



't Stad
is van
iedereen.

Urban development in Antwerp
Designing Antwerp

Urban development in Antwerp

Designing Antwerp



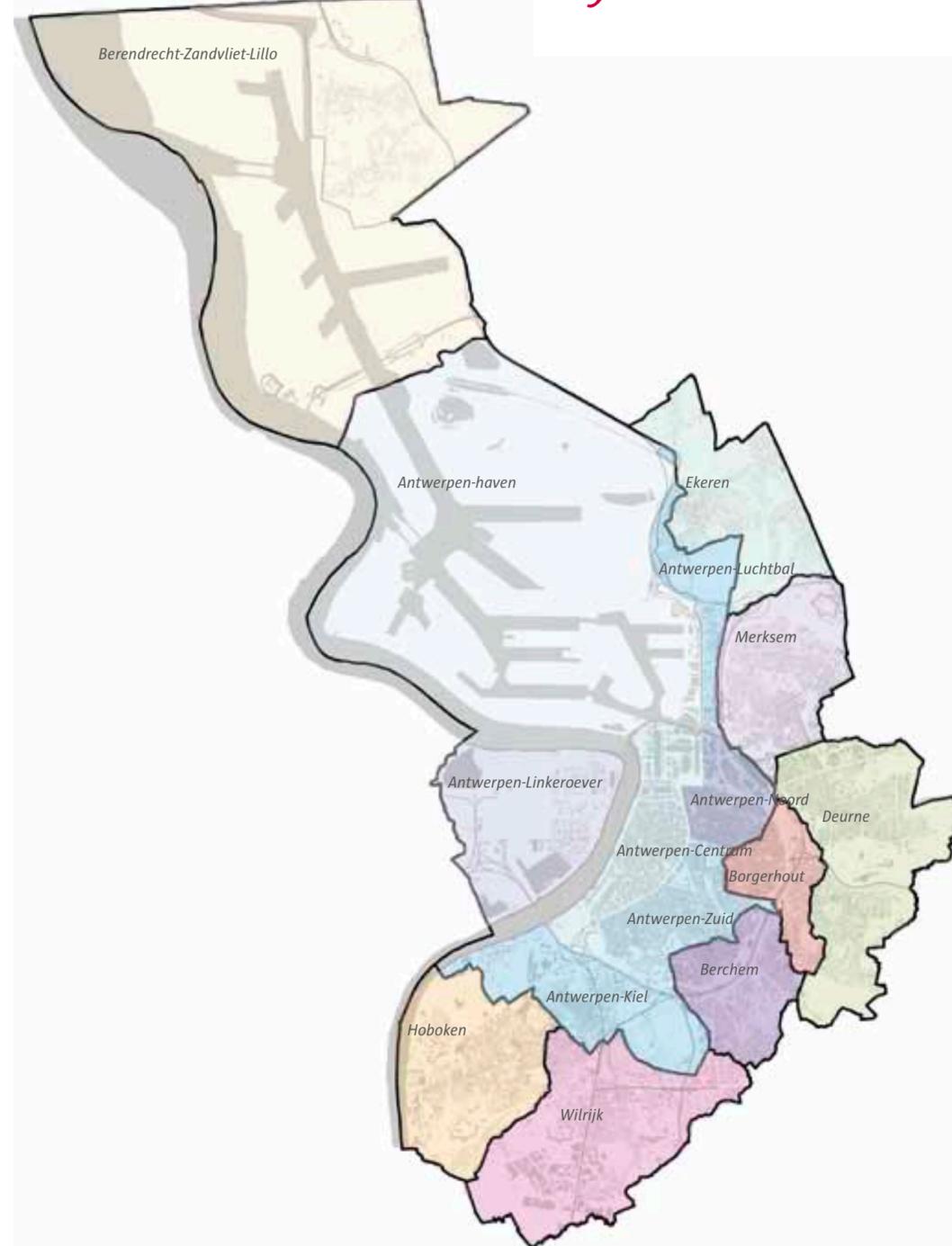
STAD ANTWERPEN

www.antwerpen.be
03 22 11 333

Project index

Amuz	129
Antwerp Berchem	33
Diamond District	33
Barreiro	88
Boekenbergpark	132
BRABO II	144
Bremweide	106
Central fire station	127
Diamond District	120
De Bist	107
Den Bell	133
EcoHuis	143
Eendrachtstraat	93
Familiestraat	92
FelixArchief	131
Gravenhof	85, 120
Groen Kwartier	84
Groen Zuid	85
Handelsstraat	92
Hof De Bist	120
Hollebeekvallei	112
Investing in Europark	124
LIVAN	145
Master plan for the centre of Deurne	78
Master plan for the centre of Hoboken	76
Master plan for Lillo	79
Master plan for Public Amenities in Borgerhout	123
Master plan for Rozemaai	77
Master plan for Wilrijk	107
Mellaertstraat	93
Moorkensplein	123
Munt	89
Neerland park	113
Nieuw Zurenborg	82
Olympiade junction	144
Park Groot Schijn	110
Pothoekstraat	92

City and districts



Colophon

Editor

Alix Lorquet

Editorial committee

Kristiaan Borret, Patricia De Somer, Hardwin De Wever, Ruben Haerens, Pieter Tan, Katlijn Van der Veken, Yrsa Vermaut

Translation

Belgian Translation Centre

With cooperation from

Petra Panis, Jo Van de Velde, Annemie Libert, Leo Verbeke, Eveline Leemans, Ian Coomans, Katrijn Apostel, Karina Rooman, Pieter Dierckx, David Van Proeyen, Kris Peeters, Cindy Broeckaert, Sacha Jennis, Klaas Meesters, Frederik Picard, Kathleen Wens, Dorien Vanderhenst, Ivan Demil, Ilse Peleman, Liesbeth Lanneau, Kitty Haine, Tinne Buelens, Filip Pittillion, Filip Smits, Philippe Teughels, Heidi Vandebroecke, Greet De Roey, Joke Van haecke, Ellen Lamberts, Geert Troucheau, Anke De Geest, Iris Gommers, Peter De Pauw, Johan Veeckman, Greet Donckers, Anne Schryvers, Dirk Van Regenmortel, Saskia Goossens, Stephanie D'hulst

Maps

Pieter Beck

Images

© City of Antwerp unless specified otherwise

Layout

www.CoolsConcepts.be

Print

Antilope NV, Lier

Legal depot number

D/2012/0306/190

Responsible publisher

Patricia De Somer, Grote Markt 1, 2000 Antwerpen

The contents of this brochure were finalised on 6 January 2012. The responsible publisher is not accountable for information that is no longer correct due to changes that occurred after this date. Subject to the exceptions expressly provided for by law, nothing in this publication may be reproduced, saved in an automatic database or made public without first obtaining written consent from the responsible publisher.

For copyright issues regarding the images used, please contact the responsible publisher.

Urban development in Antwerp
Designing Antwerp

Preface	5
1. From City on the Stream to structure plan	7
A difficult start	11
Breakthrough with strategic projects	12
Capacity building	13
Towards strategic planning	14
2. Strategic Spatial Structure Plan	15
Generic policy	17
Specific policy	20
Active policy	21
Continuous implementation of the s-RSA	22
3. Area-oriented programmes	23
Central Station Area	26
Scheldt Quays	34
Het Eilandje (the Islet)	42
Green Singel	50
Park Spoor Noord	56
Sailor's Quarter	62
4. Living	71
Master plans for neighbourhood and district centres	74
New residential quarters	80
Urban block projects	86
Real estate projects	90
Building code	94
5. Public space	99
Streets and squares	102
Green projects	108
6. Public facilities	115
Planning and spreading facilities	118
Public buildings	126
7. Mobility	135
Policy frameworks	138
Pedestrians	140
Cyclists	142
Public transport	143
Private transport	145
8. Spatial quality	151
Stadsbouwmeester	154
External advice	155
Planning permission applications	156
Design contests	157
The work of many hands	161
Expo 'Designing Antwerp'	165
Publications	166
Awards	167
Colophon	

Preface

This publication offers an overview of a few of our main spatial ambitions and accomplishments of the past couple of years. The story begins with the evolution that led to a remarkable urban development policy in Antwerp and the development of the city's coordinating role in this policy. The approval of our **strategic Spatial Structure Plan** in 2006 constituted a pivotal moment. Since then, the structure plan has given the city the certainty, the flexibility and the confidence to initiate a range of very diverse projects with different scopes and timings.

At the level of the structure plan's area-oriented strategy several **area-oriented programmes** are currently under implementation. These programmes aim for the complete renovation of large, coherent city areas in the medium term. Within the frameworks tailored to these areas, interventions in the public space are combined with multi-disciplinary projects and innovative forms of public-private cooperation.

The most recent area-oriented programmes are implemented within a large-scale spatial figure along the River Scheldt that strings together the historical port areas from north to south and embraces the old city centre in its middle.

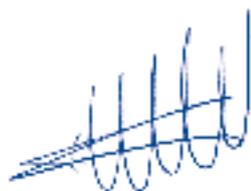
Driven by visions or 'images' at city level, the city makes continuous project-based efforts to reconquer Antwerp as a residential city aimed at a diverse public. Among other things, this implies maintaining a high quality and **diverse housing supply**. To this end, projects are initiated, monitored and coordinated at different scales within the scope of the real estate policy, the urban block policy and the coordination of large-scale housing projects. Master plans are in development to turn the city's urban centres into attractive meeting places again with all the advantages of living in the city. For this purpose, the city works together with experienced as well as promising architects and master planners, property developers and the citizens themselves.

Our investments in public space constitute a basic condition and catalyst for our striving for **a pleasant city**. This includes the renovation and the greening of streets and squares as well as new large and small green zones. Within this scope, the city strives for accessible and high quality spaces with a high recreational or nature value and for an optimal integration into the urban public space and green structure. The level, accessibility and quality of the **urban facilities** are also being optimised, both at the level of urban planning and at the level of the construction and renovation of individual public buildings - from day care centres to care centres for the elderly, and from cultural centres to fire stations.

A crucial element is the location and the connection of all of these aspects in a way that promotes **sustainable mobility** and that offers great accessibility and a full experience of the city to Antwerp's residents and visitors. For better mobility at a supra-local and regional level the city collaborates with the higher levels of government. But the city can also count on assistance and financial support from the provincial, Flemish, federal and European governments for important local public investments.

Spatial quality takes centre stage in every aspect of Antwerp's urban development policy. Within this scope, the city can count on several external advisory bodies that approach quality from different societal perspectives so as to maintain an integral concept of quality. Since 1999, Antwerp has furthermore been the only city in Belgium to have a Stadsbouwmeester ('chief city architect') who monitors the spatial quality of all projects that are implemented in the city from an independent perspective.

We gave this publication the same subtitle as our strategic Spatial Structure Plan for Antwerp: **'Designing Antwerp'**. This title emphasises the idea that our efforts for and investments in the development of the city are active and incomplete, but especially that they are also inviting. After all, the city belongs to all of us: everyone contributes a little something to make the city what it is.



Ludo Van Campenhout
Alderman for urban development, sport and diamond



Patrick Janssens
Mayor

1. From City on the Stream to structure plan

Antwerp's history is inextricably connected to the River Scheldt. The city's spatial development was also to a great extent determined by successive port expansions. Antwerp came into existence as a small settlement in a bend of the river. In the Middle Ages the city developed in a concentric manner. Around the irregular pattern of narrow streets, belts of defence canals were laid out that were recycled into inland shipping infrastructure with every new expansion.

In Antwerp's Golden Age the increasing port activity and the quickly growing population called for the layout of a new city area north of the inner city. The canals in this so-called Nieuwstad ('new city') functioned as streets. The new area quickly developed into a popular port area and constituted the heart of Antwerp's economy until the Fall of Antwerp in 1585. After the Fall, shipping traffic from and to Antwerp was blocked by the Northern Netherlands. This blockade would last until the end of the eighteenth century.



At the beginning of the nineteenth century, Napoleon Bonaparte turned Nieuwstad into a military base. The emperor ordered the construction of Bonapartedok and Willemdok. The increasing port activity gave Nieuwstad the appearance of the current dock area of het Eilandje. The numerous inlets and canals were decreasingly used for inland navigation. They mainly functioned as a sewer system for households and polluting trades. The canals became a source of stench and disease, and were gradually covered over.

At the end of the nineteenth century the River Scheldt was straightened. Entire areas were destroyed in the process. The new quays became the scene of heavy port activity and were separated from the city by a fence. The last inlets and canals disappeared beneath the surface.

The population kept on growing. Confronted with deteriorated living circumstances and unadjusted and unhygienic housing, the municipal authorities turned their eyes to the polders on the other side of the River Scheldt. In 1923, Linkeroever was added to the city, depoldered and raised with sand. However, the real development of the quarter only started in the 1950s and 1960s.

In the course of the twentieth century the capacity of the Scheldt quays became insufficient to accommodate economic growth and the expansion of port activities. In 1958 the northern polder towns Berendrecht, Zandvliet and Lillo became part of Antwerp. Large parts of the polders were transformed within the scope of successive port expansions.

In the same period, the Brialmont fortifications around the nineteenth-century city centre were dismantled. This made room for the Ring and Singel road infrastructure, which was intended to connect the city and the port to the international road network. The infrastructure built on the green foundation of the fortress walls was of large dimensions.

These projects, implemented in the 1960s and aimed at progress and prosperity, also had a downside. Large port areas along the river and near the historical centre lay abandoned. Soon the new road infrastructure silted up. After the merger of the city centre with seven surrounding municipalities in 1983, the Ring came to be at the centre of the city's territory, forming a barrier between the nineteenth-century inner city and the new outer city. Since then the city has nine districts: Antwerp, Berchem, Borgerhout, Deurne, Ekeren, Hoboken, Merksem, Wilrijk and the 'polder district' consisting of the former municipalities Berendrecht, Zandvliet and Lillo.

A difficult start

In the 1970s and 1980s practically every European city was faced with the consequences of urban exodus and economic expansion. At practically all government levels Belgium lacked the necessary vision and strength to counteract the urban exodus and the deterioration of the cities. In 1984 the municipal authorities of Antwerp made a first, ambitious attempt to turn the tide. On the occasion of the merger of 1983, the city decided to draw up a Global Spatial Structure Plan for Antwerp (GSA) for the entire territory.

The GSA contained visions and concepts that are still topical today: 'The suburbs: centres with a unique character', 'A ring forest with new gateway bridges' and the well-known concept 'City on the Stream'. However, nothing concrete was accomplished on the terrain. There was a lack of political support, which meant that insufficient people and resources were deployed. In addition, the city services had no experience with integrated spatial planning based on a coherent vision for the city.

At the end of the 1980s residents and urban development and spatial planning experts tried to encourage the municipal authorities to take action again. With their organisation City on the Stream they strived for the upgrade of the neglected nineteenth-century port areas by the river. Initially the municipal authorities went along with the vision and the ambitions of City on the Stream. An international design contest resulted in proposals by renowned designers such as [Toyo Ito](#) (Nieuw Zuid), [Bob Van Reeth](#) (Scheldt quays) and [Manuel de Solà-Morales](#) (Eilandje). However, it appeared that the authorities were not yet ready for the implementation of long-term projects after all. In 1994 city cut the resources for City on the Stream from the city's budget.

Breakthrough with strategic projects

In the mid 1990s urban development in Antwerp reached a turning point. At that time the European Union started to pay attention to urban issues and to allocate money to urban development. The Belgian and Flemish governments soon followed suit with their own programmes and funds.

Antwerp's municipal authorities capitalised on the new opportunities. The city mainly used the European subsidies for projects to be implemented in the north of the city. The areas in the vicinity of Central Station had been hit hard by urban exodus, vacancy and uncontrolled immigration.

A mainly social approach was adopted during the first wave of urban renovation. Gradually a professional approach of spatial projects was introduced on the basis of spatial long-term visions. In 1996 the city decided to establish a Welstand Committee and to appoint a Stadsbouwmeester. They were responsible for the quality of the increasingly numerous and varied spatial plans and city projects.

Also in 1996, the planning process for het Eilandje was revisited. This led to the elaboration of Master Plan Eilandje in 2002. In the year 2000, the municipal authorities initiated an ambitious planning and consultation process in Antwerpen-Noord to convert the abandoned railway site Spoor Noord into a park. In the same period, the city developed an integrated policy to deal with criminality and public nuisance at Schipperskwartier (Sailor's Quarter) and to simultaneously counteract vacancy and dilapidation. Buying, renovating and redesignating dilapidated buildings gradually became an important tool for urban development.



Capacity building

As from the mid 1990s the municipal non-profit organisation SOMA vzw (Urban Development Association Antwerp) coordinated the projects subsidised by higher levels of government. Its non-profit structure offered a number of important benefits for the city administration. It made it easier to hire project leaders with the right background, experience and expertise, and the obtained funds could be managed in a more efficient manner. In addition, the strength of the city administration itself gradually increased.

The city services for 'spatial planning' and 'works' were expanded, divided into specialised divisions (space and mobility, public domain, licenses and permits, ...) and integrated into one municipal company: Stadsontwikkeling (Urban Development). SOMA was also integrated into the company. In 2008 Stadsontwikkeling gave rise to Autonoom Gemeentebedrijf Stadsplanning Antwerpen (Autonomous Municipal Company for City Planning). Fund raising and management became the responsibility of Autonoom Gemeentebedrijf Vastgoed en Stadsprojecten Antwerpen (AG VESPA, Autonomous Municipal Company for Real Estate and City Projects in Antwerp). As a result, the municipal company Patrimoniumonderhoud ('Patrimony Maintenance') was no longer responsible for real estate transactions; apart from its management tasks it now focused on the construction and renovation of public buildings.

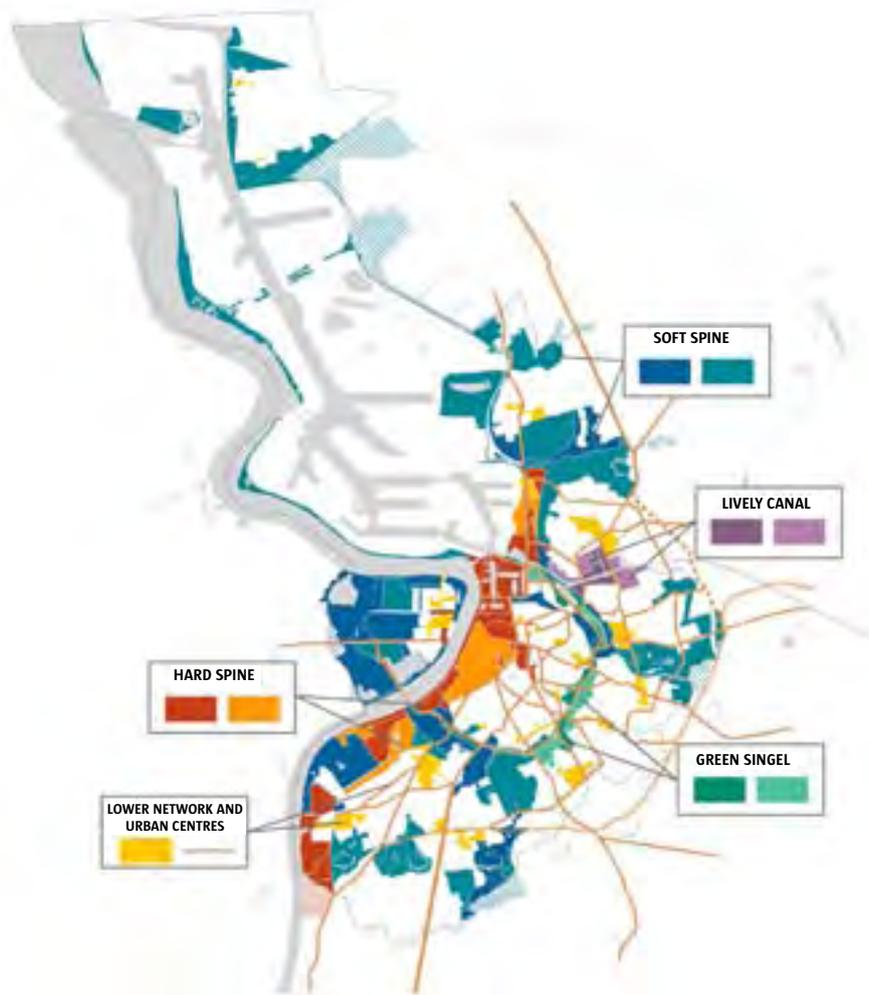


Towards strategic planning

The revival of urban development in Antwerp went hand in hand with innovative policy efforts by the Flemish government. Until the mid 1990s, static legal zone plans were at the core of the Flemish spatial policy. With the spatial planning decree of 1996 the Flemish government resolutely opted for structure planning at three policy levels: Flanders, the provinces and the municipalities.

The Spatial Structure Plan for Flanders (RSV) was approved in 1997. Two years later the concept 'structure plan' was refined in legal and in urban development terms for the provincial and municipal levels. The decree also provided for the transfer of the power to grant planning permissions to the municipalities. This so-called emancipation enters into force as soon as municipalities meet five conditions: they need to have a municipal urban development officer, a certified plan register, a duly established register of planning permissions, a register of vacant parcels and an approved municipal spatial structure plan.

On the occasion of this decree, the Flemish provinces and municipalities started to draw up their own structure plans, which were to contain a medium-term view on the spatial development of their territory. In Antwerp, the land and property policy and the ongoing strategic projects and programmes (Central Station area, Spoor Noord, Eilandje, Sailor's Quarter, ...) were integrated into the structure plan. The strategic Spatial Structure Plan for Antwerp (s-RSA) was approved in 2006. In 2008, Antwerp met the remaining conditions to autonomously grant planning permissions.



