centre at eye level is focussed on the pedestrian and cyclist experience.

Yearly more than 100 events are organized in and around the city centre.

Number of visitors is rising.

More collaboration between cultural institutions leads to unexpected activities in the City Centre.

Culture and leisure are more and more the purpose of visiting the City Centre.
AMBITION CITY LOUNGE 2008

HOSPITABLE CITY CENTRE

Legibility

Clean, intact and safe

Image

Hospitality

Signing
The City Centre image has improved among Rotterdam residents. 66% thinks the City Centre is attractive.

80 city ambassadors give information and guided tours to visitors. Some of them are positioned in recognizable clothing at the City Centre hotspots, like Rotterdam Central Station. There are several Apps available to explore the City Centre.

Rotterdam is attractive for tourists

Mariana Calleja # Travel Thirst
Friendly, sweet and lovely # Rotterdam I am impressed with its people, their kindness & politeness. Admirable!

Frankie # Travelettes
Rotterdam as ‘the illegitimate love child of Amsterdam and Berlin’ and 21 more reasons ‘I love Rotterdam’.

The visitors experience exceeds the expectation.

With ‘Hospitable City Centre’ Rotterdam improves the readability of the city which makes that visitors feel welcome. This contributes to a more positive image.

Rotterdam is ranked 17th by ‘Most hospitable city 2013’, climbing 3 positions since 2012.

Within the top 21 Rotterdam scores best on Public Transport accessibility and shop opening times. Friendliness and safety increased 6% since 2012.

A hospitable City Centre is a safe innercity at the same time. The safety feeling has improved the last couple of years.

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Urban Character

Living environments and lifestyles

Densification

CITY CENTRE LIVING

Strengthening quality of living

AMBITION CITY LOUNGE 2008
FIGURES & RESULTS
CITY CENTRE LIVING

More than 18,000 dwellings are situated in the City Centre. That is 9% increase since 2008.

Another 300 dwellings will be built in 2014.

The consumers role has become bigger.

Living Survey: growth of luxury and collaborative lifestyles in the City Centre.

66% Living Survey respondents notice improvement public space.

The 'Map of cultural historical characteristics' shows the biography of the City Centre. It is based on the existing quality and by using the history it can add new value to urban planning.

'Oude Westen: 26% families
Hoboken: 80% 1-person households

More than 20,000 households reside in the City Centre. 60% 1-person households, 14% families with children.

32,400 people lived in the City Centre by the 1st of January 2013. This is an 8% growth since 2008.

Living satisfaction has increased.

Rotterdam is a young city.

More focus on the city at eye level.

'Small and pleasant', Mauritsplaats

'Small and pleasant', Calypso

'Small and pleasant', Karel Doorman

'Small and pleasant', 100 hoog

Change in trend: from individual to more collective thinking.
Living Survey confirms new way of collaborative thinking.

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Rotterdam is a young city.

More focus on the city at eye level.
Balance between bicycles, pedestrians and cars

Attractive public space

Connections

‘Greenification’

River as urban recreational landscape
FIGURES & RESULTS
CONNECTED CITY CENTRE

Zero emission city distribution: clean and smart supply

12,000 m² green rooftops in City Centre.

+21% more cyclists in Rotterdam since 2008.

River as urban recreational landscape
‘greenification’ and quality boost quays, e.g. Boompjeskade Leuvehoofd.

Introduction dynamic traffic management

Last 3 years: 500 extra bicycle parking lots in public space.

5 new bridges

35 new bridges

5 new bridges

Table of contents:

1. Introduction
2. Densification
3. Distribution
4. Connected city
5. ‘Centre style’

Connected city
More coherent street system and greater user quality.

Densification
An attractive, green public space is an important precondition for a pleasant city life.

Distribution
City Centre: supplying before morning rush and after evening peak.

‘Centre style’
framework spatial quality

4 Park&Walk garages
- Museumpark (1162)
- Boompjes (623)
- Kruisplein (760)
- Markthal (1100)

Total 8500 trees in City Centre.

830 trees extra since 2008

Lijnbaan

Leuvehoofd

Meent

10,000 m² green rooftops in City Centre.