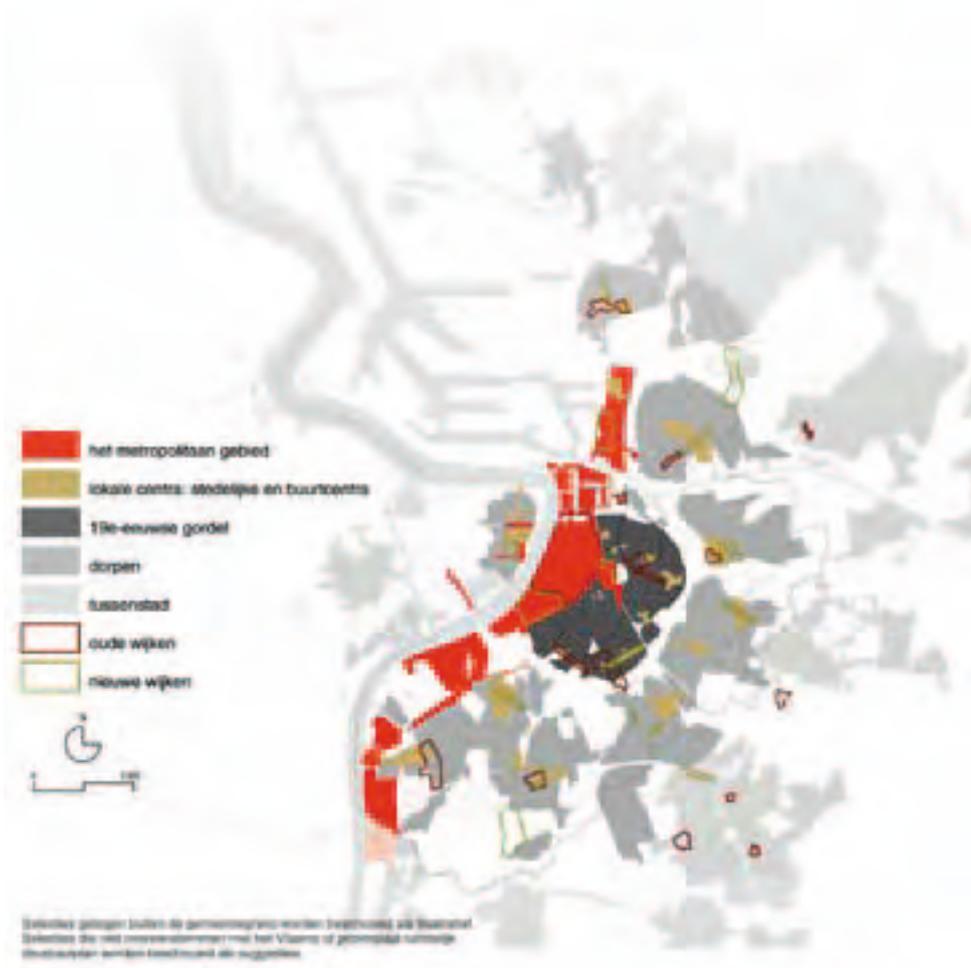
2. Strategic Spatial Structure Plan

The strategic Spatial Structure Plan for Antwerp (s-RSA, 2006) is the result of three years of intense collaboration between Italian designers [Bernardo Secchi](#) and [Paola Viganò](#) and the city services for urban development. Together they mapped out the city's structure and potential.

The structure plan introduces a **three-tier spatial strategy** for a renovatio urbis: the renovation of the city through punctual interventions in public space. To this end, three policy types are adopted: the generic, the specific and the active policy. The three policy types are complementary. The generic policy produces thematic guidelines at city level. These policy visions, guidelines and norms are then concretised at the level of large, coherent city areas in the specific policy and at project level in the active policy.

Generic policy

The first strategy is that of the **generic policy**. Seven 'inspiring images' tell the city's story. They refer to the collective memory of residents and visitors. The s-RSA wants to confirm these images and maintain and reinforce them for future generations. The inspiring images constitute the touchstone for every spatial policy decision and project.



The image of **Water City** starts from the city's original and evolved water structure. The most important figure in this network is the River Scheldt. Consequently, restoring the relationship between the city and the river is the main objective here. The network also includes smaller streams and brooks, valleys and flood areas. In the guidelines for Water City the water network is approached as the city's most important ecological system. Given the value of water as a connecting element, Water City also portrays the potential of new (local) Scheldt bridges.

The image of **Eco City** includes the open spaces and the ecological infrastructure. The objective is to obtain a clear urban park structure and to give nature every opportunity to grow. The green spaces in this structure are not necessarily parks or urban forests. They can also be private gardens in building blocks or open landscapes. The green structure must be available for use by the city's inhabitants and thus easily accessible through footpaths and cycle tracks.

The image of **Port City** refers to the significance of the port to the city in the past (the city's growth) and the present (world port). Within this scope there are two main objectives: providing maximum accessibility and developing the port's logistic infrastructure on the one hand, and restoring the relationship between the city and the port on the other. The historical port areas (het Eilandje, the Quays, the large sites at Noorderlaan, Blue Gate Antwerp, ...) constitute important areas of contact between the port and the city. They can be developed as unique city areas but need to maintain their historical value at the same time. A green buffer must be maintained between the seaport and the polder towns.

The image of **Railway City** emphasises a city that reaches out and can be reached. The focus is on expanding the city's tram network and completing its cycle route network. The expansion of the tram network is implemented at a city and regional level. Along railways and tramlines new developments can take place and parking facilities can be provided for cars and bicycles.

The image of **Porous City** aims at space optimisation through clever use of unused built and vacant spaces. A goal-oriented evaluation of building blocks can identify quite a few spaces that can be used. Density increase or decrease ('pitting') in the inner area's of urban blocks allow for efficient use of the scarce space in the city. This makes it possible to establish urban facilities, drive back vacancy and dilapidation, and provide green and open space in densely developed areas.



Water City



Eco City



Port City



Railway City

Villages and metropolis refers to Antwerp as a polycentric metropolis and includes spatial and social relations between the districts and quarters and the whole of the city. The emphasis lies on pleasant and quality living, working and recreational environment. The main objectives for the inner city, the 'metropolis', are the preservation of cultural heritage and characteristic buildings, the renewal of the urban fabric and the development of metropolitan economic and tourist functions. For the 'villages', the old and new local and urban centres, the main objectives are consolidation of the centre, renovation of public space and accessibility of facilities.

Mega City does not refer to Antwerp itself, but to the city's strategic location in one of the most densely developed and populated parts of Europe and in a network of figures that function as a 'mega city' (the Flemish Diamond, the North Western Metropolitan Area, the Rhine-Scheldt Delta, the high-speed line, ...). This 'mega-urbanity' needs to manifest itself in metropolitan and international activities at top locations, such as the railway station areas. It is therefore important that investments are made in the city's (international) appeal and accessibility. Antwerp should also play up the diversity it offers in terms of culture, living, employment, commerce and recreation. That way the city can provide an answer to the disintegration of open space and limit unnecessary transport in Flanders.



Porous City

Villages and Metropolis

Mega City

Specific policy

The **specific policy** is an area-oriented and project-based translation of the *renovatio urbis* and is implemented within five strategic spaces that constitute the basis of a sustainable urban model. Those spaces are major investment areas for area-oriented strategic programmes and concrete leverage projects that can guarantee a gradual and coherent development of the area in question. The effect of punctual interventions and investments in the public space in these areas surpasses the immediate environment and influences the public space of the city as a whole.

The **Hard Spine** is a strong structuring element in the city. The strategic space flanks the River Scheldt, extends along the former port areas in the north and south of the city and encloses the inner city and the Central Station area. There is room for mixed programmes at a metropolitan and international level, but quality of living also takes centre stage. From a spatial, functional and symbolic perspective, the main objective in this space is restoring the bond between the city and the river. The quality and continuity of the public space by the river are crucial for the quality of living in the densely developed adjacent city areas and for the high-quality development of the Hard Spine.

In the strategic space of the **Soft Spine** the emphasis is on a coherent landscape and ecological system. The areas situated along the different streams and canals are at the basis of a system consisting of five park structures. They connect the River Scheldt with Antwerp's hinterland via the Green Singel. Through smaller corridors nature slowly enters the fabric of the compact city. As such, the interaction between the Hard Spine and the Soft Spine determines the city's main structure.

The **Green Singel's** development increasingly brings large parks within the inner city's reach. The barrier effect of the overloaded traffic infrastructure (Ring road, Ring railway, Singel) should be cancelled as much as possible in favour of the connection between the inner city and the outer city. Cyclists and pedestrians should be able to safely cross the Singel area. The area's unique relief can be integrated into an ecological water management system. And although the open space can accommodate a limited number of buildings under strict conditions, the largest part of the area is reserved for local green and neighbourhood green and for the needs of future generations.

In the strategic space of the **Lively Canal** the widening of the Albert Canal and the construction of higher bridges are linked to the upgrade of both canal banks as a space to live, work and relax. The new bridges are crucial to gradually decrease road freight transport. They furthermore constitute the stimulus to upgrade the public space and to bring the inhabitants of the Merksem and Deurne districts closer to the water again.

Hard Spine

Soft Spine



Green Singel



Lively Canal



Lower Network and Urban Centres

In the strategic space **Lower Network and Urban Centres** investments are made in the improvement of the network of streets, (cycle) tracks, 'boulevards', shopping streets and public transport. The improvement and the expansion of the tram network at a city and regional level are structurally significant. Improvement of the quality of the lower network will improve the quality of the areas to which it is connected: urban neighbourhood centres, shopping streets, station areas, areas situated along the tramlines ... The identity and the appeal of the different centres are reinforced in the endeavour to make the areas equivalent to the metropolis.

Active policy

The **active policy** focuses on sites, squares, green spaces, streets and buildings from different perspectives. **The complexity of the three-tier strategy** becomes apparent at this project level. This is where the three policy types and three spatial approaches to the urban fabric meet: thematic and regulating at a city level, multidisciplinary and integrating within the framework of area-oriented programmes, and thematic and concretising at a project level.

It concerns a broad range of projects by diverse initiators in collaboration with several internal and external partners. The projects often fit into the framework of multiple city-wide or area-oriented plans or views that are in line with the generic images and the strategic spaces. In light of this overview the projects can be **categorised thematically**. There are projects focussing on living in Antwerp, public space, public facilities and mobility.

'Living' comprises the measures for reliable and varied housing. The scope of this category includes the master plans for neighbourhood and district centres, new residential areas, urban block and real estate projects, and the Building Code.

'Public space' encompasses the renewal of streets, squares and green spaces. The **'Public facilities'** category relates to the master plans for the integration of functions at a city level or at the level of certain city areas and the numerous construction and renovation projects in Antwerp's own building patrimony.

'Mobility' comprises a broad range of projects and measures for a sustainable location and mobility policy.

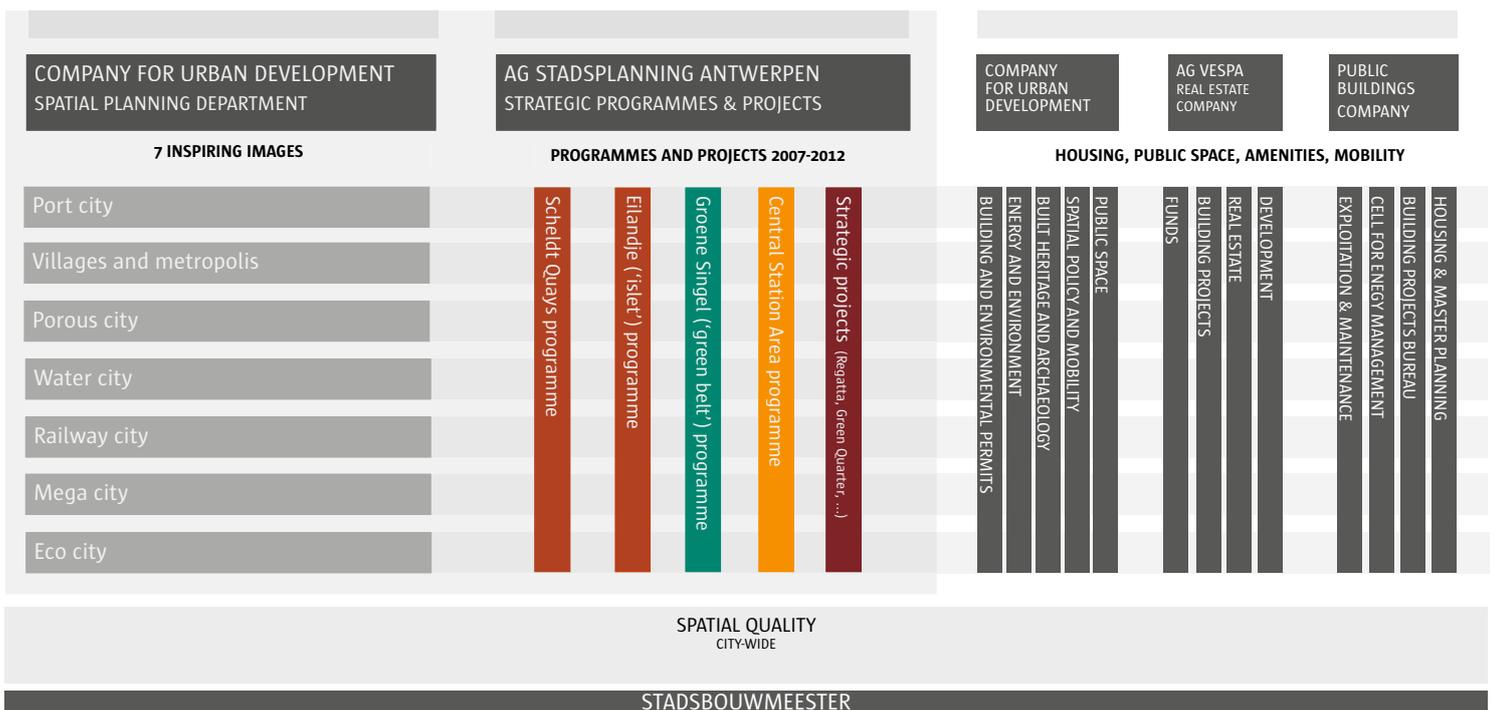
Spatial quality is evaluated within the concrete context of each project at the project level of the active policy. Several internal and external advisory bodies are consulted for the evaluation. Finally, the active policy is also the object of sustainability studies and projects, participation processes, economic development projects and archaeology.

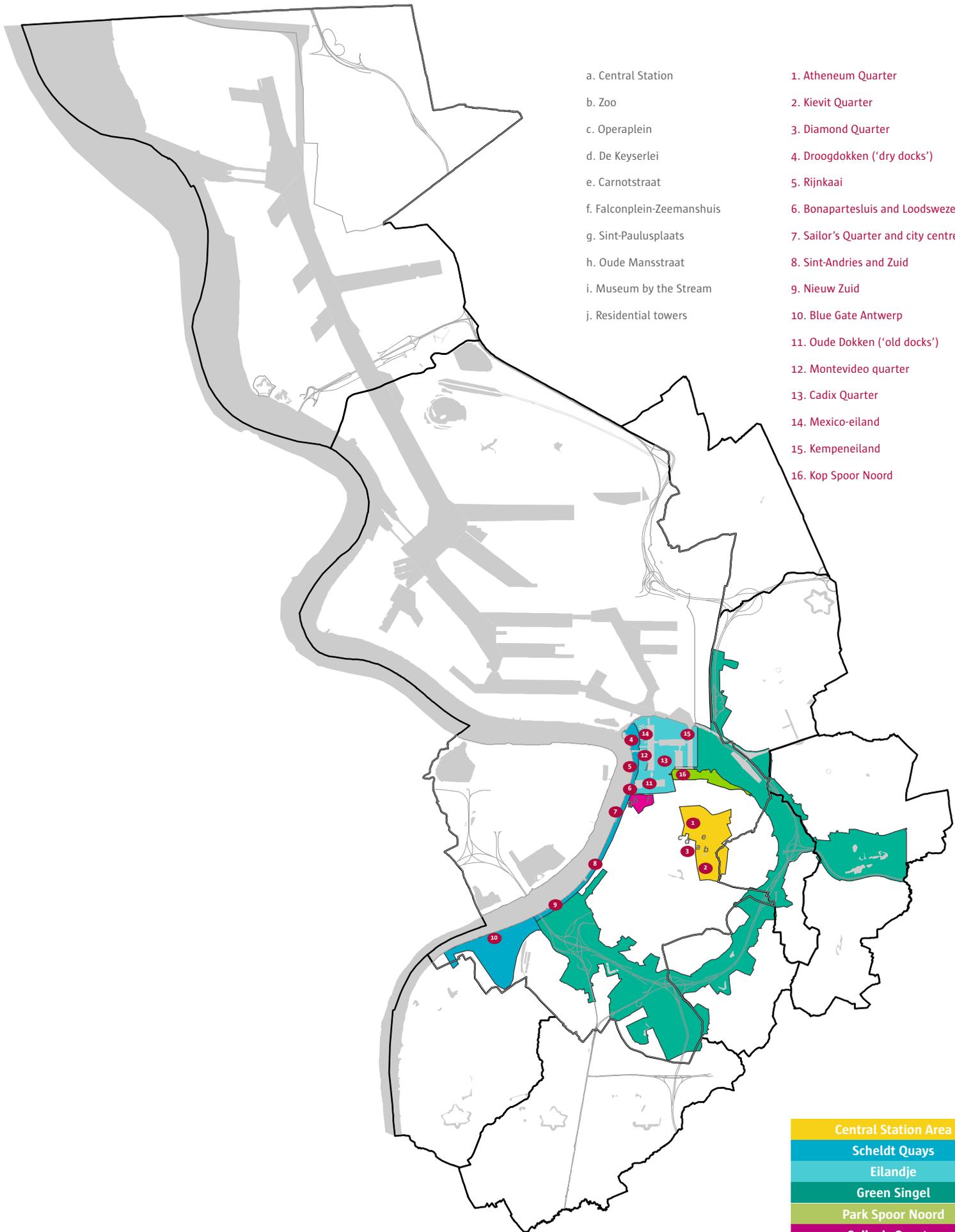
Continuous implementation of the s-RSA

The ‘**Continuous Implementation of the s-RSA**’ scheme visualises the internal partners who directly intervene in the spatial structure of the city. The actors in charge of (urban) development are the companies Stadsontwikkeling and Patrimoniumonderhoud, the autonomous municipal companies Stadsplanning and VESPA and the Stadsbouwmeester.

The generic and specific policies are mainly implemented by two actors, while the active policy depends on the expertise of a **diverse group of companies and divisions**. The Stadsbouwmeester monitors spatial quality in every aspect. There are also actors who do not intervene in the urban space directly but are closely involved with and sometimes even part of these companies, working with themes that are deeply rooted in the city’s spatial policy, such as energy efficiency, the environment and respect for urban heritage.

Finally, **all municipal companies** work towards the spatial and social transformation proposed by the s-RSA either directly or in a supportive role. The company Samen Leven (Living Together) is responsible for private construction supervision and the involvement of residents in city projects. Other municipal companies are responsible for high quality facilities such as AG Stedelijk Onderwijs (‘Autonomous Municipal Company for Education’), Algemeen Onderwijsbeleid (‘General Education Policy’), AG Kinderopvang (‘Autonomous Municipal Company for Child Care’), Zorgbedrijf (‘Care Company’), the non-profit organisation Werk en Economie vzw (‘Work and Economy’), AG Parkeerbedrijf (‘Autonomous Municipal Parking Company’) and Cultuur en Sport (‘Culture and Sport’). These internal partners (some of which with their own real estate division) help guarantee the quality and the optimal distribution of facilities. The internal organisation and mutual alignment of the municipal companies required for the progress of the s-RSA are part of a continuous process.





- a. Central Station
- b. Zoo
- c. Operaplein
- d. De Keyserlei
- e. Carnotstraat
- f. Falconplein-Zeemanshuis
- g. Sint-Paulusplaats
- h. Oude Mansstraat
- i. Museum by the Stream
- j. Residential towers

- 1. Atheneum Quarter
- 2. Kievit Quarter
- 3. Diamond Quarter
- 4. Droogdokken ('dry docks')
- 5. Rijnkaai
- 6. Bonapartesluis and Loodswezen
- 7. Sailor's Quarter and city centre
- 8. Sint-Andries and Zuid
- 9. Nieuw Zuid
- 10. Blue Gate Antwerp
- 11. Oude Dokken ('old docks')
- 12. Montevideo quarter
- 13. Cadix Quarter
- 14. Mexico-eiland
- 15. Kempeneiland
- 16. Kop Spoor Noord

Central Station Area
Scheldt Quays
Eilandje
Green Singel
Park Spoor Noord
Sailor's Quarter



3. Area-oriented programmes

Over the past few years the city has made significant efforts to implement programmes and projects in the strategic spaces. Its focus has been on four area-oriented programmes: the Central Station area, the Scheldt Quays, het Eilandje and Green Singel. In addition, priority projects have been implemented as part of other programmes. Two of them are explained in further detail in this chapter: the leverage project Park Spoor Noord (Schijnvalleipark programme) and the integrated transformation of the Sailor's Quarter (Inner City programme).

Central Station Area



Central Station Area

The Central Station Area programme is part of the strategic space of the Hard Spine. The project area has a surface area of 130 ha and includes Atheneum Quarter, Kievit Quarter, Diamond Quarter and Station Quarter.

The city wishes to transform this neighbourhood into an international reception area. To this end, the city collaborates with other governments, private property owners and developers. Uniting young and old, resident and visitor, and acquainting visitors with an exciting metropolis take centre stage. That is why the emphasis lies on redesigning public space.

The city's main challenge is making sure that the different projects are attuned to each other so as to redevelop the area into a coherent central area with contemporary grandeur.





AN URBAN DEVELOPMENT PROJECT WITH A HISTORY

Thanks to the presence of the Zoo, numerous cinemas, stylish dance clubs, chic commercial establishments and a wide range of hospitality businesses, the station area became the new bourgeoisie's favourite spot to be seen at the end of the nineteenth and the beginning of the twentieth century. The Permeke Ford dealer at De Coninckplein (De Coninck Square) became the symbol of new American luxury.

However, the boom did not last. Due to the abundance of cars in the street, the rise of television and the economic scale enlargement, the neighbourhood started having difficulties. In the 1980s and the 1990s there was an increase in vacancy and dilapidation, illegal occupation, drug problems, prostitution and criminality. Well-known commercial establishments moved to the city's periphery. The Permeke garage moved away in 1982. The bankruptcy of the Rex cinema chain in 1993 drove the municipal authorities to action.

A first series of so-called impulse projects was implemented in the Atheneum Quarter, the northern part of the station area. Afterwards, the city expanded the planning area to the quarter with postal code 2060 and presented itself more and more distinctly as the coordinator of the developments, e.g. by actively attracting small and large investors.

2060 QUARTER

The 2060 Quarter is situated between the Central Station and Park Spoor Noord. This **exceptional quarter** includes De Coninckplein, Sint Jansplein (Sint Jan's Square), Stuivenbergplein (Stuivenberg Square) and Stuivenberg hospital. Since time immemorial this has been the place where people arrive from far outside the city boundaries, and later also from far outside Belgian and European borders. This results in a typical 'couleur locale'. Every nationality has its own shops and hospitality businesses. However, the quarter is also faced with social problems (such as poverty, drugs and prostitution), which also have repercussions at a spatial level, i.e. a high rate of vacancy and dilapidation and the presence of slumlords.





Residential project Arboretum © Van Eetveldt + Nyhuis



Design centre De Winkelhaak

In reception areas such as this quarter it is incredibly important to strive for a sound balance between the facilities aimed at temporary newcomers and the facilities for families who wish to settle here on a permanent basis. A **balanced mix** of these groups is crucial to the quality of living and housing in reception areas. An integrated approach of social measures and spatial projects is essential within this context.

An example is the approach that was adopted at and around **De Coninckplein**. Measures such as police visibility in the streets, the imposition of a closing time for pubs and restaurants and a prohibition of public gathering were implemented together with several spatial projects.

The city bought the **Permeke** building complex and replaced it with a new central municipal library. The new Permeke library was designed by **Stramien** and also contains office space and facilities for the logistic support of neighbourhood life. At the same time the degenerated De Coninckplein itself was completely renovated. A large part of the square was turned into a pedestrian zone, and a wooden platform was installed together with atmospheric lighting, granite benches and a basketball field. The upgrade of this square is still under implementation through the land and property policy of AG VESPA, which bought several corner plots in order to realise new projects.

Different impulse projects were implemented in different areas of the quarter. For example, dilapidated prostitution buildings were replaced by **Design centre De Winkelhaak** in 2002. The building was designed by **Filip Pittillion** and **Coby Manders**, **Groep Archo** and **Bureau Bouwtechniek**, and provides meeting and office space to young graphic designers, architects and product developers. A dilapidated furniture store in Carnotstraat made room for **Atlas**, the centre for integration and diversity, in 2006. The building was designed by **META Architectuurbureau**. Eighteen dilapidated buildings in Schaafstraat were replaced by the **Arboretum housing complex**, designed by **Geert Vennix** and **Frederik Vermeesch**, by the end of 2007. Numerous individual single-family homes were also given a make-over.

The objectives for the 2060 Quarter, which focus on both temporary newcomers and people who wish to settle here permanently, are now legally enshrined in a spatial implementation plan called **RUP 2060**. This RUP stipulates a number of preconditions with a view to preserving the quality of the houses and the residential streets, but also allows for creative commercial activities. The RUP supports an active land and property policy with necessary investments in community facilities. Finally, RUP 2060 also includes a pre-emption right. This provides the city with an important tool to continue its integrated policy.

At the beginning of the 1990s it became clear that the **high-speed** train travelling between Brussels and Amsterdam would also make a stop at Antwerp Central Station. Since then, the listed station building and the Kievit Quarter that lies behind it have undergone a true metamorphosis. Because of its underground railway connection, Antwerp Central Station was transformed from a terminus station to a through station in 2009 ([Jacques Voncke](#)). The station was given a new entrance near Lange Kievitstraat (2008). Kievit Phase I was carried out by the developer as a compact office complex ([Jaspers-Eyers & Partners](#)). In addition, major investments were made in the public domain. Kievitplein (Kievit Square) was constructed and Van Immerseelstraat and all streets around the Kievit I site were given a make-over ([Omgeving](#)).

For Kievit Phase II an urban design was drawn up which was converted into a binding spatial implementation plan in consultation with the Flemish government. The RUP emphasises a healthy balance between **living, working and relaxing**. New constructions, including a few high-rise buildings, will be situated by the train tracks. This way, space is created for a green zone between the existing quarter and the new construction area. In anticipation of the implementation of Kievit II, the city is working on solid management of and a stronger profile for the area.

DIAMOND QUARTER

Eighty percent of the **global rough diamond trade** takes place in Antwerp. In the Diamond Quarter several prominent jewellers present their diamond jewellery as well. The city would like even more visitors to discover the fascinating Diamond Quarter and wants to make it more attractive to investors.

To this end the main focus lies on the quality of the **public space**. A first step consisted in the redevelopment of Pelikaanstraat, Simonsstraat and Mercatorstraat. After a thorough sprucing up these streets were equipped with a green central reserve and a broad cycle path. The fine (protected) mosaics of the railway track side were restored to their original state.



The city wants to establish a **new pedestrian connection** between Stadspark and the high-speed train station. This connection will be established on an undeveloped plot of land with a surface area of 1.5 ha. This new public space will be surrounded by a mix of dwellings, offices and facilities. A new high-rise building project will give this place iconic value.

CENTRAL STATION AND ZOO

The development of the four-kilometre long **North–South connection** enabled trains to pass under the city and connected Antwerp to the high-speed network at the end of 2007. The Central Station itself was beautifully renovated by the NMBS. It now has fourteen platforms spread over four levels. The arrival of the high-speed train in the centre of the city constitutes a significant boost for Antwerp’s social and economic development.

Next to the station building are the Zoo and the corresponding **hall complex**. The complex is under major renovation (design by [Simpson Architects](#)). After the renovation the Queen Elisabeth hall will remain the home of the Flemish symphonic orchestra the Royal Flemish Philharmonic. At the side of Carnotstraat new conference infrastructure will accommodate one thousand visitors.

The **Antwerp Zoo** is in for one of its most important transformations ever. The master plan of [Robbrecht and Daem](#) architects will transform Kioskplein (Kiosk Square) into a new entrance for the Zoo as well as a new semi-public space. The transformation of Kioskplein will give the Queen Elisabeth Hall complex a kind of inner garden and attached terrace with additional operational opportunities. The semi-public square will make the Zoo more recognisable as an important point of attraction in the city.



MOBILITY PROJECTS IN STATION QUARTER

Situated between the Central Station and the Leien, Station Quarter is one of the city's busiest junctions in terms of mobility. By giving more space to cyclists and pedestrians, the municipal authorities want to turn Station Quarter into a pleasant quarter again where it is nice to walk, to shop and to live.

Carnotstraat

Until recently, Carnotstraat was an arterial street for cars, buses and trams that was unattractive to cyclists and pedestrians. Early 2011 the redevelopment of Carnotstraat was completed. The roadway was made narrower. This way room was made for broad and comfortable foot and cycle paths. Plane trees were planted in the street. The tram and bus lane was separated from the roadway with a row of elevated kerbstones, which improves the flow of both public transport and cars. Since its redevelopment, the Carnotstraat functions as a real gateway to the city again.

Operaplein (Opera Square)

At the end of the nineteenth century, **Rooseveltplaats (Roosevelt Square)** was one of the new bourgeoisie's favourite meeting places. Today the square functions as a pick-up and transfer point for tram and bus passengers. Together with the Leien, Rooseveltplaats forms a physical barrier between the station area and the historical city centre. The city and the Flemish government appointed Spanish designer [Manuel de Solà-Morales](#) to provide a tailor-made solution.

The Spanish architect designed a low-traffic Operaplein with a surface area of about one hectare. The motor vehicles that today still drive over the Leien will be led underground between **De Keyserlei** and Rooseveltplaats. This way De Keyserlei is connected to the Meir on ground level through the new square. In order to maintain the accessibility of the neighbouring quarters two balloon loops will be established around the tunnel trenches on the Leien (near Maria-Theresialei and Violierstraat). This way the sidestreets of the Leien remain accessible and Operaplein and Van Ertbornstraat can be turned into pedestrian zones.

This is also a plus for the commercial establishments nearby. Because when the heart of Antwerp revives, it becomes more attractive to investors as well. With the new Operaplein, the city wants to reconquer a piece of **public space** and give it back to the citizens of Antwerp.



De Keyserlei

De Keyserlei is the main connection between Central Station and the historical city centre. The city wants to create one continuous pedestrian's axis between Central Station and the River Scheldt. De Keyserlei is a crucial part of this axis. Today, however, this important entrance to the city is marked by the turmoil of passing cars, taxis, busses, cyclists and pedestrians.

This is about to change. By the end of 2012, the street will become a low-traffic boulevard with ample space for pedestrians. Extra attention is given to an optimised public transport flow from and to Central Station and touristic hotspots. The redevelopment of De Keyserlei started in November 2012.

Office location policy note

During the preparation of the strategic Spatial Structure Plan Antwerp (s-RSA, 2006) the municipal authorities observed an oversupply of (often unlicensed) offices in dwellings and of antiquated, small and badly located offices. In order to impede low quality offices and large developments at unsuitable places on the one hand and to boost the development of high quality offices with international appeal on the other, the city drew up a policy note. In order to regulate office policy for the whole city as efficiently and legally secure as possible the 'urban development office ordinance' was drawn up in 2008. This ordinance limits the scale of permissible office projects for the entire territory to 1,500m² of gross floor area.

At the same time the ordinance delimits four locations where large-scale office development (with a gross floor area larger than 1,500 sq m) is stimulated: het Eilandje, the Central Station area, the Berchem station area and Regatta. Large-scale office projects are not definitively out of the question elsewhere. For example, there are locations that may qualify for large-scale office development, but whose future depends on other (supra-local) plans and negotiations. The Green Singel (top and office locations) and Antwerp International Airport are such locations. For locations that were not included in the ordinance, separate area-specific spatial implementation plans (RUP) will have to be drawn up.

Together with the preparation of the 'office ordinance', the city started a public-private partnership for the international promotion of Antwerp as an office city. Non-profit organisation Antwerp Headquarters vzw was established in 2008 by the municipal authorities, the VOKA Chamber of Commerce Antwerp-Waasland and 23 real estate and property development companies. Flanders Invest & Trade (FIT), Gemeentelijk Havenbedrijf Antwerpen (Municipal Port Company of Antwerp) and Provinciale Ontwikkelingsmaatschappij Antwerpen (Provincial Development Company of Antwerp) are partners as well.

Antwerp Headquarters provides operational guidance to (international) companies that wish to start operating in Antwerp and to companies from Antwerp that wish to expand. In addition, the non-profit organisation promotes Antwerp worldwide as an attractive business city. Within this scope the main focus is on the four top locations for high-quality office development. Docklands (Eilandje), Diamond District (Diamond Quarter), Antwerp Berchem (Berchem station area) and West Park (within the framework of the Regatta mixed housing project at Linkeroever).





Scheldt Quays

Scheldt Quays

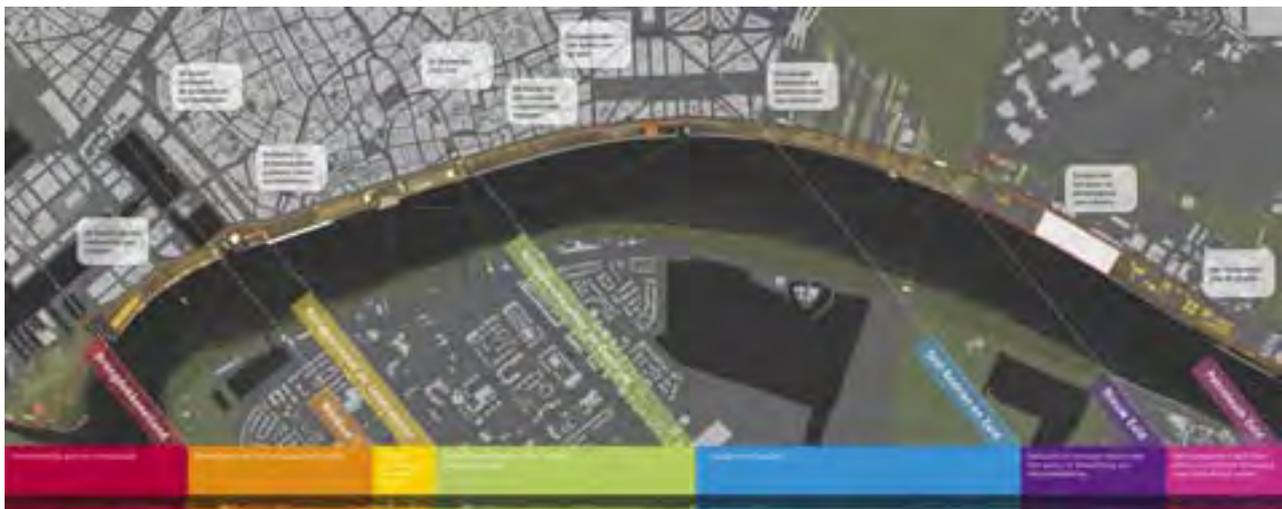
The Scheldt Quays programme is part of the strategic space of the Hard Spine. The project area is 6.7 km long and about one hundred metres wide. It consists of seven zones: Droogdokkeneiland, Rijnkaai, Bonapartedok and Loodswezen ('pilotage building'), Sailor's Quarter and city centre, Sint-Andries and Zuid, Nieuw Zuid and Blue Gate Antwerp (formerly known as 'Petroleum Zuid').

The redevelopment is a collaboration between the city of Antwerp and Waterwegen en Zeekanaal nv ('Waterways and Sea Channel', W&Z, which is responsible for the implementation of the Sigma plan against flooding in the Belgian part of the Scheldt estuary). The redevelopment has three aims: the modification of the flood protection wall, the renovation of the public space and the stabilisation of the old quay wall.

ABANDONED PORT

The economic role of the Scheldt quays had lost its significance in the second half of the twentieth century. Port activities had moved to the north of the city. At the central Scheldt quays a 1.35m high concrete flood protection wall was built in 1978. The wall was a protective measure as part of the first Sigma plan (1977) to prevent flooding in the Belgian part of the Scheldt estuary. The wall constituted an additional barrier between the city and the river.

Despite the partly successful appeal by Stad aan de Stroom to the municipal authorities in the 1980s, this unique public space lay untouched for years, except for some interventions in the central part (such as the Cruise Terminal, the foot and cycle paths and the redevelopment of the quay road). Large parts of the quays were downgraded to car parks. Other parts were spontaneously taken over by Antwerp's inhabitants for walking, picnicking, jogging or cycling, and even for large events and celebrations. In the mean time a new waterfront was established by a private company with luxury flats and lofts by the quay road.



QUAY PLAN

In 2005 the Flemish government presented the **updated Sigma** plan, which was based on new insights into water policy and control. For Antwerp, the update meant raising the height of the flood protection wall from the current 1.35 metres to 2.25 metres. Simply raising the height of the existing flood protection wall was not an option, neither for Antwerp nor for Flanders.

That's why the city and the Flemish government decided in 2007 to have a design drawn up for the renovation of the quays in which **safety and quality of the public space** take centre stage. They organised a design contest, which was won by [PROAP](#) and [Wit](#). The design team created the Quay Plan in 2010, which since then has constituted the frame of reference for the renovation of the quays and all subprojects.

GUIDE LINES

The Quay Plan is based on the quays' unique qualities. How these qualities should be handled in the entire project area is explained in six main guidelines.

Active port

The quays constitute a gateway to the world. The docking of ships remains the most important quality of the quays. Cranes, hangars, docks and bollards bear witness to the rich port history and also get a prominent spot in the plans for the future.

Historical heritage and archaeology

The quays are a living monument. The preservation of historical elements is carefully considered in relation to other choices in the Quay Plan. Where possible, historical elements will be integrated into the new design.

New flood protection wall

The Quay Plan works with different kinds of flood protection solutions, which each give shape to the public space in a different way. Embankments, buildings, balconies and mobile flood protection walls each entail different possibilities and limitations for the renewal of the surroundings. Placing the flood protection wall closer to or further from the water results in more dry or potentially wet areas.

Rijnkaai and Bonapartesluis © PROAP

The current flood protection wall.



Mobility

Avoiding barriers between the city and the river is one of the Quay Plan's priorities. That is why through traffic will be kept away from the quays as much as possible: the quay road will be turned into a distributor road for local traffic. Along its entire length a walking and cycling boulevard will be laid out. From north to south a quay tramline will connect the quays to the city's tram network and park and rides. Underground car parks will be created to the immediate north and south of the centre.

Quay programmes

The quays can potentially offer qualities which are lacking in adjacent city areas. This could be space, green, peace and quiet, a better connection to the river or a location for events or culture. A few new landmarks could be carefully located there, but the quays should mainly be able to be used flexibly for all kinds of organised and spontaneous activities.

Extraordinary public space

The quays belong to everyone. They constitute an extraordinary 'interspace' where the city's inhabitants can catch their breath. The city's rich history, the atmosphere of the adjoining quarters and the water's movements are so perceptible here precisely because the quays themselves are so straightforward. The creators of the master plan have opted to maintain the quays' uniformity and recognisability. Still, every zone will maintain or be given its own layer of 'couleur locale'.

ZONES

The general guidelines for the quays provide a coherent framework within which design choices can be made per zone regarding flood protection solutions, public space and the connection to the adjoining city area.

Droogdokkeneiland ('Dry Dock Island')

Droogdokkeneiland offers beautiful views of the entire quay line. Delimited on one side by the natural Scheldt bank and on the other by the dry docks, this is the ideal place for a metropolitan river park. Droogdokkenpark will be a prominent location by the water where people can get a breath of fresh air.

Rijnkaai

Like Droogdokkeneiland, Rijnkaai forms part of the Eilandje project area. Here, flood protection will be provided for by buildings in the quay area with a limited height and public access to the water. The remaining quay area and the beautiful historical cranes will be preserved.

Rijnkaai and Bonapartesluis © PROAP

The quays have a rich history.



Bonapartesluis ('Bonaparte Lock') and Loodswezen ('Pilotage Building')

Bonapartedok ('Bonaparte Dock') breaks the continuity of the one hundred metre wide quay strip. This makes the surroundings of Loodswezen, nearly cut off from the city, a unique place. According to the Quay Plan this site offers room for an intimate tidal garden. The filled-in Bonapartesluis can become a pick-up point for public water transport. Loodswezen will get a new designation.

Sailor's Quarter and city centre

The quays in the city centre offer room for activities for which there is no space in the inner city itself. The quay zone near Sailor's Quarter thus becomes a square for open-air activities. At the historical centre a mobile flood protection wall will be built close by the river. This will make it possible to organise activities on the quays and underneath the hangars, such as markets or fairs.

Sint-Andries and Zuid

Near the quarters of Sint-Andries and Zuid, the flood protection solution will have the shape of a winding embankment situated close to the city. Behind that embankment a vast, undefined space by the water is created. There will also be an underground car park. A new building north of Zuidersluis ('Southern lock') will become one of the focal points in the public space. A sloping platform extending up to the water allows for more intimate contact with the water.

Nieuw Zuid

The former railway site of Nieuw Zuid will in the medium term be transformed into a residential area equipped with a mix of facilities and a green park strip. Here the quay strip itself can be raised to the level required for flood protection so that the view of the Scheldt is preserved. The new quarter will extend up to the water in some places, but the quays' public character will still be guaranteed. [Bernardo Secchi](#) and [Paola Viganò](#) are elaborating a master plan for this new quarter.

Blue Gate Antwerp

Blue Gate Antwerp will be a high-quality enterprise zone with a regional water-related distribution centre. A new football stadium will also be located on this quay strip. A green corridor with a cycle track will constitute the connection between the park strip of Nieuw Zuid and the Polders of Hoboken. The wharf is reserved for inland navigation.

Sailor's Quarter © PROAP



City centre © PROAP



Loodswezen © PROAP



SINT-ANDRIES AND ZUID

The first implementation project is situated in the zone of Sint-Andries and Zuid. Construction of the flood protection dyke and the public space will be able to begin in 2014 upon stabilisation of the quay wall.

The flood protection solution near the quarter of Sint-Andries and Zuid consists in an embankment on the side of the city. The gentle slopes of that embankment offer nice views of the city and the river. The quay area that lies behind the embankment is a floodplain. On and on both sides of the embankment several spots will be reserved for temporary activities: green sitting areas, an amphitheatre, a large sunbathing area near Scheldestraat... The area will still evoke the **maritime atmosphere** of the historical quays. The existing cobblestones will be reused and the crane rails will be preserved. Ships will continue to moor at the characteristic 'blue stone'.

Underneath the quay area a new **city carpark** will be developed. The entrances and exits for cars will be situated on the roadway south of Scheldestraat. The main exit for pedestrians will be located near the archaeological remains of the Sint-Michiels bastion, which will be integrated into the design of the underground car park.

Between the flood protection wall and the façades the current **road profile** will be **redeveloped**. The terrace zone will be preserved and will include a limited number of parking spots and loading and unloading areas. Adjacent to Het Zuid a lane will be reserved for a tramline. Near Sint-Andries the potential tramline can be integrated into the roadway. A broad cycling and walking area between the dyke on the one hand and the roadway and tramway on the other hand is connected to the slopes of the dyke. Stretches of grass with scattered trees on the slopes will become recreational zones with sitting areas and play facilities.

At Zuiderluis a **sloping surface** will be provided to allow people to get closer to the water. As the historical quay wall will be preserved, direct contact with the water will only be possible where the wall is interrupted. In other words, the sloping surface will be a unique spot along the quays. The preliminary design provides for an architectural landmark at this location: a building on stilts that could have a cultural function.

Sint-Andries: View from the slope. © PROAP



Sint-Andries: Making contact with the water. © PROAP





Underneath the quays

With a view to the implementation of the first Quay Plan subproject, the city archaeologists carried out an investigation in the zones of Sint-Andries and Zuid in 2010. During this investigation a communal burial ground dating from before the year 1000, the southern flank of the Sint-Michiels bastion and part of the sixteenth-century city wall were excavated.

The Sint-Michiels bastion was built around 1608 as one of the final parts of the Spanish ramparts. Napoleon fortified the bastion to protect the military shipyards and the arsenal. The archaeological investigation demonstrated that the eastern part of the southern bastion flank remained unharmed and is still covered with the original white natural stone. The western part was dismantled in the time of Napoleon and covered with blue stone. This is why the southern flank offers great insight into the bastion's history over a few dozens of metres. The archaeological remains will be integrated into the design of the underground car park.



DROOGDOKKEN

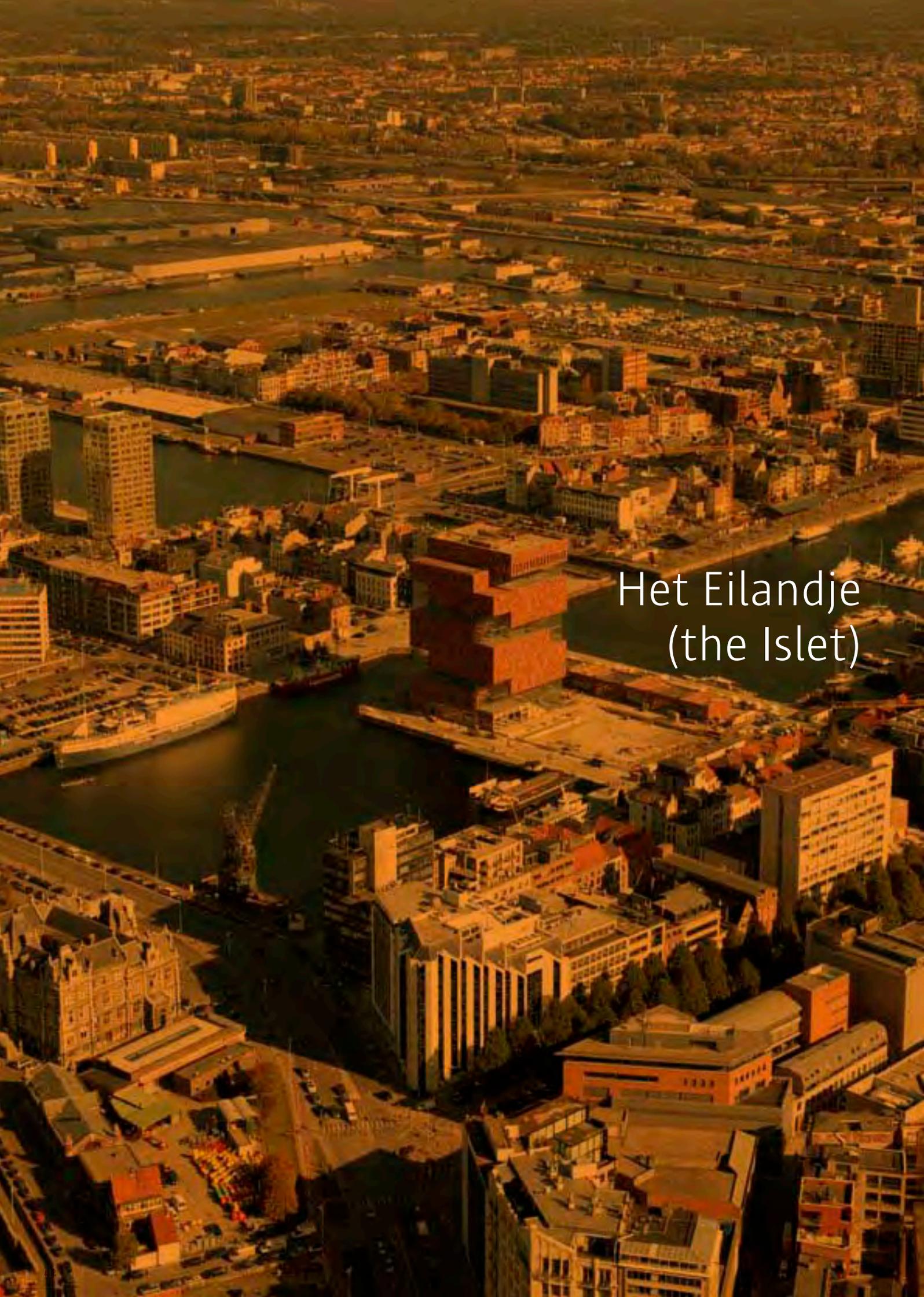
The second implementation project consists in the construction of Droogdokkenpark. In 2011 a preliminary design was drawn up by design office [Van Belle & Medina](#) and [Vogt](#) landscape architects. Thanks to its unique location in the curve of the River Scheldt, Droogdokkenpark can bring the city and the port closer together. The combination of nature, maritime infrastructure and water gives this spot an extraordinary character. The protected dry docks are also involved in the design and can be made publicly accessible in time.