12,000 m² green rooftops in City Centre.
AMBISSION CITY LOUNGE 2008

SMART ECONOMY

- Attractive business climate
- Inspiring environment
- Knowledge intensive activities
- Promising new industries
- More visitors

Promising new industries

Knowledge intensive activities

Inspiring environment

Attractive business climate

More visitors
A remarkable high number of creative starters settle with new formulas in old buildings.

Shopping is main reason for visiting Rotterdam City Centre.

82,400 jobs in Rotterdam City Centre.

Total +/- 1,236,600 m² office buildings in the City Centre (> 500 m²).

70,000 m² transformation vacant buildings in 2011 and 2012.

City Centre is most wanted location in acquisition of property.

Mediation services for transformation and innovative initiatives of vacant property.

N.N. DE cafe

Erasmus MC

Schieblock

Lijnbaan

‘Het nieuwe kantoor’
Six years of City Lounge show successful results, so there is no reason to completely change our approach. Therefore City Lounge will remain the basis for the further development of the quality in the city centre.

But, at the same time, the world changes. That’s why we have benchmarked several cities worldwide, from our City Lounge point of view: what can Rotterdam learn from them? We have focussed on both international frontrunners and cities that excel in certain aspects, like legibility.

Furthermore, there are some things that have changed drastically during the last decade. These trending topics we discussed in so-called expert meetings. The main question was: what is the influence of new trends and developments on the Rotterdam City Centre.

The conclusions of the benchmark and expert meetings were translated into some new perspectives. They will have our full attention in the coming years.

*The appendix contains the benchmark and expert meeting conclusions.*
City Lounge represents the transformation of the Rotterdam City Centre into a vital, comfortable place to meet, stay and enjoy. The City Lounge approach enhances the quality of the City Centre.

City Lounge, to be continued.
Authenticity enhances the profile of the City Centre.

Dare to make a choice for typical Rotterdam features. They determine the strength and image of the City Centre.

- Routes & places
- Urban, young, sub, diverse
- Events and festivals
- Legibility
- Visibility and activities
- River and docks
- City centre on the river
- Modern decor
- Reconstruction and highrise
- Architecture
- Emphasize AUTHENTICITY
- Stage: city at eye level
- Emphasize AUTHENTICITY

Authenticity enhances the profile of the City Centre.
Dare to make a choice for typical Rotterdam features. They determine the strength and image of the City Centre.
Residents, employees and visitors are using the City Centre in their own different way. Knowing their preferences and motives for using the public space make it possible to meet their expectations.

Residents experience as starting point

preference = urban

Visitors

motives are leading

The visitor doesn’t exist

hospitable

what are MOTIVES to create attractive urban space

Employees

work remotely

quality public space
The City Centre of Rotterdam is worthwhile exploring. A pleasant stay coincides with feeling at home. It is about knowing where you are, where to go and how to get there. The legibility of the city - a readable structure - is essential for those who want to get to know the city. Longer stays and higher spendings are resultant benefits.
Densification of the City Centre is required to accommodate the population and employment growth. Furthermore, it is a way to amplify the attractiveness. Not only new property but also transformation and programming can contribute to the desired densification.

It starts with the people that make the inner city!
The principles of the sharing economy have physical impact on the use of the City Centre. The people flow changes and new functions will pop up in public space.
In order to anticipate on future trends we have broadened our horizon: What can Rotterdam learn from other cities? We have analyzed some international and Dutch best practices. Melbourne and Copenhagen are top-scoring cities, consequently ranked high in liveability rankings. But there are more lessons to be learned on specific subjects like temporary use, legibility or new ways of participation and collaboration.

The main conclusions are:
• Focus on an attractive city centre pays off
• Focus on authenticity enlarges the attractiveness
• Temporary projects and experiments are fully-fledged ways of urban planning

Three extra points of attention:
• Policy consistency
• Monitoring
• New ways of participation and collaboration
An attractive city centre is the key factor in the new generation city centre plans.

The city centre experience is leading. Within this context, lots of cities have explicitly chosen for a pedestrian and cyclist focus: a people orientated city centre. The Stockholm City Plan is even named 'The Walkable City'. Cities like Bristol and London are improving their legibility by putting the needs of the pedestrians first: how far can you walk in 5 minutes? It is generally known that people who feel welcome, will stay longer and spend more.