In the **landscape park** flood protection will be provided for by gentle slopes. The existing and new trees define this landscape of grassland and meadows. The preservation of the natural tidal area with its mudflats and salt marches enables a special contact with the River Scheldt. A double pier makes this nature reserve accessible via the landscape park's path network.

The new park entails a significant expansion of the city's green structure and creates **room for recreation**, public events and open-air activities. The existing buildings are preserved and will be given a cultural or recreational function. The elevated Belvédère square plays an important role in the park as a vantage point and a meeting place.

The development of Droogdokkeneiland will be carried out in different stages so as to not interfere with the existing port activities at the Droogdokken site. In a first stage the area situated between Droogdokkenweg and the River Scheldt will be dealt with.





Het Eilandje
(the Islet)

Het Eilandje (the Islet)

The Eilandje programme is part of the strategic space of the Hard Spine. The old port area has a surface area of 172 hectares and consists of the following zones: Oude Dokken ('Old Docks'), Montevideo Quarter, Cadix Quarter, Droogdokkeneiland ('Dry Dock Island'), Mexico-Eiland and Kempeneiland. Within the scope of this programme the city is closely cooperating with Havenbedrijf ('Port Company'), which cedes terrains to the city in different stages, co-invests in development and contributes knowledge about water and dock management.

Based on a strong vision and with a multitude of plans, the city wishes to transform het Eilandje into a dynamic area by the water. Every quarter will be given its own identity. These quarters will be connected by the east-west axis Londenstraat–Amsterdamstraat, which will be transformed into a green city boulevard. Het Eilandje will be connected to the inner city by the Scheldt Quays and by a cultural north-south axis via Sailor's Quarter.

The maritime history, the prominent presence of water, the large amount of open space and the mixture of modest homes, large office spaces, lofts and hangars give het Eilandje its unique character. Obviously, those characteristics take centre stage in the urban renewal project.



The oldest docks of the city © Stadsarchief Antwerpen

FUTURE VISION FOR A HISTORICAL PORT AREA

Het Eilandje came into being around 1550 and is the oldest port area in Antwerp. During the period of French rule (1795 – 1814) Napoleon ordered the construction of two docks. Bonapartedok and Willemdok, the city's oldest docks, initially served as a naval base. After the fall of Napoleon the Dutch king William I gratefully used the existing infrastructure to develop het Eilandje into a blooming urban port. However, when the port expanded northwards in the twentieth century, bustling port life disappeared and many inhabitants moved away. Het Eilandje lay abandoned, forming a barrier between the city and the port.

The design contest organised at the end of the 1980s by Stad aan de Stroom for the abandoned port areas along the River Scheldt resulted in a design by Spanish architect [Manuel de Solà-Morales](#) for het Eilandje. Due to the lack of a political support, the project didn't get beyond the preliminary design stage. In the mean time het Eilandje had been saved from oblivion and a few pioneers established themselves in renovated warehouses.

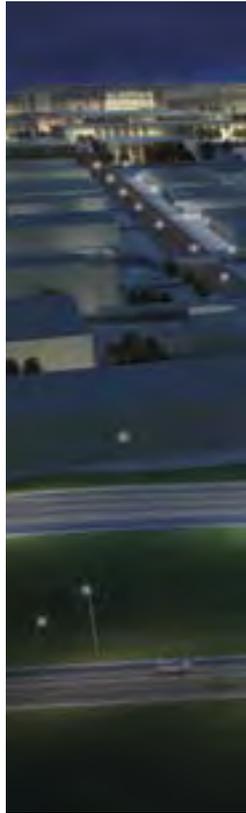
At the end of the 1990s the municipal authorities and Havenbedrijf breathed new life into the planning process. In 2002, René Daniëls, who was Stadsbouwmeester at the time, and Buro5 Maastricht designed the Master Plan Eilandje. This plan contains the objectives for the development of the area, which were subsequently developed into different subplans: Image quality plans for architecture ([Atelier JPLX](#)) and outdoor space ([Atelier JPLX](#), [Michel Desvigne](#) and [Rob Cuyvers](#)), a Green Plan ([Michel Desvigne](#)) and a Water Plan ([Urhahn Urban Design](#) and [Rob Vrolijkx](#)). All these plans start from the preservation of the historical and maritime identity of het Eilandje but also add new elements to the area.

ZONES

With its systematic approach, the city wishes to make het Eilandje liveable and dynamic again zone by zone. This should lead to a dynamic urban mix of living, employment and recreation. The first stage concerns Oude Dokken, Montevideo Quarter and Cadix Quarter. Droogdokkeneiland, Mexico-Eiland and Kempeneiland are developed in the second stage.

The redevelopment was initiated near **Oude Dokken** around Bonapartedok and Willemdok. The construction of the marina at Willemdok in 2000 constituted the first significant step. In 2006, the Saint Felix warehouse was thoroughly renovated and converted for use as city archive (Felix Archives; architects: [Robbrecht and Daem](#)). May 2011 saw the opening of Museum aan de Stroom (Mas, 'Museum by the Stream'; MAS; [Neutelings-Riedijk](#)). The dock edges were redeveloped and received subtle touches of green.

The **Montevideo Quarter** gave the port area its current name: in the past, when all bridges over the docks were raised, the quarter seemed like a small island completely surrounded by water. The Montevideo Quarter is becoming a real cultural attraction. Characteristic buildings such as the Montevideo warehouses ([Poulissen & Partners](#)), the Shop and the hangars of the Red Star Line are reminders of the area's rich port history. The city wishes to restore these historical buildings and give them new functions. Furthermore, six impressive residential towers are rising at the edge of Kattendijkdok ([Diener & Diener, Gigon & Guyer](#) and [David Chipperfield](#), 2014).



Montevideo warehouses © Poulissen & Partners



The Port Company is building its new headquarters at Mexico-Eiland. © Zaha Hadid Architects



The municipal authorities wish to turn **Cadix Quarter** into a low-energy, modern residential area by the water. The following years, homes and schools will be built and other residential facilities will be provided at the dock edges and in the adjacent streets in several stages. The docks themselves offer room for a floating open-air swimming pool and for houseboats and a marina. A new green square will extend from the SISA Arts Campus to Kattendijkdok. The Cadix Quarter will be connected to the city centre through a new tramline.

The development of Cadix Quarter is the final step of the first stage of the development of het Eilandje. In the second phase the **relationship with the modern port** takes centre stage. Havenbedrijf is building a new port house on Mexico-Eiland ([Zaha Hadid Architects](#)) and the city is planning the development of an urban river park at Droogdokeneiland.



Londen-Amsterdamstraat will become a green urban boulevard.

High-rise policy note

The strategic Spatial Structure Plan Antwerp links the development of high-rise buildings to well-considered density increase and protection of rare open space on the one hand and to the quality of the skyline and the appeal of Antwerp as city on the stream on the other. Het Eilandje and Nieuw Zuid are especially mentioned as potential locations where high-rise buildings can add a touch of quality to the skyline.

Analyses, benchmarking and studies done in 2009 - 2010 demonstrated that it was advisable for the city to adopt a clear view with regard to historical heritage (the cathedral, the historical city centre ...). Consequently, the city selected a number of locations where the development of high-rise buildings is absolutely out of the question. Several lines of view of the cathedral at a macro level (from a distance of over two kilometres) are preserved in this manner. High-rise buildings are not allowed in a number of historical city centre zones selected in the s-RSA. There are no further areas in which new high-rise developments are excluded.

Indeed, a second important conclusion was not to base the core principles of the high-rise policy on specific locations. However, the city did decide that there are certain areas that are more appropriate for the development of high-rise buildings than others. In the north and the south of the quays a carefully considered location may provide a few high-quality counterparts for the well-known towers of the city centre (Cathedral, Boerentoren, Politietoren). To the north a few landmarks have been added within the scope of the urban development projects Eilandje and Spoor Noord (e.g. MAS, the residential towers at Kattendijkdok and the London Tower). In the south the mixed housing project Nieuw Zuid and the industrial estate Blue Gate Antwerp offer new possibilities. In addition, the Green Singel may constitute a potentially interesting location for the development of well-considered high-rise buildings, i.e. at the northern and southern landings along the River Scheldt.

In the rest of the city the development of high-rise buildings is not out of the question, but caution must be exercised in the midst of the urban fabric. Special attention must be paid to the connection of the buildings to the public domain, their interaction with the street, their functions and accessibility.

The high-rise policy note should thus be a guiding and controlling instrument for the development of high-quality high-rise buildings at different levels of scale, regardless of the location. In view of this level of ambition, the city wishes to guarantee a minimum degree of quality by drawing up a checklist with criteria and guidelines for the initiator. This list is divided into main themes, in which quality requirements, guidelines and points of interest are provided with regard to the location and the architectural development of high-rise building projects.

PUBLIC SPACE AND WATER

At het Eilandje the large water surfaces of the docks are more prominent than the buildings. That is why the city pays a lot of attention to the water and to the redevelopment of the dock edges. Existing **authentic elements** of the public domain are preserved and integrated into the new development as much as possible. Where possible, bridges and locks are restored and missing connections are repaired. Respect for the past is also apparent in the choice of materials. Cobblestones and blue stones are recovered or new ones are laid.

Het Eilandje was an industrial port area that never really had green spaces. With the Green Plan the city adds **subtle touches of green** in the redevelopment of the public domain. Square shaped plant and tree compartments are laid out along the dock edges and the new square in the Cadix Quarter will have a green character.

Londenstraat and Amsterdamstraat will be transformed from a disorganised and busy traffic axis into a **green city boulevard** with a central tramline to the city centre by 2013. The avenue will constitute a crucial link between the Scheldt Quays, the Leien and Park Spoor Noord. As the Londenstraat-Amsterdamstraat axis also connects the different zones of het Eilandje, it is also an important meeting place for citizens and visitors.

The updated **Water Plan* Eilandje** selects a number of water projects to be implemented by 2020. Water is an important touristic and recreational asset and can constitute the basis for new commercial port activities. Some examples of water projects are the development of about fifty comfortable berths for houseboats, a floating open-air swimming pool and a museum port in Bonapartedok. Attention will also be given to the improvement the quality of the water.



A large crowd of people is gathered on a street, possibly for a parade or public event. A vintage car is driving through the crowd. In the background, there is a bridge and a hillside. The scene is captured in a sepia tone.

Green Singel

Green Singel

As a strategic space, Green Singel can play an important role in increasing the quality of living in the city and in developing the Soft Spine. The space includes the mainly green roadside landscape of the Ring and Singel roads around the inner city. The Green Singel is 13 kilometres long. Its width varies from 200 to 500 metres. The Green Singel has 625 hectares of open space and 150 hectares of undefined space. No less than 155,000 of Antwerp's inhabitants live within a radius of 800 metres from Green Singel.

HISTORY OF THE GREEN SINGEL

The Brialmont fortifications, built around the city around 1860, constitute the outline of the strategic space of the Green Singel today. Barely fifty years after their construction, the Belgian government decided to tear the ramparts down. In 1910 a contest was organised to find a new use for the plots of land that had become available. But none of the designs that had been submitted came to anything and the area where the ramparts used to be was slowly but surely claimed as a recreational area.

Until the development of the Ring road around Antwerp in the 1960s. According to the original plans, its infrastructure would consist of a large and a small ring road, an inner boulevard and a ring railroad. The Grote Ring ('Great Ring Road') was not developed. Proposals regarding the development of the Grote Ring road surfaced regularly but were always strongly opposed by the peripheral municipalities. Nevertheless, the 'small' Ring road was considered a symbol of economic progress and was allowed to develop at a broad scale in the green landscape.

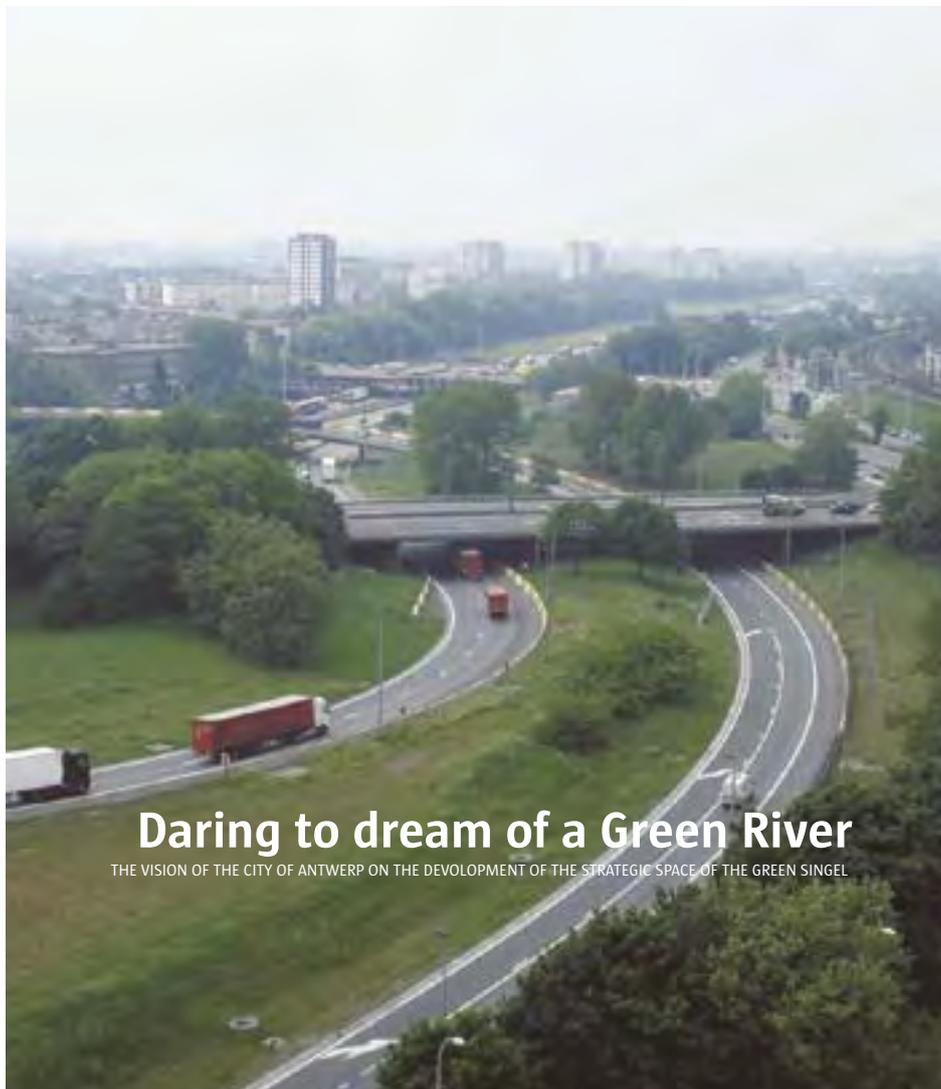
VISION AND COORDINATION

The municipal authorities want to transform the Green Singel into an accessible space that connects the inner and the outer city as well as the five large parks in the city's periphery. In 2007, the municipal authorities started to develop a vision for the area. They started five research trails: functional research, mobility research, ecological research, design research and research into the best development strategy.

The integration of the research results led to eleven concepts, which constitute the spine of the city's vision of the strategic space. This vision was described in the summary note **Durven dromen van een Groene Rivier** ('Dare to Dream of a Green River') in 2009, and is further being refined and concretised by a design team consisting of [Maxwan Architects](#), [Karres en Brands](#), [HUB](#), [Antwerp University](#) and [Goudappel Coffeng](#) in an image quality plan. Together with the development of the Flemish Master plan 2020, this should lead to a joint framework for the sustainable integration of infrastructure into the city.

In the mean time the transformation of the Green Singel area is gradually carried out with the **city as coordinator**. Development will take place in several stages, taking into account the available public resources and the quality of the environment (air and sound). Existing and planned developments are adjusted based on the city's vision.

Synthesis note Daring to Dream of a Green River, 2009



Daring to dream of a Green River

THE VISION OF THE CITY OF ANTWERP ON THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE STRATEGIC SPACE OF THE GREEN SINGEL

GREEN RIVER

The Green River is the **basic concept** for the renovation of the Green Singel area. The concept is based on the structural logic of the area, which is largely determined by the contours of the former Brialmont fortifications and the infrastructure embedded therein. Those historical contours are still clearly visible on maps and aerial photographs.

The Green River concept turns this characteristic structure into a main asset. Consequently, **infrastructure, landscape and building** in the Green Singel area should be different than in the inner and the outer city. The Green Singel should be just as present in the city as the River Scheldt is.

The logic of the Green River is further translated in the ten other concepts.





Roadside Landscape

LANDSCAPE CONCEPTS

Spatial coherence in the Green Singel is created lengthwise with the concept of the **Roadside Landscape**. The roadside vegetation and the relief are organised in such a way that they bring coherence in an informal landscape. The landscape will also help to remedy the lack of green in the inner city and to increase air and sound quality. It is an ecological corridor for fauna and flora with a cooling effect on the city.



Water Landscape

The water that is now drained by means of an underground sewer system will be made visible again through the concept of the **Water Landscape**. The Green Singel can serve as the city's ecological water buffer. All new urban developments in and around the Green River zone will be connected to that water management system. Such a system is ecological and sustainable, and increases the area's appeal for users. Fauna and flora become richer, water is purified in a natural manner and the water system contributes to the unique character of the Roadside Landscape.



Park Connections

Antwerp's large parks are located in the outer city and are separated from the inner city by the bundle of infrastructure of the Ring and Singel area. This barrier makes the parks difficult to access from the inner city, while the city centre is most in need of green zones. That is why the concept of **Park Connections** consists in connecting those large parks to the inner city by means of an expansion over and through the infrastructure.

In and around the Green Singel area there are a lot of smaller green zones with limited sport and relaxation facilities. Still, some quarters remain in need of more green spaces and play and sport areas. The Green Singel area can compensate for that need to a great extent. In the Roadside Landscape local and neighbourhood parks are located in strategic places as oases in the motorway landscape. These so-called **Pearls in the Green River** are transformed into rest areas. Playing with relief and vegetation will create a pleasant leisure zone with appropriate sport and play areas tailored to the adjacent quarters.



Pearls in the Green River

INFRASTRUCTURE CONCEPTS

Within the **Multiway Boulevard** concept every infrastructure line has its own function. Supra-local traffic stays on the Ring road and local traffic ends up on the Singel. Urban and metropolitan functions that generate supra-local (car) traffic are concentrated near public transport hubs and slip roads of the Ring road. Local functions that generate little car traffic can be situated in the space between those urban / metropolitan functions. A new Singel tramline constitutes an important addition to the existing network of public transport lines going to the city centre.

The entire strategic space will be strung together both longitudinally and transversely by a ladder structure of connections for cyclists and pedestrians. Just like the main characters of the fairy tale of The Wizard of Oz are led through a strange landscape along the Yellow Brick Road, the ladder structure guides slow traffic through the Green Singel area. The ladder structure also offers room for recreation: running, cycling, roller blading, walking ...



Multiway Boulevard



Yellow Brick Road



Grey and Green Bridges



Peripheral Construction



Pebbles in the Green River



Roadside Buildings

Today there are thirteen bridges between the inner and the outer city. The **Grey and Green Bridges** concept is to make these connections clearer and more logical. On the Grey Bridges connection complexes will be developed for the exchange between the higher and the lower road network. The Green Bridges connect the fragments of green in the Roadside Landscape and the inner and the outer city. Superfluous parking and asphalt strips are replaced by green zones. This way the existing bridges are upgraded to small coverings.

BUILDING CONCEPTS

The reinforcement of the edges of the Green Singel area by means of **Peripheral Construction** is crucial for a liveable and readable Green River figure. Development is possible in a selected number of peripheral areas of the strategic space under strict conditions. This way the municipal authorities want to enable pleasant living with a view of the Green River.

Over the years, the area along the Singel has developed into an important office location with a lot of parking pressure and supra-local traffic. To turn this tendency around, new top and office locations will be conceived as **Pebbles in the Green River**. It concerns compact developments in public transport locations that are grafted on a parking system that is preferably made directly accessible via the Ring road. This way the open space is spared and supra-local traffic is kept away from the Singel and the surrounding quarters.

In order to preserve the open space in the Roadside Landscape, new **Roadside Buildings** can only have the smallest possible visual footprint. Some of the options include buildings as an artificial landscape, suspended buildings and hidden buildings. Furthermore, the number of new buildings needs to be limited. That is why, except at top and office locations, only local public amenities are allowed.

Park Spoor Noord



Park Spoor Noord

Park Spoor Noord is a leverage project in the Soft Spine area. 18 ha of the site in Antwerpen-Noord were turned into a park (2005-2009) while the remaining 6 ha are being developed by the Nationale Maatschappij der Belgische Spoorwegen (the Belgian national railroad company) (floor area of 192,000m²). The site has a unique elongated shape. It is intersected in the centre by the Viaduct Dam, dividing the area into a western and an eastern part. A piece of the western part is situated underneath the Noorderlaanbrug bridge.

REDESIGNATION

In the year 2000, the Nationale Maatschappij der Belgische Spoorwegen (NMBS) abandoned its marshalling yard in the north of the city. As it was no longer used for rail activity, a **new destination** was to be found. An inquiry showed that local residents were in great need of green, light and open space. Indeed, the surrounding quarters are densely developed. Only one in eight homes has an outdoor space.