Densification leads to a more attractive city, a well-populated city centre is like a rich layer of humus for urban life. Proved by among others Melbourne: once a 'donut city', whose centre was emptied of people and activities, is now one of the most liveable cities in the world. Sustainability is increasingly important in The Most Liveable City Rankings and one of the leading principles in new city centre plans.
Experiments are becoming a generally accepted new way of urban planning. Some positive pilots prove that **small, temporary actions can lead to a new permanent situation with lasting change**. Best practice Times Square NY turned into a public space again after a successful pilot. Best practice Times Square NY shows how this space became public again after a successful pilot.

Municipalities are easing rules and regulations concerning **transformation** in order to encourage the city dynamics. Zwischennutzung, founded in Berlin, is one of the best examples. But Rotterdam is also carrying out the transformation process, with among others the Schieblock. City acupuncture is another example of small-scale intervention with long-term planning efforts. With these approaches adjustments may be made **without moving forward with large expenditures**. At the same time one can **more quickly build trust** amongst different interest groups. Moreover, this is not a temporary way of urban planning because of lacking resources but ‘temporary is the new permanent’.

**TEMPORARY USE & EXPERIMENT**

**TACTICAL URBANISM**

Short term action, long term change

**JAN GEHL:**

‘Pilot Project Process’
The growing competitiveness between cities makes it more and more important for them to promote their unique selling points. Thereby making increasing use of the attractiveness of the city centre, focussing on pedestrians and cyclists, densification and ‘greenification’. Remarkably, only a few cities utilize their authenticity. Birmingham for example does emphasize its multicultural character.

In strengthening the cities identity, distinctive places are of big importance. But it’s not only about places, it also includes framing stories. Copenhagen, for example, knows how to promote the city as worlds best cycling city. ‘Copenhagenize’ even became a verb!

The image of Rotterdam is determined largely by icons as ‘Lijnbaan’, ‘Erasmusbridge’ and recently the new Central Station. The DNA of the City Centre is able to play a key role in strengthening the cities image.
Besides attractiveness, temporary use and authenticity there are three extra points of attention. Cities who are excelling, are consistent in their policies. Focussing on ‘most liveable city’ year after year, delivered Melbourne a top position in every single liveability ranking. Many cities monitor their policy. Consistently data gathering gives a better understanding of the impact of events, measures or policy.

Cities, moving with the times, involve ‘the whole town’ in their planning process. The municipal government is just one of the partners. This approach asks for flexibility and new ways of collaboration. The Chicago Culture plan was created by more than 40.000 citizens, employers and visitors: ‘The City is Listening’
Previous years, several experts came to Rotterdam to observe the City Centre development and to search for opportunities. The City Centre’s attractiveness was identified as crucial in all of their observations.

**APPENDIX 2: LESSONS EXPERTS**

City Centre is an experience. Be consistent in implementing this experience.

Larry Beasley
- Stopping the bad story
- Deliver the experience
- Focus on public realm
- Ask everyday users
- Framing stories
- Campaign instead of policy
- Accelerate, but not for competition.

plugging the positive story on a focussed and repetitive way.

do not only involve the usual suspects but also unexpected participants.

new buildings: create non-negotiable requirements.

City Lounge will bring acceleration automatically.

safety is important, less talking, more doing.

there should be some sense of balance between movement types on all streets.

Jan Gehl
- The importance of the human scale
- A good city is like a good party
- People orientated
- Being a nice city
- Pilot project process, experiment as a strategy.

key is to invite the people: visitors but certainly residents.

first 5 storeys should be inviting and in contact with the street.

investing in the human scale results in a more liveable city (rankings monocle, mercer).

more attention to human scale improves image of being a nice city and economic development will follow.

small interventions as experiment. A positive effect will result in a new permanent situation.

Alan Jacobs
- Incorporate and address the water
- Link the parks
- Celebrate the streets
- Create balance
- Address the streets
- Adopt long range street vision.

more at-
tention to human
scale improves
image of being a
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small interventions as experiment. A positive effect will result in a new permanent situation.

previous years, several experts came to rotterdam to observe the city centre development and to search for opportunities. the city centre’s attractiveness was identified as crucial in all of their observations.
In our knowledge-building about trends and effects on the City Centre we have organized expert meetings with a selected group of experts. The main question was: How is the Rotterdam City Centre influenced by new identified developments?
Embrace historical or prominent places in the City Centre.

Do not invest in hardware but software.

Cluster activities and don’t make them depend on just 1 aspect.