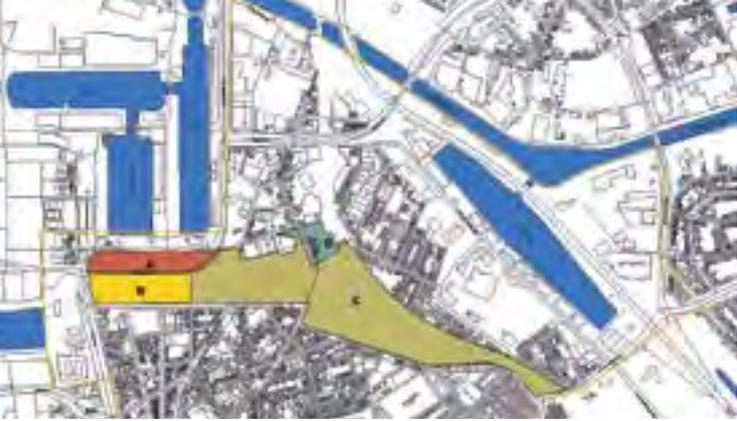
After thorough research and upon consultation with all parties involved, the municipal authorities decided in a **consensus document** to transform the railway site into a landscape park. The creation of this landscape park necessitated a modification of the Flemish zoning plan, in which the area was designated as a 'zone for urban development' in 1998.

Subsequently, the city and the railroad company entered into a **policy agreement**. The marshalling yard was divided into legal zones. An area of 18 ha would become a landscape park offering room for sport, recreation and culture (by way of comparison: Stadspark, the city park, has a surface area of 11 ha). In return, the NMBS was allowed to develop the remaining 6 ha adjacent to Noorderplaats, the so-called 'Kop Spoor Noord'.



The eastern part of the Spoor Noord site in 2002 (left)

The eastern part of the Spoor Noord site in 2011 © Ian Coomans



Zones of the policy agreement: Development zone Kop Spoor Noord (A and B), landscape park (C) and Damplein (D)

‘VILLAGES AND METROPOLIS’ DESIGN

In January 2003, [Bernardo Secchi & Paola Viganò](#), [Buro Kromwijk](#) and [Iris Consulting](#) won the international design competition for the new park. The winning design is called ‘Villages and Metropolis’ and is directed at two levels of scale: the local level and the city / metropolitan level. The park was to become a garden to the neighbourhood and a park to the city.

Park Spoor Noord is not a conventional park where green and nature development dominate, but it lies somewhere between a **park and a neighbourhood square**. The design is based on the terrain’s original shape and existing relief. The extensive stretch of grass and the planting of standard trees result in a vast, transparent landscape. The park’s spine is formed by a curvy cobblestone boulevard of 10 to 20 metres wide. The use of black concrete for benches and paths at the edges and the entrances adds to the park’s coherence.

The field of grass is intersected by a **network of winding paths** that connect the different neighbourhoods. Along the network of paths, sports field, (sand) gardens, play areas, railway buildings and tree groups create different atmospheres. The largest play areas are the water garden and the sand playground near the open shelter ‘Platform’. The impressive BMX and skate bowl is situated next to the Noorderlaan viaduct.

The choice for a transparent basic park with robust materials was the first of a series of **sustainable choices** with regard to the lay-out of the park: reuse of railway materials, integration of viaducts and railway buildings, internal water management with ‘wadis’ for the collection of rainwater, indigenous plants ...



BUILDING PROJECTS

The large **Parkloods** ('park hangar'; 1925, previously 'WDT hangar') is situated in the centre of Park Spoor Noord. Based on a design by [Verdickt & Verdickt Architects](#), the hangar was transformed into a multifunctional complex with an exhibition space, offices for logistic support, a hospitality establishment, a neighbourhood sport hangar and a newly built sports centre. The new sport centre has a transparent roof which lets daylight in and emanates artificial light when it is dark outside. This makes the sport hall a beacon of light in the park.

The **Platform** (1886, previously 'SPTM hangar') is one of Belgium's oldest railway buildings. For decades the building served as a maintenance hangar for locomotives. The hangar was preserved as a covered open space with no specific function. Since its renovation according to a design by [Stramien](#), numerous events and activities are organised there.

After its renovation by [360 Architects](#), the former **education building** for railway staff houses part-time art education, out-of-school child care and a room where youngsters can come together.

The **water towers** near Halenstraat are at the park's most eastern point. The towers were built in 1898 to provide steam locomotives with water. These so-called 'ZEN monuments' (ZEN in Dutch stands for 'without economic value') were completely restored by architects [Pat Heylen](#) and [Karel Beeck](#).

Kop Spoor Noord, the area of development between Park Spoor Noord and the Leien, will become home to a new campus of Artesis University College ([Polo architects](#)), housing projects such as the Park Tower ([ELD Partnership](#)) and the Light Tower ([awg architects](#)), public amenities, offices, hospitality and commercial establishments. The Parkbrug ('Park Bridge'; [Ney & Partners](#)) connects Park Spoor Noord to het Eilandje via Kop Spoor Noord and the Leien.



Park Spoor Noord in 2010 © AG Stadsplanning



Water towers © Ian Coomans

MANAGEMENT PLAN

The western part of Park Spoor Noord was opened to the public in 2008. The eastern part followed in 2009. The city drew up a management plan in order to keep Park Spoor Noord a pleasant and clean place. This plan contains guidelines and arrangements regarding the daily cleanup, the maintenance of the playground furniture and the water gardens, and the prevention and control of public nuisance. Neighbourhood supervisors and the police made arrangements with regard to their presence in the park. The management plan is adjusted annually for as long as it is necessary.

The kind of **activities** that take place in the park are closely monitored and assessed. A programme coordinator stimulates and supports a balanced mixture of activities in the park: larger events and neighbourhood activities, a summer bar, child and youth entertainment during the summer holidays ...



Light tower at development zone Kop
Spoor Noord. © awg architecten



Parkloods

Communication and participation

On the occasion of the preparation of the consensus document, an exhibition and a group discussion were organised in 2001, and in 2002, over two hundred people participated in the Trek je plan-dag ('Plan-your-park day'), which focused on various themes (youth, culture, bridges, safety, green, water, sports, buildings ...). The city collected all of the participants' remarks and presented them to the five selected potential design teams. Early 2003 the candidates' proposals were exhibited.

During the large-scale campaign called Park in Zicht ('Park in Sight', 2003 – 2005), the Parkloods hangar was turned into a park and walks were organised under the guidance of the winning design team. On the basis of a model and simulations of the winning design, inhabitants were able to make suggestions during discussion groups. During a Tournée Générale in 2005 the project team visited target groups that are not as easy to reach (at the poorhouse, the mosque, via the senior citizen organisation ...) to talk about the project. A readable map was drawn up, which would afterwards get a place of honour at the inauguration of the Belvédère, the vantage point at the central viaduct.

A Wervend Programma ('Inspirational Programme') put the site in the spotlight with events such as an annual street run, the festive completion of the renovated Dam station ([Pat Heylen](#) and [Karel Beeck](#)) and Graaf! ('Dig!'), an exhibition on the redevelopment works (2005). In 2006 the renovated Damplein (Dam Square; [Bernardo Secchi](#) and [Paola Viganò](#)) was festively opened and the photo exhibition Park in Beeld ('Park in the Picture') was organised. Mid-2007, the Parkloods hangar housed the large overview exhibition Focus op het Noord ('Focus on the North').



Sailor's Quarter

Sailor's Quarter

In the s-RSA, the Sailor's Quarter forms part of the Inner City programme in the strategic space of the Hard Spine. With a surface area of 33.8 ha, the area borders on het Eilandje in the north and on the university quarter in the south. Over the years, the once dynamic and popular Sailor's Quarter became isolated from the rest of the city. The quarter was also increasingly faced with a proliferation of window prostitution, public nuisance and criminal business activities. With a combination of new policy measures and city projects, the municipal authorities wanted to make the Sailor's Quarter a pleasant place to live again.

DECLINE OF A FOLKSY NEIGHBOURHOOD

In the 1980s and the 1990s, the **balance between prostitution and living** in Sailor's Quarter was lost. This had to do with local as well as supra-local and even international factors. Related international events were the expansion of the prostitution industry, the influx of Eastern European women and the legalisation of prostitution in the Netherlands. Some radical changes in the neighbourhood were the demolition of entire building blocks and the construction of social housing complexes.

In the 1990s prostitution had spread over the entire quarter and the grip of prostitution on the residential fabric was tightening. Falconplein (Falcon square) and Klapdorp became the playground for people involved in illegal trade. Criminality increasingly dominated the streets. At the end of the 1990s **local residents** sounded the alarm: they presented a petition to the municipal authorities. The city developed the 'Antwerp prostitution policy plan'.

ANTWERP PROSTITUTION POLICY PLAN

The policy plan is based on the idea that **prostitution can stay**, but under strict conditions only. The criminal side effects must be systematically combated; prostitution must not cause local residents any nuisance, the statute of prostitute must be improved and a few (former) prostitution areas should be redeveloped.

The policy plan focused on **two city areas** that each have a different type of prostitution: Sailor's Quarter (window prostitution) and the Atheneum area (street and pub prostitution). The plan contained an integral approach to making these quarters pleasant, safe and liveable again. As it was the largest and the most problematic prostitution area, Sailor's Quarter was the first in line for the implementation of the policy plan.

The most striking intervention in Sailor's Quarter was **the conversion of the window prostitution area into a pedestrian zone**. This decision was initially controversial, as window prostitution is associated with clients driving around. Under strong protest of the establishment owners and silent cheers from the residents, all prostitution establishments in the neighbourhood were closed down except for those in three specific streets: Verversrui, Schippersstraat and Vingerlingstraat (the so-called V model). At the same time, counterfeit trade in the Falconplein-Klapdorp area was severely dealt with.

GHOST TOWN

The resolute approach in 2000-2001 soon led to spectacular results. The prostitution zone was isolated from the surrounding residential and office area and was **easier to control** by the police thanks to its compact nature. In addition, it was turned into a pedestrian zone, because of which the traffic carousel and, as a consequence, traffic congestion disappeared. Organised crime also left the area. Sailor's Quarter became a peaceful neighbourhood.

Too peaceful, as it turned out soon enough. The quarter assumed the air of a **ghost town** after the clean-up operation. Up to eighty percent of the buildings were empty in the amputated arm of the window prostitution area (Sin-Paulusplaats – Oudemanstraat) and in the centre of the counterfeit trade area (Falconplein – Klapdorp). And it didn't look like a spontaneous revival would occur any time soon. Furthermore, the condition of the **empty buildings** was simply bad, and the enforced balance between living and prostitution was fragile. After the implementation of the 'Antwerp Prostitution Policy Plan' there was a need for an integrated, area-oriented policy.



Sint-Paulusplaats (St Paul Square) by night.

A SEDUCTIVE PIECE OF ANTWERP

Early 2002, the **planning process** was approved for the development of a substantiated, integrated and socially supported vision for Sailor's Quarter. The residents were closely involved in this process. During several 'thinking days' all of the quarter's aspects were discussed: living, employment, recreation, prostitution, green, culture, traffic ... After a heavily attended consultation meeting and an interactive exhibition, a new story was written for the quarter and priorities were set. At the end of 2002 the developed vision was made official by the municipal authorities. The document in which it was recorded was called '**Sailor's Quarter, a seductive piece of Antwerp**'.

The vision consists of **four main ideas**:

- '**An interesting part of the city**': the Sailor's Quarter should once again develop into a true residential quarter.
- '**A pleasant place to live**': the quarter's positive features as a residential area should be optimised.
- '**A controllable window prostitution area**': living and prostitution can go together as long as clear agreements are made and observed.
- '**Attractive to investors**': the quarter should attract new residents and entrepreneurs.

FROM A VISION TO CONCRETE PROJECTS

The approval of the future vision on the Sailor's Quarter rang in a new stage for the quarter. The city initiated concrete projects on the basis of a spatial strategy and annual action plans.

First, a number of **structuring axes** were selected that connect the quarter with the adjoining city areas. On those axes attractive projects were developed for residents and visitors. In the quiet zones between the axes the residential fabric is protected, supported and reinforced.

In the next stages subprojects were systematically developed by a multidisciplinary steering committee. Within this scope **annual action plans** were drawn up that were linked to the budget.



Verversrui by night.

AN INTERESTING PART OF THE CITY

The Sailor's Quarter used to seem cut off from the inner city almost intentionally. Visitors were neatly diverted around the quarter. This changed thanks to the carefully considered redevelopment of the public domain and the introduction of attractive activities.

The redevelopment of **Sint-Paulusplaats** was the most important link in the repair of the connection with the inner city. Furthermore, the 'canal walk' added a tourist attraction to the area. Participants in this walk dive into the former sewer system near Grote Markt (the central city square) and resurface at the heart of Sailor's Quarter.

To breathe new life into **Oudemansstraat**, the municipal authorities launched the 'atelier policy'. Proprietors who renovate their buildings but do not immediately find an appropriate tenant are financially encouraged to place the ground floor at the disposal of artists as atelier space.

Residents and visitors were closely involved in the redevelopment of **Falconplein**. To this end, a Wervend Programma ('Inspirational Programme') was drawn up with events like an organic market, Zomer van Antwerpen ('Summer of Antwerp') activities, the Europalia Russia photo exhibition and the harbour film festival. The high point of the programme was the festive inauguration of the renovated square at the end of 2007.

A PLEASANT PLACE TO LIVE

Several **residential streets** were redeveloped. The focus was on the quality of living rather than on traffic. The city developed tools to stimulate renovation in the quarter and set the tone by initiating its own projects.

Two new housing policy tools were designed that were tailored to the quarter: the **renovation contract and the guidance contract**. Both instruments stimulate the redesignation of former prostitution and commercial establishments. Stedelijke Woonwijzer, which supports renovation projects by giving advice, granting premiums and lending out material, set up a permanent office in the quarter.

The first project that was implemented by the city in this quarter was the renovation of the dilapidated **Stadsmagazijn** ('Municipal Warehouse'), which had been taken over by squatters. A meeting place and a centre for neighbourhood initiatives, the renovated Stadsmagazijn plays an important role in the repair of social life in the quarter. Practically every project for Sailor's Quarter was created, developed, discussed and exhibited in this very warehouse.





Falconplein



Gezondheidshuis: 'Health House' for prostitutes



A CONTROLLABLE WINDOW PROSTITUTION POLICY

After the redevelopment of the three remaining prostitution streets the ‘tour d’amour’ was shut down for good. The area was turned into a pedestrian zone and was decorated with specially designed, low-maintenance street furniture. Special attention was paid to the prostitutes’ **safety and work circumstances**.

A **police division specialised in prostitution** was established. In 2005 this division set up shop in an office in the newly built Villa Tinto, a prostitution house designed by [Quinze & Milan](#). The number of complaints by residents about the activities in and around the prostitution zone has decreased considerably over the past few years.

The ‘**declaration of suitability for window prostitution**’ stipulates qualitative requirements with which window prostitution buildings ought to comply. It has turned out to be a powerful tool for police surveillance of the prostitution area. Furthermore, thanks to the regulations, all prostitution buildings were renovated in two years’ time. In turn, this made for a substantial improvement of the prostitute’s working conditions.

With its free, anonymous and specialised assistance, the **Gezondheidshuis** (‘Health House’) for prostitutes has become a vital part of the quarter. This eye-catching new building was designed by [LAB architects](#) and constitutes a beacon in the centre of the prostitution zone.

ATTRACTIVE TO INVESTORS

The city wants to make the Sailor’s Quarter attractive to **new residents and entrepreneurs**. It buys dilapidated and prostitution buildings through a rolling fund. These are renovated and put on the market again. Entire building blocks are also restructured.

For example, the **Falconplein – Zeemanshuis** (‘Seamen’s House’) project includes the redevelopment of Falconplein as part of the cultural axis between the city centre and het Eilandje as well as the restructuring of the adjacent building block. Based on a design by [Rapp+Rapp](#) and [West 8](#), green public spaces, housing, offices and community facilities are planned to be provided here.

EFFECTS AND RESULTS

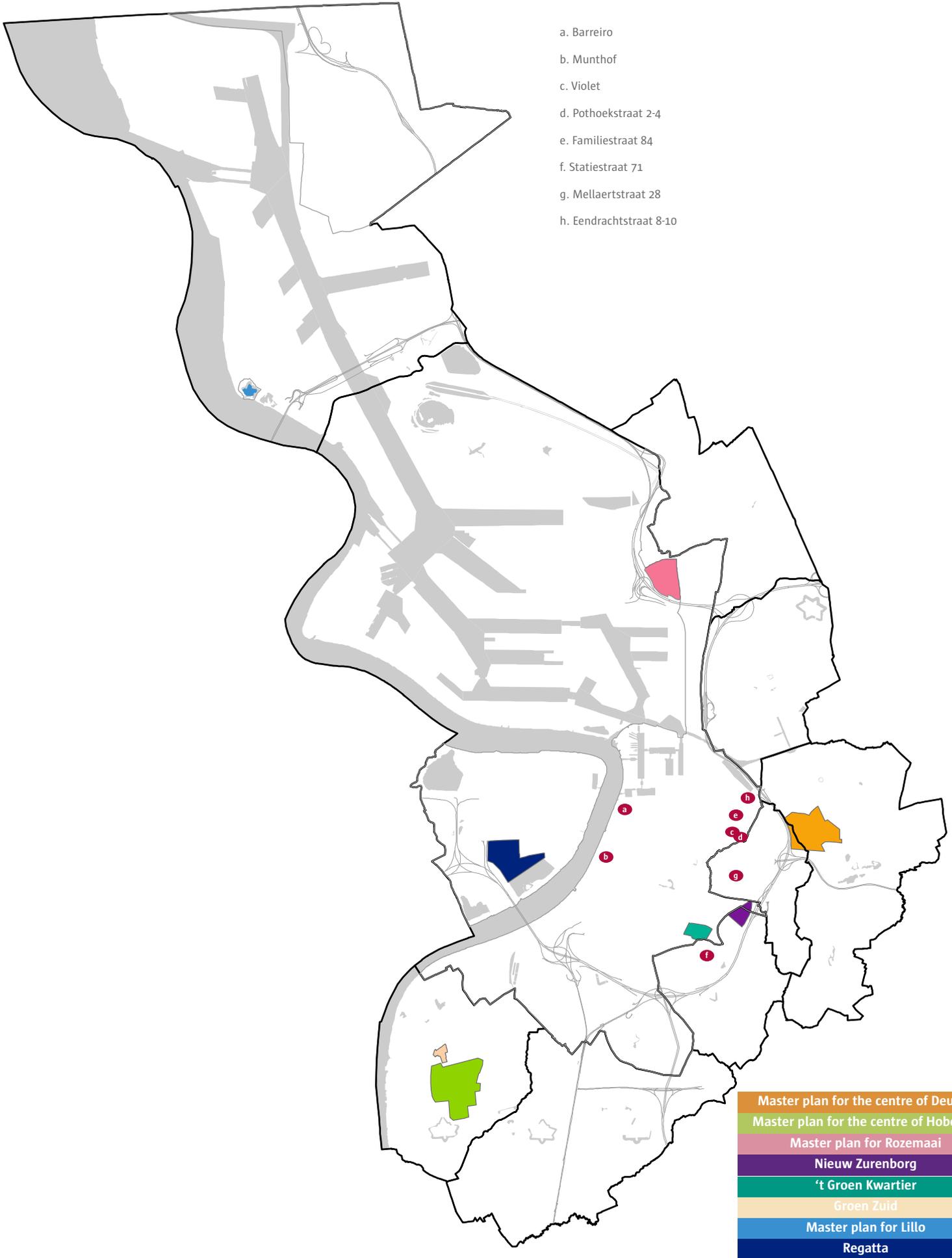
The development of Sailor's Quarter was meticulously mapped out between 1997 and 2007. In view of the conclusion of the subsidy programme of Federaal Grootstedenbeleid ('Federal Policy for Large Cities') a **final assessment** was carried out with **impact measurement** in 2007. A survey of the area dating from 2002 served as baseline. The geographical information system (GIS) was used to process and analyse the terrain data. This way the impacts of the range of policy measures could be measured and evaluated.

The **results** are self-evident. The number of prostitution streets was reduced from 17 to 3. The number of show windows remained practically the same (it went from 275 to 273), but they are now located in 61 instead of 96 different buildings. Before the prostitution area became a pedestrian zone, up to 4000 cars used to drive around there. This is no longer the case. No less than 42% of all buildings in the quarter underwent major renovation. Between 2000 and 2007 the number of vacant houses dropped drastically and the number of building applications increased significantly. There were also heavy investments in the public domain: 45,300m² of public space were redeveloped.

The prostitution policy plan, the annual action plans and the concrete projects obviously stimulated **private initiatives**. There were forms of public-private cooperation (Falconplein – Zeemanshuis and Barreiro). Proprietors and the municipal authorities entered into renovation contracts. And finally, more and more residents and entrepreneurs are investing in Sailor's Quarter.

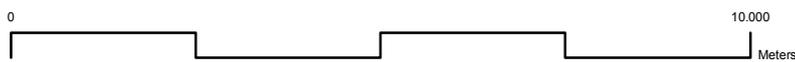


The Falconplein-Zeemanshuis project includes a new residential project at Falconruui. © META architects



- a. Barreiro
- b. Munthof
- c. Violet
- d. Pothoekstraat 2-4
- e. Familiestraat 84
- f. Statiesstraat 71
- g. Mellaertstraat 28
- h. Eendrachtstraat 8-10

- Master plan for the centre of Deurne
- Master plan for the centre of Hoboken
- Master plan for Rozemaai
- Nieuw Zurenborg
- 't Groen Kwartier
- Groen Zuid
- Master plan for Lillo
- Regatta



4. Living

The city invests strongly in a pleasant living environment. For this reason the city attaches great importance to the level, the quality and the diversity of the housing supply. Within this scope the city has developed and perfected various methods and tools.

With various master plans, Antwerp is working on the upgrade of the spatial structure of the existing neighbourhood and district centres. Together with property developers, the city works on the development of completely new quarters, and at the urban block level it involves private owners in cross-parcel projects.

With the property policy the city takes on the renovation and replacement of vacant and dilapidated buildings. And finally, the Building Code enables the city to regulate the quality of the housing supply up to the level of individual citizens with construction or renovation plans.

An aerial photograph of a city grid, overlaid with a semi-transparent orange filter. Several areas are highlighted in green and blue, representing parks and water features. A large green park with a winding blue stream is prominent in the lower center. Other smaller green areas with trees and a building are visible in the upper left. The text 'Master plans for neighbourhood and district centres' is centered in white.

Master plans for neighbourhood and district centres

Master plans for neighbourhood and district centres

Because of the growth of the city and its suburbs, the port expansions and the municipal fusion of 1983, the city now has several urban centres. The old city centre constitutes the 'metropolis', and the district and neighbourhood centres are the 'villages' in the 'Villages and Metropolis' image of the structure plan. For the villages the spatial points of departure are: equivalence to the metropolis, reinforcement of the centre and a higher quality of living. The main actions are the qualitative development of public space, the location of community facilities, the preservation of the historical nature and the individual character of the villages, and a spatial organisation aimed at sustainable transport behaviour and public transport.

Over the past few years several master plans were drawn up, and planning and implementation processes were initiated for the villages. This always goes together with an analysis of the level of facilities and possible needs. The capacity with regard to mobility and parking pressure is investigated as well. Sustainable mobility solutions and the need for facilities, green, housing and commerce are integrated into the plans. This way all urban centres will promote living in the city again.