City Centre’s legibility needs to optimize.

Desire for cooperative government (partner in current and new processes).

Ownership of places makes level of engagement transparent.

Reinforce existing strengths and improve these places.

Embrace historical or prominent places in the City Centre.

Create a platform for the many subcultures in the city.

Sport facilities enhance liveliness.
Distinctive places should be linked to peoples motives.

Retail turnover largely contributed by pedestrians, not the motorist.

Enhance the legibility. For example by utilizing images or a line that can be followed by visitors.

Centralize motives instead of focus groups.

Legibility requires uniformity, regularity, transparency and consistency in image and communication.

Choose for places. This is what gives the city its identity. If the place works well, people will follow.

90% of behaviour is controlled by the subconscious mind.

Decision making from the user perspective.

Expert judgement

CITY CENTRE AT EYE LEVEL
An increasing number of cyclists (21%) demonstrates the arrival of a new middle class. Rotterdam is a young city with many subcultures. City Centre residents appreciate the urban character, that is the common value. More space for spontaneous residents initiatives and vary by neighbourhood. The Rotterdam DNA as prime focus. Think in perceptions. The city centre’s boundary is not a fixed line. An increasing number of cyclists (21%) demonstrates the arrival of a new middle class. City Centre residents appreciate the urban character, that is the common value. From extreme individualism to more collective thinking and living on a base of shared motives. For example space sharing. 

For example carsharing or providing meals on the network of thuisafgehaald.nl. 

Rise of the sharing economy 

Intensifying consumer interaction: thinking and cooperating during development process.

There is a need for ‘special’ typologies and flexible living arrangements. 

City Centre living also calls for peace and green space within the urban dynamics. 

Expert judgement 

CITY CENTRE LIVING
The ‘Maastunnel’ is still Rotterdam’s bicycle icon. It is time for a new icon as a gesture in hospitality to the cyclist. 

Traffic space is public space. 

Cycling space is public space.

It is precisely the balance between cyclist, pedestrian and motorist, that is Rotterdam’s strength.

Cycling is Urban lifestyle.

Allow cycling also during shop opening hours in the pedestrian zone.

The municipality needs to provide an attractive living environment with a welcoming public space for both cyclists and pedestrians.

The bike space in Rotterdam is a tremendous quality: ‘Riding the Coolsingel without hands’

The ‘Maastunnel’ is still Rotterdam’s bicycle icon. It is time for a new icon as a gesture in hospitality to the cyclist.

Strengthening the intuitive proximity to downtown might be the main bike measure that the city can take.

Municipality, exploit this.

Cycling is a party, especially in Rotterdam. ‘Municipality, exploit this.’
There has been considerable invested in hardware, but the software - connections and experience - is underexposed.

Limit construction, but do renew and facilitate this renewal of the existing properties.

The municipality is a large property owner. It is unwise to put vacant property on the market all at once. Create a scarcity.

The municipality is a large property owner. It is unwise to put vacant property on the market all at once. Create a scarcity.

'Alternative Working Practices' are not a temporary trend. Offices are differently designed in larger floor space and with places to meet.

More demand for multifunctional offices. Also shared use of facilities in buildings. Such as coffee bars on the ground floor.

Focus on legibility and liveability of the city centre.

Invest in the City Centre as an attractive place to stay.

A bustling city also needs to provide a residential offer and a cultural life to be attractive for employees.

Be patient with the pace of transformation. Outdated offices still have high book value, but this overvalue will slowly be depreciated the coming years.
The City Centre needs a collective story. Better marketing also involves taking a closer look to the city’s image. It is about making the city. The whole is greater than the sum of its parts.

Experience is not only in-shops but also in programming, attractiveness and the message that is propagated.

Focus on authenticity, the typical Rotterdam places. People will visit the ‘Lijnbaan’ anyway. Improve connections and legibility. Also involve terraces and resting places.

If the perception matches the expectation, people will automatically stay longer. Better marketing also involves taking a closer look to the city’s image. It is about making the city. The whole is greater than the sum of its parts.
OVG Léon Brandwijk || Jones Lang Lasalle Rogier van der Bol ||
FGH bank Timmo Primus || Kooplust Marian Bekkers || Look Feel Michiel
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makelaardij David Blok|| Rabobank Ronald van Raaij || Sfeervolk Henk
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