MASTER PLAN FOR THE CENTRE OF HOBOKEN

The Master Plan for the centre of Hoboken aims at a better spatial organisation of the district centre at a social, ecological, economic and cultural level. In order to preserve Hoboken's individuality, a balance must be pursued between industry, recreation, landscape and living. Drawn up by Brut in cooperation with Landinzicht and Vectris (2011 – 2012), the Master Plan for the Centre of Hoboken is based on four objectives:

'Hoboken by the River Scheldt' aims at strengthening the relationship between the district centre and the River Scheldt and wishes to reduce the (psychological) distance between the river and the landscape. The recreational potential of the zone by the River Scheldt is currently insufficiently developed. To change this, industry, recreation and living should be reconciled.

'Hoboken, green district' strives to establish missing green links: to this end, undesignated open spaces are redeveloped and parks, gardens and green buffers are made more attractive. Green is crucial for residential areas and plays a connecting role in ecological networks. In Hoboken the railway and Krijgsbaan can develop into an important connecting corridor for fauna and flora between Schoonselhof and the River Scheldt (via Fort 8).

'Accessible Hoboken' mainly aims at the creation of a good cycle track network, the comfort and safety of pedestrians and an attractive public domain. A number of streets in the city centre and in the residential areas are made into restricted traffic zones. Special attention is paid to making green zones accessible and adjusting the cycling and pedestrian network to public transport. Feasibility studies will be carried out with regard to tramline extensions. The possibility of reopening the railway station is also being investigated with a view to a possible 'tram train' (light rail) catering to the network in the suburbs. Parking solutions are integrated into the urban block projects. In addition, the possibility of public co-use of private car parks is being looked into.

The objective **'A reinforced centre'** aims at creating an attractive public space. A concentrated supply of functions around the central Kioskplein and Kapelstraat will push back vacancy along the long streets. This will help the centre of Hoboken to develop into an attractive and dynamic meeting place with facilities, hospitality establishments and outdoor cafés.



MASTER PLAN FOR ROZEMAAI

The residential area of Rozemaai is situated on the border between the districts of Antwerp and Ekeren. The quarter came into existence in the 1970s and 1980s. Initially, it mainly consisted of social rental flats, but afterwards a few dozen social homes were built to sell. In 2009 [Jan Maenhout](#), [Keppler Consulting](#) and [Ontwerpbureau Pauwels](#) were commissioned to draw up the Rozemaai Master Plan. The designers' focus is on the landscape. The master plan is based on four spatial structures and a sociocultural dimension.

Water constitutes the first spatial structure. The aim is to establish a connection between the Donkse Beekvallei (Donkse Beek valley) and the centre of Ekeren by creating a natural landscape park. This green-blue nature zone full of trees, shrubs, meadowland, dikes and wadis (for the infiltration of rainwater) will run through the entire residential area. The old course of the stream is repaired and given slightly sloping banks.

The spontaneously developed **landscape** in Rozemaai lies at the basis of the landscape park. With a minimum of interventions, the Donkse Beekvallei can develop into a meeting place where Rozemaai residents can have a picnic, play football, fish, etc. Foot paths and cycle tracks connect to the path in the valley. A new cycle route is to develop into a comfortable connection between Antwerp's city centre, Rozemaai and the centre of Ekeren.

In order to optimise the quality of living in the Rozemaai quarter, **traffic** will also be dealt with. The master plan suggests placing Ekersesteenweg at a lower level in the road hierarchy. A new tramline between Ekeren and Antwerp will make two stops near Rozemaai. This way, tram passengers will have direct access to the walking network in the Oude Landen nature reserve.

The green structure determines the **building plots**. Water problems constitute a crucial precondition for development and rule out underground parking. A mix of housing types will be established, for which strict guidelines will be drawn up relating to sustainability and quality.

By adding a **sociocultural dimension**, the master plan wishes to put an end to the isolation of the Rozemaai quarter. Supra-local and local activities can breathe new life into the area. Within this scope, facilities are planned near Ekersesteenweg and pavilions will be built in the valley for local activities.



MASTER PLAN FOR THE CENTRE OF DEURNE

Deurne consists of twenty neighbourhoods, but lacks a centre for the district as a whole. Under the slogan Deurne Publiek ('Public Deurne') a number of objectives were formulated over the past few years with regard to the creation of such a central, high quality meeting place. Design office **Omgeving** translated this objective into a master plan in 2010. It was the first master plan for the centres within the twentieth-century belt.

The master plan optimally plays up existing assets of Deurne by means of four concepts. One of Deurne's most important features is Rivierenhof, part of the Schijn valley. This green structure is slightly concealed from the centre. The concept of the **'Schijnvallei'** extends the green structure through Cogelsplein (Cogels Square) and Rodekruisplein (Red Cross Square), over St Fredegand Church and the graveyard, to the actual centre.

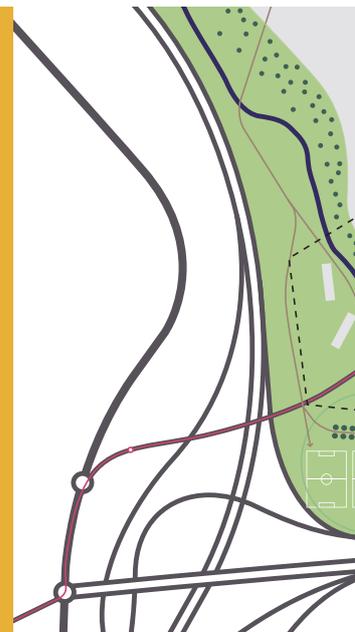
'Central axis' and **'Hospitality hub'** are the most important concepts with regard to the reinforcement of the centre. Frank Craebeckxlaan and Hooftvunderlei are confirmed as central axis. The public buildings situated along this axis, such as Expohal and the district hall, evoke the atmosphere of 'modern' Deurne. The reinforced hospitality hub rests on the atmosphere of historical Deurne around Cogelsplein, Rode Kruisplein and St Fredegand Church. Deurne Dorp, the old centre that is at the origin of the former municipality of Deurne, has typical alleys and historical little houses.

An **'alternative network of slow roads'** ought to make the district hall, Rivierenhof, shops and facilities more accessible to pedestrians and cyclists. The concept of **'equal distribution of parking spots'** aims at a better distribution of parking pressure through a reorganisation of the three existing parking clusters.

Master plan for the centre of Deurne: preservation of the characteristic patrimony

During the preparation of a master plan the department for the preservation of monuments provides advice on the heritage value of the buildings in the project area. First, a 'quick inventory' is carried out in terms of image quality. Afterwards, the structural, historical and architectural value of the valuable patrimony is investigated. The intention is to preserve and reinforce the authentic character and the characteristic patrimony of city areas that are under development.

In Deurne, the genesis of the centre formed the basis of the quick inventory. A photo inventory of the entire project area was carried out. The buildings and streets that are part of the inventory of cultural heritage in Belgium were marked. Every building was then assessed in terms of its cultural, historical and architectural qualities. The quick inventory also includes non-listed buildings that do not appear in the inventory of cultural heritage but do help determine the image of the centre of Deurne.



MASTER PLAN FOR LILLO

Lillo is part of the Berendrecht-Zandvliet-Lillo ‘polder district’. These former polder villages were appended to the city with the port expansion of 1958. Lillo consists of a fort surrounding a hamlet. Its location and its scenic, cultural and historical value make it a unique spot in the city.

According to the Flemish Sigma Plan to prevent flooding in the area of the Belgian part of the Scheldt estuary, the **flood protection level** should be raised from 8.30 metres to 11.00 metres TAW (the Belgian national tidal reference). Immediately the question arose whether the marina could be kept at the same location between the village centre and the River Scheldt. The municipal authorities and Waterwegen en Zeekanaal nv (which implements the Sigma Plan on behalf of the Flemish government) want to use the flood protection solution to give Lillo a **new vitality**.

The Master plan for Lillo (2010), drawn up by design team [Grontmij](#) and [Cluster Landscape](#), links the safety standards stipulated in the **Sigma Plan** to attractive public space, recreation, culture and architectural quality. The plan consists of three parts: dyke heightening and redevelopment of the marina, upgrade of the remaining area between Lillo and Scheldelaan and restoration of the historical centre. It is an innovative design, notably because the marina will form part of the new dyke structure.

The fort of Lillo is part of the historical line of defence around Antwerp. Consequently, the Master plan for Lillo takes the principles of the **‘Forts and defence lines in a cross-border perspective’ programme** (Interreg – European Union) into account. This collaboration involves several provincial authorities working together on the disclosure and the promotion of their historical defence lines and fortifications.



Deurne-centre: desired spatial structure © Omgeving

Lillo Master Plan © Grontmij Vlaanderen & Cluster landscape

New residential areas



New residential areas

Abandoned industrial areas are interesting places for urban development. Such sites offer the city rare opportunities for the development of new green, mixed residential quarters. Apart from an integrated approach, this also requires serious investments and a good collaboration with public or private partners. Sometimes the initiative for such a residential expansion comes from a private property developer, as was the case for the Groen Zuid (Green South) and Regatta projects. In other cases, the city takes the initiative, as was the case for the Green Quarter and Nieuw Zurenborg projects.

However, the city coordinates both project types. It imposes conditions on the developer regarding the number of social or affordable houses, green space, community facilities, sustainability, mobility and private outdoor space etc. These and other conditions are established in a cooperation agreement. If the city owns the terrain, it incorporates the conditions into a contest by means of a statement of requirements or through a 'conditional sale'.



Nieuw Zurenborg gas site © AG Stadsplanning Antwerpen

NIEUW ZURENBORG

Nieuw Zurenborg is a brownfield site with a surface area of approx. 11 hectares that is situated in the **Green Singel** area. In 2002 the terrain was abandoned by gas distributor IGAO. Part of the site is still being used by the Flemish transport company De Lijn as a bus depot. On one side the site borders on the nineteenth-century residential area Zurenborg. A large part of it is enclosed between two important barriers: the Ring railway and the Singel and Ring infrastructure.

In 2006 the municipal authorities initiated the process for the purchase, remediation and redesignation of the polluted area. The city acquired the terrain in 2009. As the adjacent quarters are faced with a shortage of open and green space, a spatial implementation plan is to redesignate Nieuw Zurenborg as a green residential area with a **new quarter park**.

The results obtained from an environmental study and from **design research** are integrated as preconditions into the development vision on the area. Pending the completion of the complex redesignation process, the Nieuw Zurenborg site gets a temporary function. For example, it will be the home base of Zomer van Antwerpen (Summer of Antwerp), the cultural summer programme of the non-profit organisation Antwerpen Open vzw.



REGATTA

The new Regatta quarter is built on the Borgerweert site, an extensive stretch of grassland situated between Blancefloerlaan and Galgenweel on the **left bank**. As owner of the land, property developer [Vooruitzicht](#) is responsible for the quarter's design and its realisation while the city coordinates the development.

450 single-family homes, 1,100 flats and 40,000m² of offices and shops will be built in ten years' time. The urban design for this was created by [awg architects](#). With a view to the introduction of a new kind of urbanism on the left bank, the quarter also has other urban functions and community facilities, but without dominating the residential nature of the quarter. The regional planning programme and the image quality plan are to embed all those different functions in a coherent spatial whole.

A **new 12ha park** will be laid out between the new quarter and Galgenweel lake. In the park design by [Bernardo Secchi](#) and [Paola Viganò](#) the banks of the largest sailing lake in Flanders remain undeveloped. The Italian architects also provide for a whole range of recreational possibilities for the neighbourhood.



GROEN KWARTIER ('GREEN QUARTER')

Groen Kwartier is a new 'green quarter' developed on the site of the former **Military Hospital** on the border between the districts of Antwerp and Berchem. At the end of the nineteenth century an arsenal was built here for the storage of war material. Later it became the location for a military hospital and a monastery. In 1993 the hospital and the monastery closed their doors for good.

In 2004 the site was listed as a **historical monument** by the Flemish government. However, when the decision was made, the wish of the city to develop the site as a residential area was taken into account. Subsequently, the city bought the site from the ministry of Defence. After the urban development contest an agreement was made with property developer [Groep Wilma-Vanhaerents](#) and architects [Stéphane Beel](#) and [Lieven Achtergael](#), [360 Architects](#) and [Huiswerk](#).

The concept of a '**city garden**' lies at the basis of the design. Nearly half the terrain will be turned into a green public space according to a design by French landscape architect [Michel Desvigne](#). With this public city garden the city will gain a new green zone in its very centre. The adjacent quarters will get more points of access to the site. The quarter will be made into a pedestrian zone as much as possible: it will have paths instead of streets. Residents will be able to park their cars in underground parking garages. Visitors will be able to park their cars at the edge of the site.





Groen Zuid © Crepain Binst Architecture

Groen Kwartier will be a **mixed residential area** with a mix of houses and functions. About 400 new or renovated flats, lofts and single-family homes with gardens will be created. The houses will vary in size and are aimed at different target groups: young and old, singles and families with children, and social and private housing. The presence of shops, hospitality establishments, offices and professional practices is also aimed at the integration of the new quarter into its environment.

GROEN ZUID ('GREEN SOUTH')

Groen Zuid will be a new residential area on the former industrial site of Scanfil in the centre of Hoboken. Production at the site was stopped early 2006. The new quarter will feature a neighbourhood park and facilities for its spacious surroundings and have **restricted traffic**. Cyclists and pedestrians will be given priority. Underground parking garages will be provided to keep cars out of the streets. Only short-term parkers and visitors will be able to park their cars above ground.

A new tunnel for cyclists and pedestrians underneath the tracks will connect Groen Zuid to Gravenhof park and the Polderstad quarter. On one side of this **green axis** a 4 ha neighbourhood park will be laid out with a sports centre and a care cluster. On the other side a residential area will be developed with a varied range of nearly five hundred family homes and flats. Within this scope the municipal authorities strive for a healthy mix of larger family homes and affordable and social houses.

Facilities will be located in **three towers** of up to twelve storeys high: about 100 assisted living apartments, a service centre and a day care centre accommodating 110 children. This way the city wants to attract new, young families to the new quarter and offer a solution to the existing day care shortage in the surroundings. The assisted living apartments provide a solution for elderly citizens and people in need of care who wish to stay in the area. The master plan for Groen Zuid was drawn up by [Crepain Binst Architecture](#). The public domain was designed by [Stramien](#). The property developer is [Cores Development](#).



Urban
block projects

Urban block projects

With urban block projects the city strives for a higher quality of living by establishing a better balance between built and open space. An urban block is formed by a number of adjoining parcels bordered by streets that are situated around one and the same inner area. It is the corner stone of the city in terms of urban development.

In 2004 the city developed a systematic approach to urban block projects. The focus is on the dense urban fabric of the nineteenth-century belt. Smart corrections to the proportion between developed and undeveloped space in building blocks can lead to significant quality gains in the area.

By definition, an urban block project is based on a cross-parcel approach for the construction of buildings or the creation of open space. Within the scope of a public or private initiative, an intensive and phased organisation process is followed in order to come to a supported development plan with all owners within a building block. Design research is used to investigate how added value can be created for the entire building block.

Depending on the desired result, the project is aimed at the buildings, the inner area or the public space in order to increase development in the urban block (density increase), eliminate superfluous buildings to create an alley or more open space (density decrease) or eliminate buildings in the inner area for the creation of a public, private or common outdoor space (pitting).

Every urban block project is tailor-made and requires different considerations regarding density, the preservation or demolition of buildings and the expansion or restriction and the statute of the outdoor space.



VIOLET

The discontinuation of the activities of a lift manufacturer in an urban block between Violetstraat and Lange van Bloerstraat in the Antwerpen-Noord area gave rise to the Violet urban block project. This quarter is faced with a **large shortage of outdoor space**: only one in eight houses has its own garden. The municipal authorities bought the lift factory and had it torn down. The inner area was completely pitted.

One of the objectives was to create (larger) private gardens for the adjacent houses. A total of **11 private gardens** were laid out on the basis of a development plan of the design office [import.export architecture](#). As most residents are home owners, it was relatively easy to divide the land into parcels for new gardens.

At Violetstraat a dilapidated house was replaced by a two-family house with a garden designed by [Puls architects](#). At Lange Van Bloerstraat, [import.export architecture](#) designed the Ter Pitte housing project, a striking building with 6 housing units.

BARREIRO

The city bought vacant port wine business Barreiro in Sailor's Quarter with a view to a thorough restructuring in the short term. The terrain was eventually obtained by [Impact Vastgoed](#) through a **'conditional sale'** with the desired open space and the building envelope as a spatial framework.

Design research resulted in a **small-scale residential project** centred around a semi-public inner garden. Taking into account the ownership structure, the company opted for a phased approach. The first phase concerned the clean-up of the site and the construction of a new 'gateway building' on the undeveloped plot of land near Krauwelengang.



New 'gateway' building. ©
Van Eetveldt + Nijhuis



Munthof: Existing houses gain a new garden
with access. © AG Stadsplanning Antwerpen

Ship remains and flax pits

In 2007 the city archaeologists uncovered the well-preserved remains of a late medieval commercial zone at the Barreiro site. This was done in close collaboration with the property developer. The investigated plot is situated north of the medieval city centre. Back then, it was a swampy area between the city and the rivers Scheldt and Schijn, where textile workers used to work (dyers, weavers, leather workers, ...).

A building was uncovered in the area that had wooden foundations and two floor levels and was made of bricks. In addition, three large barrels were discovered that were made of wicker and wooden planks. The wood of the barrels appeared to have been recycled from a late medieval ship (dating from the early fourteenth or the late fifteenth century). The barrels were probably used for flax working to soak (ret) the fibres, which were subsequently made into linen. Thanks to the excavations the (prominent) presence of this medieval craft in Antwerp could be documented for the very first time.

MUNTHOF

Munthof in the Sint-Andries quarter is an **informal open space** situated between Kloosterstraat and Lange Ridderstraat. The green square is surrounded by blind walls covered with colourful graffiti, which give the place an artistic and informal character. In 2009-2010 the municipal authorities and the local residents drew up a development plan to improve the public space and finish the edges of the building block.

Owners of houses without an outdoor space bordering on Munthof can **acquire a new garden** with access to Munthof within the framework of the development plan. Small new buildings will be attached to the blind walls of the houses on Muntstraat that are adjacent to a vacant plot of land and these buildings will be integrated in the public space as much as possible.

The [Cluster Landscape-Atelier Ruimtelijk Advies](#) team was commissioned to design the public space and the garden fences. In 2011 they provided the design for **three public spaces**, two new corner buildings and a few private gardens. The new garden wall constitutes a façade for the square and is seamlessly connected to the new buildings at Muntstraat. All walls around the square are covered with climbing plants in order to reinforce the green character of Munthof.



A photograph of a multi-story brick building at night. The building features a grid of 15 rectangular windows, three rows of five. The windows are illuminated from within, casting a warm glow. At the ground level, there is a large glass entrance area. In the foreground, a person is walking from left to right, pushing a hand truck loaded with several cardboard boxes. A dark car is parked on the street in front of the building. The overall scene is lit with a warm, orange-yellow light, likely from streetlights or the building's interior lights.

Real estate projects

Real estate projects

The city's property policy aims to remove dilapidated buildings and neglected sites from the streets, increase the quality of the housing supply and breathe new life into neighbourhoods. Within the scope of the implementation of its property policy the city established the *Autonoom Gemeentebedrijf voor Vastgoed en Stadsprojecten* (AG VESPA; 'Autonomous Municipal Company for Real Estate and City Projects in Antwerp') in 2003. Through AG VESPA, the city buys vacant and neglected buildings in order to renovate them or replace them with new buildings. Those buildings are then sold on the private market. The proceeds of these sales will then be put into a rolling fund that can be used to purchase additional vacant and neglected buildings. With this rolling fund, the city's fight against vacancy and dilapidation acquires a sustainable character.

The property policy is co-financed by the Flemish and the federal government. It focuses on parts of the city where the private sector invests too little in property. Good housing and a pleasant living environment should attract new residents and boost private initiatives. The main target group is young families with children.

AG VESPA is mainly active on smaller plots of land and corner lots in the nineteenth-century belt. These lots are often difficult to develop because of their orientation, specific shape or small surface area. The scale of the projects varies. Individual houses can give a small-scale acupuncture effect. However, where advisable and possible, adjacent buildings are purchased together in order to take on a larger entity in one swift move.

Even with these complex preconditions, maximum efforts are made to improve the quality of living. The houses should be functional, flexible and energy efficient and have plenty of light. Residents should experience a pleasant sense of space in the houses. Despite the limited amount of space, the city furthermore strives to integrate a high-quality outdoor space into each design. Because the surface area suitable for building is often limited, architects have to look for a high degree of optimisation of the available square metres. Thanks to the frequent use of split levels, the loss of circulation space is restricted to a minimum and living spaces on different storeys are brought into contact with one another. Architects often come up with unexpected solutions. Innovative roof terraces or patios provide outdoor space and living spaces are located above the bedrooms.

In addition, the allure and architectural quality of the houses should ensure that they constitute an added value for their environment. Visible and recognisable interventions function as a catalyst for the neighbourhood. With a view to creating pleasant and dynamic streets, the ground floors of the houses are always in contact with the street. Architects look for suitable solutions to combine these 'active frontages' with sufficient privacy for the residents.

Reconciling architectural quality and living comfort on the city's most difficult to develop lots is a real challenge. For this purpose, the city works together with young and promising architects. Several projects have been rewarded with an architecture award.



CORRECTION TO THE STREET WALL

Handelsstraat is an exotic shopping street in the Antwerpen-Noord area. House numbers 77-79 used to be an undeveloped plot of land with a surface area of 250 sq m that was part of the premises of a local police office. Architecture office [Mys & Bomans](#) designed two attached houses, of which one has its living space adjacent to a large city garden and the other has a roof terrace and a terrace by the kitchen. The building is rationally built around a central double stairwell. The rooms can be furnished in a flexible manner. A bicycle shed has also been provided for. The sober and contemporary façade gives a finishing touch to the street wall.

UP-AND-COMING NEIGHBOURHOOD

Viséstraat is situated near Park Spoor Noord. This convenient location is a great asset that can help it develop into a pleasant residential street. The house with number 30 was a dilapidated building that had to be torn down. The design by [360 Architects](#) is based on the spot's positive features. The house has a relatively open ground floor which is connected to the broad street and the park in the front and to a city garden in the back. An open passageway connects the two outdoor spaces. The living spaces are located on the ground floor and on the first floor; the bedrooms and the bathroom are on the second floor and on the roof level. A spacious roof terrace provides a beautiful view of the park.

Viséstraat 30 © Van Eetveldt + Nijhuis



SHARP CORNER LOT

The sharp corner between **Pothoekstraat and Potgieterstraat** in the Antwerpen-Noord area remained vacant for many years. There were advertising boards near house numbers 2 to 4. Due to its location and specific shape it is a conspicuous but also a difficult place to build a house. [Cuypers & Q architects](#) designed a house with the stairwell located in the 'armpit' and with two 'legs' that allow for optimal use of the space. With its limited size and uniform window openings, the house fits into the city scene, yet it stands out thanks to its finish and dark bricks. The house comes with a parking space, has a versatile ground floor at the busy Pothoekstraat, room for four bedrooms on the first floor and living spaces on the second one. A terrace room on the third floor provides access to the spacious roof terrace.

Pothoekstraat-Potgieterstraat
© Van Eetveldt + Nijhuis

EXTRA LIVING SPACE

At **Familiestraat** in the Antwerpen-Noord area a corner building lost its commercial function. House number 84 languished for many years underneath the tower of Sint-Eligius church. [Puls architects](#) converted this neglected house with its mansard roof into something special. The architects created an additional residential unit on top of the existing house without any loss of quality. The upper dwelling has a spacious roof terrace while the lower dwelling has a practical, versatile space on the ground floor.



Familiestraat 84
© Van Eetveldt + Nijhuis



Statiestraat 71 © Stany Dederen

IMPULSES FOR LOCAL BUSINESS

Statiestraat in Berchem district used to be a popular supra-local shopping street. Even though Statiestraat is still the most important shopping street in the Oud-Berchem quarter today, businesses lost a lot of their appeal in the 1980s and 1990s. Architects [Ronny De Meyer](#) and [Frank Van Hulle](#) made a design for a vacant building with house number 71. After its demolition three high-quality duplex flats with a large terrace were built here. The division into different residential units is made visible through the taut lines of the floor plates and parapets. On the ground floor there is room for a commercial establishment. The façade stands out because of the alternating use of clear glass and translucent profiled glass.

ROOM FOR FAMILIES

At **Eendrachtstraat** in the Antwerpen-Noord area two small adjacent houses (numbers 8 and 10) had been languishing for a considerable time. Both houses were made into one large single-family home with a garden. The design by [Teema architects](#) plays with recesses and protuberances and combines vintage and contemporary elements. The old tile floors, the existing wooden floor, the inner doors with their frames and the stairs were preserved. The broad façade and rear elevation were whitewashed. This produces a nice effect combined with the wooden window frames.



Eendrachtstraat 8-10 © Van Eetveldt + Nijhuis

SPLIT LEVEL AND SUNLIGHT

28 Mellaertstraat, on the corner with Bakkerstraat in Oud-Borgerhout, had been a vacant corner lot for many years. [Met zicht op zee architects](#) were commissioned to design a house with lots of daylight in the living spaces and sunlight shining on the outdoor space for the completely enclosed corner lot. This was achieved thanks to the central location of the staircase, the indentations in the volume and the well-considered positions of the window openings. On the ground floor there is a garage and a versatile space. The central staircase successively leads to the bedrooms, the kitchen, the dining room, the roof terrace and finally the living room on the third floor.



Mellaertstraat 28 © Van Eetveldt + Nijhuis



Building Code

Building Code

Every construction or renovation project requiring planning permission has to comply with the criteria of the municipal Building Code. For this reason this urban development ordinance may constitute a strong tool to steer high-quality and sustainable building down to the level of small-scale private initiatives. With the update of the previous Building Code (dating from 1989) the city wanted to exploit this potential to the full. Antwerp's current Building Code came into force in the spring of 2011 and is based on the core values of liveability, sustainability, image quality and safety.

ROOM FOR FAMILIES

Antwerp faces an oversupply of flats. As many young middle-class families often look for an affordable house with a garden outside the city, the Building Code contains measures to **protect family houses**. Among other things, this concerns regulations with regard to the preservation and restoration of sufficient living and outdoor space in large single-family homes in case of division, combination or change in designation of that kind of home.

The municipal authorities also strive for more **private outdoor space** through the obligation to leave twenty percent of the lot open and undeveloped when building, changing the designation of or expanding a house. This obligation even applies if this twenty percent was developed before the works and if the expansion entails the addition of an extra floor.

MORE GREEN IN THE CITY

The Building Code states it is obligatory to install a **green roof** on flat roofs when building or renovating a house. This should at least be an extensive green roof, but people who install an intensive green roof can receive a subsidy from the city. If it is impossible or undesirable to install a green roof, the alternative is a rainwater collection well, but only if it is actually used.

Gardens should be open green spaces according to the Building Code. Constructions such as garden sheds should not hinder the use of the garden. Paving in gardens and front gardens is limited to the path necessary to reach the door or garage. Paved terraces of more than 50 sq m should be water permeable. The rest of the garden has to be planted.

Trees and streams should be preserved as much as possible; they should also be protected and, if necessary, compensated. It is also obligatory to provide for (preferably indoor) bicycle sheds, and cars must not be parked in the front or back garden.

FUNCTIONS, LIVING QUALITY AND FLEXIBILITY

The scale and function of a building should be adjusted to the environment's **capacity**. A building should contribute to the desired function mix and should not have a negative impact on mobility and parking pressure in the neighbourhood.

In the city it is important to be able to **live above shops** comfortably. This is why buildings that combine housing with another function should provide separate access to the living areas and a fixed staircase leading to the different floors.

With a view to more **flexibility in case of a function change** (housing, hospitality business, commercial establishment...) and with an eye to increasing the quality of the living areas in general, living areas should have a clear height of at least 2.60 metres.



DYNAMIC STREET SCENE

The Building Code strives for **dynamic streets** and a stronger social sense of safety. This is why blind façades are prohibited. Façades must be transparent for at least 2 sq m so that it is possible to look into a space with a residential function or, if this is not possible, a bicycle storage space. A garage is only allowed if the façade is at least eight metres wide. Shops need to have a display window on the street side, and the roller blinds of commercial establishments have to be transparent.

IMAGE QUALITY

The municipal authorities place **spatial quality** centre stage at all levels of urban development. Consequently, image quality plays an important role in the Building Code. The Building Code states that buildings should be in harmony with their surroundings, both in terms of capacity and image quality and from a cultural and historical perspective. Dull uniformity is not an objective here. Harmony with the surroundings can also be obtained through emphases, contrasting elements or interpretation of the surroundings.

There is no simple method to measure whether or not a building fits into its spatial context. The contextual reference image is not fixed either: it may be the street, the building block, the quarter, or, in the case of high-rise buildings, even the entire city. Image quality always depends on a **qualitative assessment** of the physical environment or the programme, but also on views and interpretations that are put forward within the scope of the design.

This means that the evaluation of image quality always implies a concrete assessment. The city therefore established an efficient planning permission procedure aimed at dialogue.



New architecture at Cogels Osylei, Zurenborg Quarter, conservation area since 1980.

Dynamic planning permission procedure

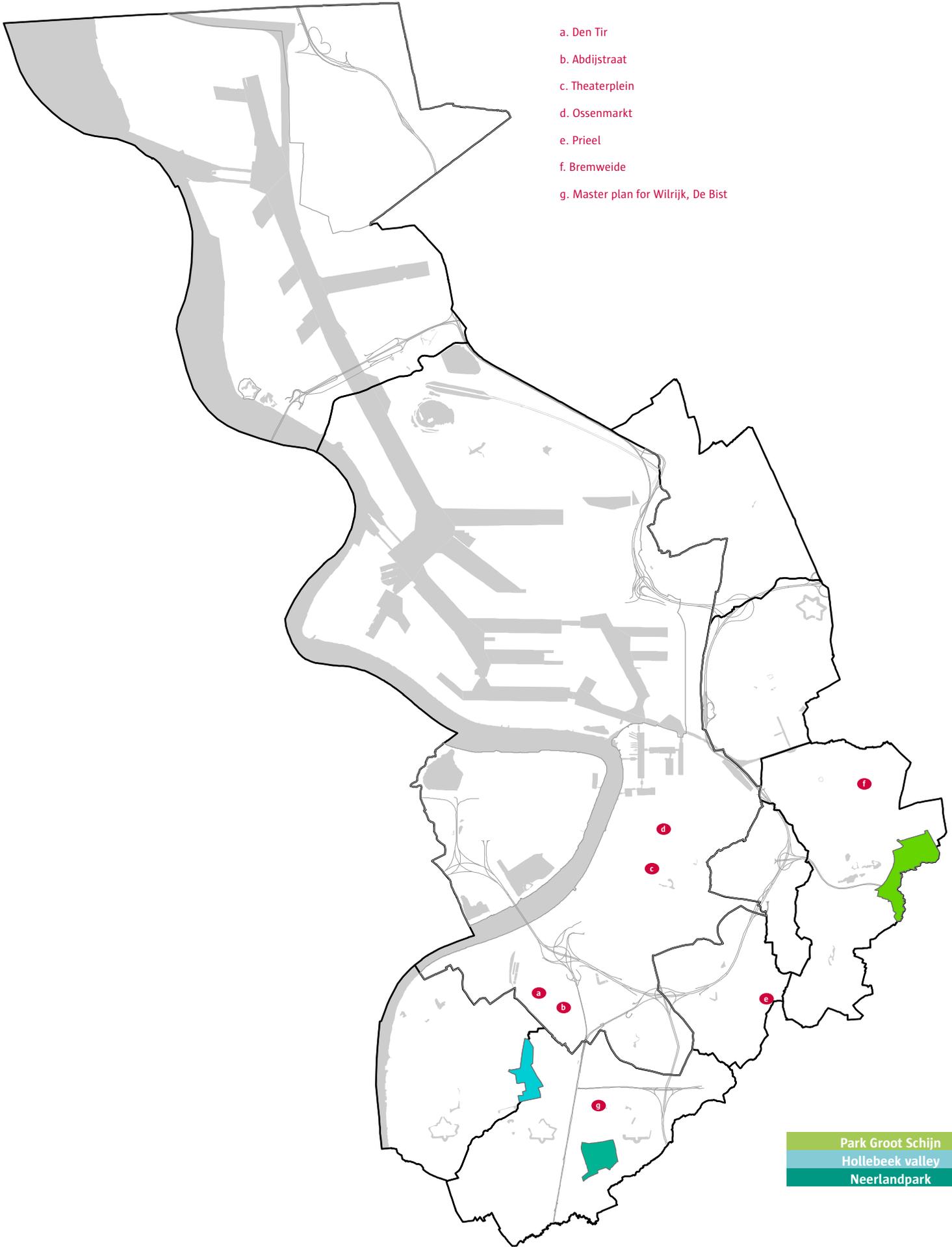
People with renovation or building plans can address the city services for free preliminary advice. A building application can be discussed in advance with an architect of the planning permission office. This makes procedures considerably more transparent and smoother. Bottlenecks can be detected even before the application is submitted, and qualitative solutions can be sought in mutual consultation.

The scale of a project, the extent to which it is in contrast with its surroundings or its location in a place with good visibility or in a cultural and historical heritage area may make it necessary to seek the advice of the Welstand Committee or the Stadsbouwmeester ('Chief City Architect'). In certain situations monument advice is also part of the procedure. This is for example the case for projects in zones with cultural, historical or aesthetic value (CHE zones), for buildings listed in the Architectural inventory of cultural heritage, listed monuments, city and townscapes and landscapes, or for buildings that obstruct the view of such things. Thanks to the preliminary advice, property developers are informed in an early stage whether or not an archaeological investigation will take place.

The city invests in the digitisation of the application procedure for planning permissions. This way, everyone can follow the progress of their application online. In 2010, an average of 9,500 people visited the website www.antwerpen.be/bouwaanvraag each month. In 2010 Antwerp furthermore managed to deal with all applications for planning permissions within the period specified by law. The city's quality-oriented procedure and digital efforts went hand in hand with a significant rise in the number of building applications.



Old and new at the monumental Leopold de Waelplaats (Leopold de Wael Square).



- a. Den Tir
- b. Abdijstraat
- c. Theaterplein
- d. Ossenmarkt
- e. Prieel
- f. Bremweide
- g. Master plan for Wilrijk, De Bist

Park Groot Schijn
 Hollebeek valley
 Neerlandpark



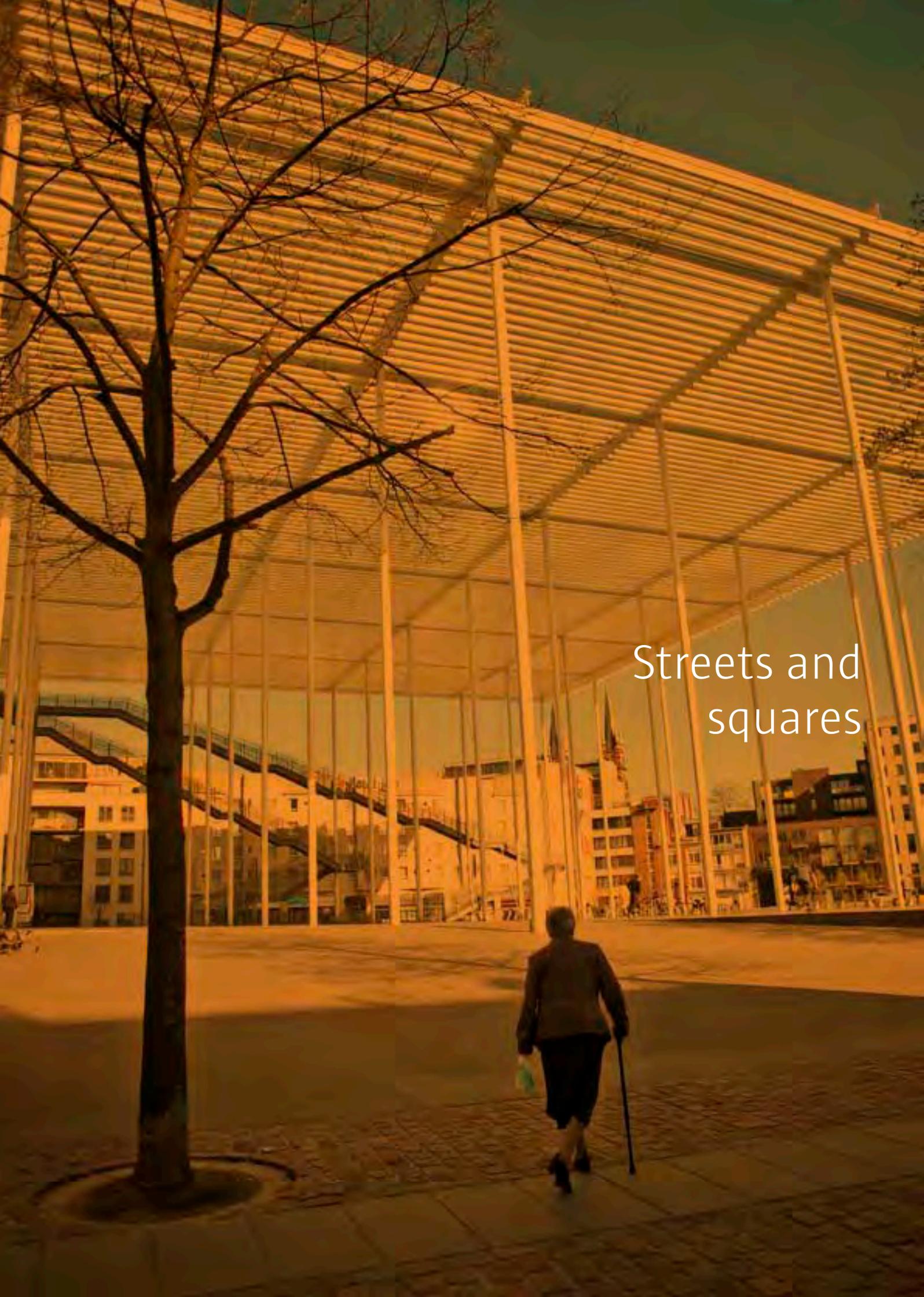
5. Public space

The quality of public space takes centre stage in the s-RSA and in Antwerp's urban development policy. The design of public space is an important part of each city project: from the area-oriented, integrated programmes and master plans, over housing developments and building (block) projects to the concrete lay-out of streets, squares and parks. After all, architecture and public space mutually influence one another and determine to a great extent how people experience the city.

With a view to high-quality public space, the municipal authorities have established a specific 'public domain procedure', a 'street furniture inventory' and a design scenario book. The city does not strive for bland uniformity but wants to guarantee a recognisable and sober basic quality everywhere in the city. This is necessary because of the large number of projects, the different planning contexts and strong variation of public space projects. In addition, this approach allows to already take into account crucial aspects of public space in the vision and design stage. These crucial aspects include mobility, green, use, maintenance, road safety and the smooth flow of public transport. Since 2010 the municipal authorities also have a Tree Plan. The objective is to plant the right tree at the right spot. Image quality and the tree's possibilities to grow are taken into account here.

The city has almost two hundred play areas and skate ramps. As the city also wants to create play opportunities in 'regular' public places, the youth service is involved in every project in the public space. Play elements or small playgrounds are integrated into the design where necessary or where they may provide added value.

In the coming years the Light Plan and the Green Plan will be important tools for the design of public space. The Light Plan is to optimise the nocturnal experience of the streets and squares and to make green zones and ponds stand out better. Based on the images and the strategic spaces of the s-RSA, appropriate lighting will be provided for any place in the city based on a coherent vision and a manageable system. The Green Plan is based on the Eco City image and the strategic space called Soft Spine and formulates guidelines on the coherence, quality, utility value, design and management of the green zones in the city and the harbour area.



Streets and
squares

Streets and squares

DEN TIR AND ABDIJSTRAAT

Abdijstraat has been **an important shopping** street since the beginning of the twentieth century. The street is the main economic artery and the centre of the Kiel area. In the 1980s, however, some parts of the area started to deteriorate, resulting in vacancy and neglect. The neighbourhood and the city looked for ways to stop this downward spiral. In 2003, the city commissioned [B-architecten](#) and [Stramien](#) to develop a complete design for the redevelopment of Abdijstraat and the renovation of Den Tir, a prominent building that used to serve as a target range for the militia.

To restore the **economic and central function** of Abdijstraat, a small shopping centre was developed behind Den Tir's old façade. In addition, new houses were built and a small neighbourhood square was laid out. Sint-Bernardsesteenweg, an access road situated between Den Tir and Abdijstraat, was converted into a local green boulevard with a free tram and bus lane according to a design by [TV SAM](#).

The municipal authorities organised a competition for the redevelopment of Abdijstraat and the development of the public space in front of Den Tir. The selected design for Abdijstraat suggested a **simple street profile** using a single material. This profile provides 'flexible zones' between the sidewalk and the roadway which were given various designations such as parking strips, terrace areas or relaxing areas with benches.

The same materials were used for the development of the bus and tram stop near Den Tir. This brings the building and the public space **closer together**. The regular tree rhythm of Sint-Bernardsesteenweg was purposefully interrupted here by planting a few trees in certain spots. Finally, [Ney & Partners](#) and [B-architecten](#) developed a ninety metres long intricate open canopy roof construction which gives the public space a three-dimensional appearance.

Canopy roof construction and Den Tir shopping centre.



Theaterplein (left)

THEATERPLEIN (THEATRE SQUARE)

Theaterplein looked a bit abandoned and neglected prior to 2008. Except for Vogelenmarkt, the weekly market, the square attracted few people to go for a stroll, to play or to take a breather. After sifting through the many entries for an international design contest, the municipal authorities opted for the design by [Bernardo Secchi](#) and [Paola Viganò](#). The Italian designers see the original Theaterplein as a spazio smisurato: a measureless, empty, somewhat intimidating space.

The force of the winning design is in **clear proportions** and clear and simply functioning shapes. The newly laid out square consists in a gently sloping surface that, when crossed diagonally, provides a direct connection between the Leien and Meir. The square's green structure was based on the existing situation. A city garden was laid out on the square with more complex vegetation: the plants in the beds give the city garden a different colour every season.

Opinions on the appeal of the **Stadsschouwburg** ('city theatre') differ. The design team was of the opinion that it was not so much the building's appearance as its size and scale that caused the problem. Now, an enormous glass canopy roof links up with the theatre building's lower roof and connects it with the renovated public space.

The 23m high **canopy roof** has a steel structure that weighs about 900 tons. The supporting pillars of the underground parking garage had to be reinforced to be able to support the weight of the canopy roof. The glass roof of sixty by sixty metres is supported by 42 pillars with a diameter of 35 cm. Up against the canopy roof the theatre building's new emergency stairs give a strong finishing touch to the square's sidewalls. The rainwater that falls on the canopy roof is collected in an underground infiltration basin.



OSSENMARKT (OXES MARKET)

Ossenmarkt is situated in the university quarter in the city centre. The local circulation plan proposes to 'cut' through traffic on Ossenmarkt. To this end, the square was redeveloped and rolled out from **wall to wall**. Traffic is only allowed along the outer sides. The square has a loading and unloading area.

Ossenmarkt is paved with a **carpet** of bluestone cobbles. Long strips, also in bluestone, connect the façades and the surface of the square and make up the framework for the location of the street furniture. The difference in height between the square and the roadway along the outer sides is reinforced by a carpet of large concrete balls, reminding cyclists that they should reduce their speed on the square.

The **tree structure** was thinned out so that the remaining trees would have enough room to grow. This resulted in an open square with plenty of light, a valuable selection of trees and a good balance between the outdoor cafés of the student pubs and the open space.



Ossenmarkt was rolled out from wall to wall.

PRIEEL PLAY AREA

In the Berchem district the Prieel play area was redeveloped and expanded using **recycled materials**, which reinforced both the durability and the play value of the site. For example, felled tree trunks from the adjacent track side are now used for a climbing structure over the sandpit. Kerbstones were used to build stairs on the existing hills. Molehills were created with recuperated cobblestones and a large slide was replaced with three smaller recycled slides.

BREMWEIDE PLAY LANDSCAPE

Next to landscape park De Bremweide in Deurne district there was an undeveloped plot with a leaky pond, a sand path and a few plants along the edges. The municipal authorities decided to convert this plot into a play landscape. The old pond was transformed into an **adventurous play area**. Children climb and swing over the water and the mud to a central island tower. Natural materials like robinia wood and giant pebbles were used.



Bremweide: a leaking pond made way for an adventurous play area.



Prieel: adventurous play elements in sustainable materials.

MASTERPLAN FOR WILRIJK

The Master Plan for Wilrijk combines the construction of a modern community centre with the redevelopment of the large central square (De Bist) and the surrounding streets. The functions around the opened up square transformed De Bist into a true **hub of activities**.

An open passage constitutes a **pedestrian connection** between the district hall and the shopping centre and is a place where events can be organised. At the centre of the square there is a green play area and a basketball field. The square was developed lower than the surrounding area, with an edge people can sit on along a passage for pedestrians. Parking space is provided for at the tip of the square, in a green setting of old planetrees and new trees. A canopy roof provides shelter for waiting bus passengers and constitutes the transition between high-rise and low-rise development. An elevated space with benches was developed beneath a 'green roof' of planetrees.

The square leads to the **community centre**, which houses the district hall, the library, the police office and two art academies. The buildings were designed by architecture office [Vanhecke & Suls](#) from Wilrijk and [Baumschlager Eberle](#). The centre is built according to the principles of sustainable building with compact building volumes, joint use of space, solid materials, green roofs and well-thought-out techniques for low maintenance costs and energy consumption.



New academy and library



Green projects

SYNTHESIS PLAN FOR PARK GROOT SCHIJN

-  valley & green seams
-  new sport complex
-  new club buildings
-  existing club buildings
-  parking space
-  garden allotments

- 1. cemetery
- 2. football
- 3. dog clubs
- 4. netball fields
- 5. scouts and various clubs
- 6. existing athletics track
- 7. tribune with annexe buildings
- 8. play forest
- 9. caravan site
- 10. new (eco) tunnel for cyclists
- 11. skate park

Green projects

In implementation of the green and blue network specified in the s-RSA, the municipal authorities are making efforts to optimise quality, accessibility and utility value and to extend green areas. Where possible, water management takes centre stage. The ecological value of water elements present is increased and in valleys room is made for Antwerp's rivers and brooks. The city wanted to implement a green project in every district between 2007 and 2012, paying extra attention to reconciliation of nature, sports and recreation.

PARK GROOT SCHIJN

Park Groot Schijn (83 hectares) in Deurne, currently a patchwork of sport clubs, allotment gardens, associations and forgotten bits of nature, is transformed into a coherent and dynamic park. The park accommodates sport and dog clubs, a trailer park, shooting clubs, youth clubs, a skating rink, a ski run, a diving club and more. The objective is to develop a landscape park in which the ecological value of Schijnvallei and Koude Beekvallei (Koude Beek valley) is reinforced and residents can find space for recreation.

The design team for the Park Groot Schijn Master Plan consisted of [Maxwan Architects, 1010](#), [Karres and Brands landscape architects](#) and [Goudappel Coffeng](#). Together they integrated the results of the participation process in a **three-tier** plan: 'valleys', 'green seams' and 'programme rooms'. The valleys will be the heart of the park. They will be made rougher to increase their ecological and educational value. The green seams constitute the core concept of the master plan. They connect the valleys with the programme rooms. The green seams will have grass, trees, paths and typical park qualities. They penetrate the edges and tempt people to visit the park. The programme rooms provide space for the park's different users. The rooms are delimited by means of grass height, shrubs and fencing. Those boundaries fit into the design of the landscape but allow for a specific design according to the needs of the users.

In addition to the complete redevelopment of the park, a sport complex and a number of new club houses will be built for clubs and associations. An 'eco tunnel' will also be established to connect the northern and southern parts of the park passing under the E313. An **image quality** plan establishes the design and layout principles for both the park and for the architecture of and the choice of materials for the club houses.

The first stage includes the layout of 171 allotment gardens in combination with further nature development in the Koude Beekvallei.



A unique participation process

At the basis of the Park Groot Schijn project was a spatial conflict that dragged on for years, whereby dissatisfied resident and action committees initially did not get much response from the municipal authorities. In the 1990s the city drew up a special planning scheme in collaboration with the province (BPA, the predecessor to the spatial implementation plan). This BPA contained legal regulations with regard to provincial domain Rivierenhof and the municipal plots of land at Rugeveld. After protests from users, the city decided to draw up a separate spatial implementation plan (RUP) for Rugeveld and to extend it to Boterlaar and Silsburg in 2006. In the new plans the city took into account the protests that had been made before, but the residents made clear that they wanted to be actively involved in the project.

This time, residents and users submitted a joint notice of objection against the RUP. Together, the Rugeveld Site committee and Antwerpen aan 't Woord ('Antwerp speaking') established the Rugeveld-Boterlaar-Silsburg study group. The city, this time confronted with a well-organised conversation partner, signed a participation charter in June 2009 at the request of users of the area.

A pivotal moment in the participation process was the introduction of the idea of multiple use of space. Youth clubs were willing to share their play areas while sports clubs would make joint use of their fields and manage them together. The people who worked the allotment gardens agreed to open their gardens to the public at certain times. A year and a half after the start of the process a widely supported master plan was approved for Park Groot Schijn. In May 2011 the master plan was presented to the general public. The cherry on the cake was a contest held to find a suitable name for the park. The name was announced in September 2011 during a study day on the project's innovative approach: 'Park Groot Schijn'.





Vision map Hollebeek valley © Grontmij

HOLLEBEEKVALLEI (HOLLEBEEK VALLEY)

The Hollebeek is one of the six most important brooks in the territory of the city of Antwerp. The city asked design office [Grontmij](#) to draw up a plan for the upgrade of the Hollebeek valley. A number of plots of land in the Hollebeekvallei are property of the city, others are still private property. This made it impossible to implement the entire plan in a single stage. Since the start of the project in 2010, AG VESPA has already been able to acquire a number of plots.

Owners are encouraged to sell their part of the bank. This way the green zones along the brook can systematically develop. The **'vision map'** is a touchstone for every spatial initiative and for the planning permission policy in this urbanised brook valley. The map shows the vision and ambition for the entire Hollebeekvallei as a green finger and coherent wet transition area with plenty of nature and with a clear statute and management.

In the **short term** the first foundation will be laid for the upgrade of the brook valley. These first works have been incorporated in an 'implementation map' and include cleaning up the banks and turning them into gentle slopes, together with forest management near the allotment gardens, in 't Motteke forest and in the green zone situated behind Hollebeekstraat.

This is followed by the development of a **footpath and new plantations**. The footpath and new wooden bridges will make the Hollebeekvallei more accessible and easier to walk in. Extra pools and new banks ensure the brook's capacity to hold more water. New plantations and good management will increase biodiversity and improve the natural experience of the entire brook.



Simulation Hollebeekvallei © Grontmij

NEERLANDPARK

Neerlandpark is part of a green zone in Wilrijk. The area is partly designated as a residential zone, partly as a nature reserve, and for the most part as a green recreational zone. In the latter a park with a surface area of 23 hectares will be laid out in which water buffering, nature development, nature education and playing take centre stage. The city opted for a varied and low-maintenance park layout. Designers [Fris in het Landschap](#), [Grontmij](#) and the non-profit organisation Kind & Samenleving vzw created the design for the park zone.

In the park zone there will be several **green elements to stimulate children to play**. To this end a survey was conducted in two neighbourhood schools and at local youth club Chiro Jowen in 2010. The combination of natural play elements was the most popular concept. The central zone of the park will be converted into a 'natural play landscape' with relief, groups of trees, ditches to play in with pebbles or a sand at the bottom, wild flowers, tree trunks and space where children and youngsters can build camps, dig holes and create huts out of willow branches.

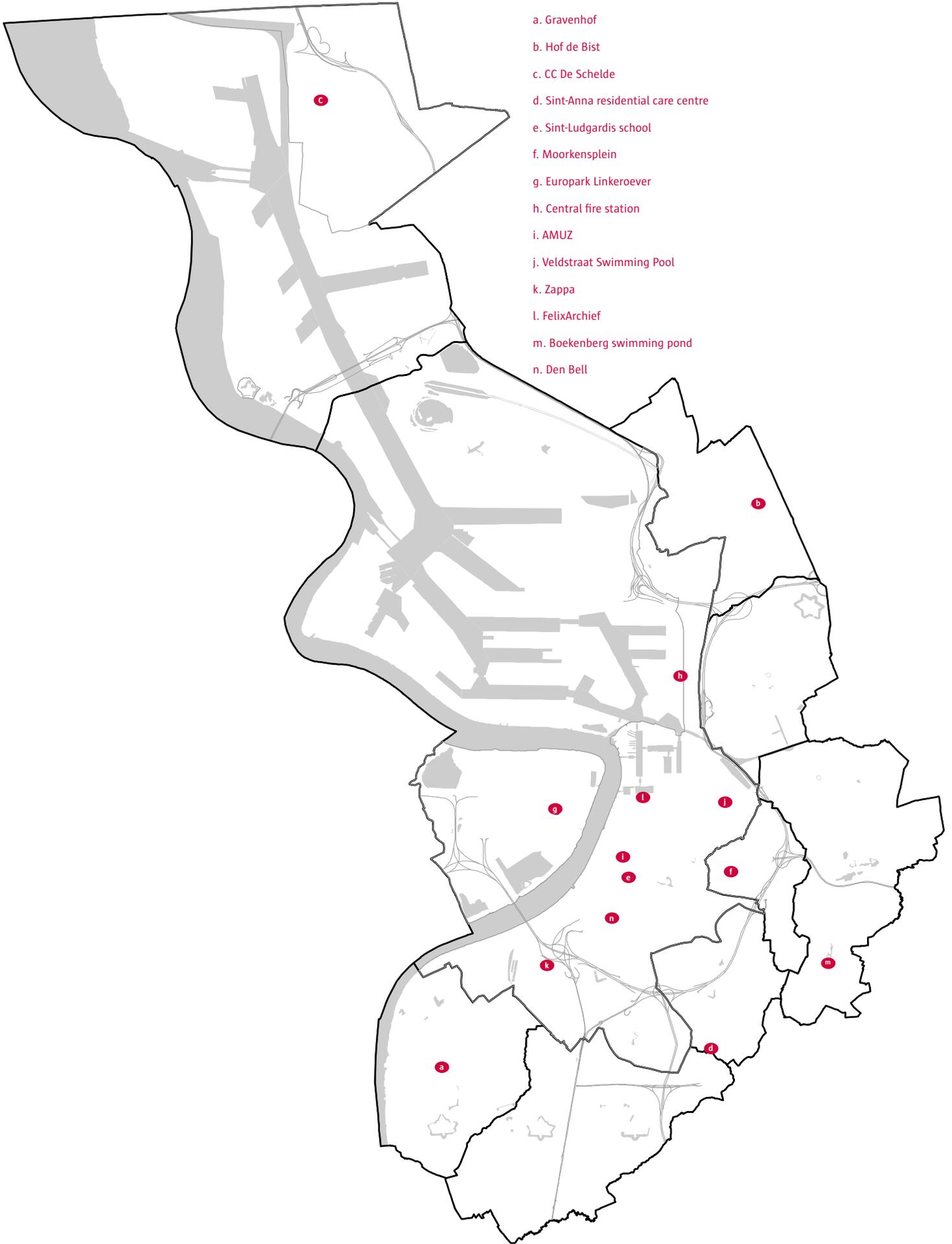
In Neerlandpark the ecological and educational function of the existing **water elements** will be reinforced. Children will be able to play all around the water elements. The anti-tank ditch and bomb pit will become characteristic features and where possible they will also be used for water management.

The existing footpaths and cycle tracks are developed into a **park promenade** with picnic spots. A path network leads visitors along the nature reserve, through the park and to the different play areas. Cyclists are allowed to ride on some paths, others are reserved for walkers.

At the edge of the developed area a **tree orchard** with local fruit trees will constitute the natural transition between the developed area and the park. The park is also the starting point of three ridgelines that lead to the zone for ecologically valuable nature. In addition there is a nature reserve that is managed by the non-profit organisation Natuurpunt vzw.



Picnicking in nature in Neerlandpark. © Grontmij



- a. Gravenhof
- b. Hof de Bist
- c. CC De Schelde
- d. Sint-Anna residential care centre
- e. Sint-Ludgardis school
- f. Moorkensplein
- g. Europark Linkeroever
- h. Central fire station
- i. AMUZ
- j. Veldstraat Swimming Pool
- k. Zappa
- l. FelixArchief
- m. Boekenberg swimming pond
- n. Den Bell



6. Public facilities

The city want to offer its current and future residents sufficient and high-quality public amenities. All services with regard to sport, culture, recreation, education, care, police and the fire brigade should be accessible to everyone. So the infrastructure should be accessible in a sustainable and comfortable way. Central amenities have a positive impact on mobility in the city.

Public amenities also play a crucial role in the reinforcement of Antwerp as a city to live in. A well-thought-out integration of community facilities is vital when striving for pleasant neighbourhood and district centres and an attractive metropolis. That is why public amenities are planned both at a city level and at a city area level. With its public patrimony management, the city works on optimal service provision. With the application of sustainable building techniques and the selection of impressive architecture the city sets a good example.



Planning and
spreading facilities

Planning and spreading facilities

The city works with master plans for planning facilities in the long and medium term. Such master plans can be thematic and dedicated to only one type of facility for the entire city or can be aimed at a balanced supply of different types of facilities in one specific city area. Spatial analyses are at the basis of the master plans.

The implementation of these plans requires expertise in the area of real estate, urban development, architecture, building techniques, etc. The initiators of those thematic master plans are not necessarily urban development services. That role is often filled by services from other policy areas which are responsible for a specific service provision or amenity. An important development is the establishment within those services of their own divisions or daughter companies for real estate or development. That way they can coordinate the distribution and planning of their facilities themselves in consultation with all partners involved.



*Cultural Centre Restyling Masterplan:
synthesis map © Poponcini & Lootens
ir. Architects bvba*



Hoboken Cultural Centre: view from the park © Poponcini & Lootens ir. Architects bvba

CULTURAL CENTRE RESTYLING MASTER PLAN

The Cultural Centre Restyling Master Plan was drawn up in 2007 by the [Poponcini & Lootens](#) office. The plan is to remove **infrastructural shortcomings** in some districts and modernise the existing, often antiquated cultural centres. The main focus is on the wish of Antwerp's cultural centres to work together more often and in a more integrated manner and to have a common identity. The Master Plan contains fourteen project locations. Three priority projects were initiated in Hoboken, Ekeren and Berendrecht-Zandvliet-Lillo.

There was **no basic infrastructure** in Hoboken. Here the master plan catered to the request to give the Gravenhof castle a function and to protect its small park. The cultural centre of Hoboken will be housed in the renovated park castle, which will be expanded with a foyer and a versatile theatres hall. Ekeren did not have a cultural centre either. So the necessary infrastructure will be provided in Ekeren as well with the renovation of park castle Hof De Bist. In Berendrecht-Zandvliet-Lillo a thorough renovation and expansion is being planned for the existing cultural centre De Schelde.

STRATEGIC CARE PLAN

In 2009 Zorgbedrijf Antwerpen drew up a strategic plan to deal with the ageing of Antwerp's population in an integrated manner. The aim is to make every quarter **suitable for every age group** (so that it would in principle be possible for someone to spend their entire life over there) and to better align the care centres and life in the neighbourhood.

The Strategic Care Plan sheds light on certain lacunae by dividing the city into **residential care zones** and analysing the existing situation. Zorgbedrijf involves the city, all policy areas and private partners in its search for solutions for shortcomings. An array of tools is used for this purpose: housing adjustments, multi-generation housing, assisted living apartments, crisis, day and night care, rest and nursing homes, care by relatives, service centres ... The proximity of shops, post offices and banks is also taken into account.

In 2009, five design contests were organised for strategic care master plans. It concerns plans in **different quarters and districts**: Borgerhout extra-muros (Gitschotelhof, [Huiswerk architecten](#)); Merksem Heide-Tuinwijk (Melgeshof, [BRUT](#)); Oud-Merksem (Sint-Bartholomeus, [Cuypers & Q Architecten](#)); Berendrecht-Zandvliet-Lillo (Monnikenhof, [Claus en Kaan Architecten](#)); and Berchem Nieuw Kwartier (Sint-Anna, [Hub](#)).



A new residential care centre with optimal preservation of the site's green character © Hub architects

NIEUW KWARTIER MASTER PLAN

In the Berchem quarter called Nieuw Kwartier ('new quarter') there were already several facilities for the elderly, including rest and nursing home **Sint-Anna** (accommodates 408 people), Residentie Edelweiss (accommodates 54) and residential care centre De Veldekens (since 2008; accommodates 106). The quarter did not have a service centre, there were no day care facilities and there was a shortage of assisted living apartments.

The existing residential care centre is transformed into a **new residential care complex** with a residential care centre for 180 people, three care apartments, a day care centre, 110 assisted living apartments and a new service centre. It was important to the residents of the quarter to preserve as much green and public space as possible. The master plan takes this into account by means of passages and open space between the buildings. A play area for children and a new day nursery may be established near the Leopold III school. Sufficient parking space will be available for residents and staff. Completion is planned for 2019.

Heritage value at two levels

The department for the preservation of monuments investigated the cultural and historical elements and values of the **Sint-Anna** project area. After all, the rest home had been included in the architectural heritage inventory.

Rest and care home Sint Anna was built in 1922-25. It has been renovated several times. It is an example of an early twentieth-century almshouse in a neo-traditional brick and sandstone style. The building has heritage value on two different levels. On the one hand, the architectural quality contributes to the site's valuable character; on the other, the building has a cultural and historical value.

For this reason it was important to play up and reinforce the site's historical and architectural values during its redesignation. An architectural-historical study was carried out in order to make the abovementioned historical context clearly recognisable in the new design. The valuable heritage qualities presented in this study were communicated to the designers so that they would be able to integrate them into the plans in a balanced manner.



MASTER PLAN FOR CITY SCHOOLS

With the Master plan for City Schools the city and AG Stedelijk Onderwijs (‘autonomous company for municipal education’) want to cope with a few major social challenges. The plan describes how Stedelijk Onderwijs can provide the required **extra capacity** and how antiquated infrastructure can be adapted to changed educational methods between now and 2025. The main focus is on reducing the ecological footprint of the school buildings and their users.

The core values of the Education Master Plan are **innovation, sustainability, capacity and broad education**. The master plan describes no less than 240 projects at 110 different locations, requiring an investment cost of at least half a billion euro. Since 2010, a total of 80 projects have been initiated. In all those projects, the focus is on new technologies, green investments, joint use in the neighbourhood, spatial quality and flexibility. The Passive House standard is now the guiding principle for new school buildings, and thematic campuses are established for competence-oriented education where possible.

SINT-LUDGARDIS

Private education institutions also invest in the renovation of their patrimony. In 2009 the Sint-Lutgardis school and the city of Antwerp held a design contest for the expansion and adaptation of the school. The city and the school had decided to go for a ‘broad’ school, and so for **shared public use**. The main requirements were a larger capacity for the school and a sport hall for the neighbourhood. The sports hall would be co-financed by the city.

[Stéphane Beel Architecten](#) drew up a plan in which **efficient use of space** takes centre stage. The school is situated in a densely developed area with historical heritage value. The small building plot and the limited maximum building height made it a complex design.

Both new classrooms and an **underground sport hall** could be built thanks to optimal use of space. Other underground facilities included a new storage space for the school and dressing rooms, sanitary facilities and a cafeteria for the sport hall. Aboveground facilities consisted of classrooms, a playground and a cafeteria for the pupils. The underground sports hall’s interior is visible from the street, as is the site’s green inner area. This way interaction is created between the neighbourhood and the school.





Moorkensplein © TV Buro Lubbers Bovenbouw Architects and Korteknie Stuhlmacher Architects

MASTER PLAN FOR PUBLIC FUNCTIONS IN BORGERHOUT

With the Master Plan for Public Functions in Borgerhout the city wants to take on the current and future **shortages of facilities** in Borgerhout. Borgerhout is one of the most densely populated districts in the city (and the country) with a large shortage of green spaces. Based on a thorough analysis of plots of land, buildings and opportunities, the framework plan integrates things like the establishment of a new administrative centre, a police office, neighbourhood parking facilities, a library, a neighbourhood sport centre, two day care centres, and a neighbourhood park next to Moorkensplein (Moorkens Square).

In view of the difficult spatial context, **creative sustainable solutions** had to be sought, such as the provision of outdoor play space for the day care centre on the roof of the library and the construction of a sport centre on the first floor. Drastic decisions also had to be made, such as the acquisition of seven private houses to create extra open green space.

The expansion of Moorkensplein with a neighbourhood park (total surface area will be 0.8 ha) is intended to address the dire need for green in the neighbourhood. The design by [Buro Lubbers - Bovenbouw - Korteknie Stuhlmacher Architecten](#) capitalises on the monumental district hall. A few streets leading to the square and **neighbourhood park** are cut, resulting in a new traffic situation.



Plan for Moorkensplein © TV Buro Lubbers Bovenbouw Architects and Korteknie Stuhlmacher Architects



Europark quarter at Linkeroever

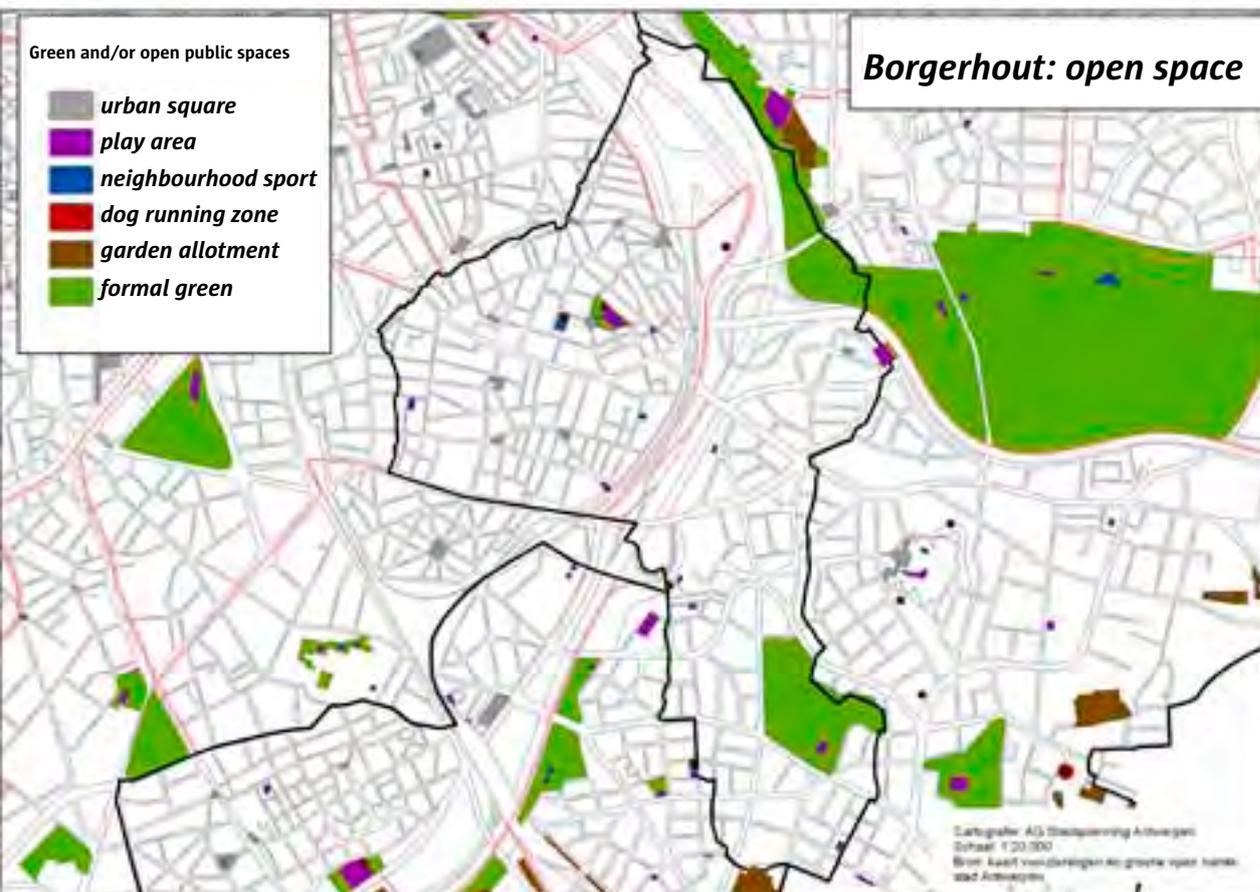
INVESTING IN EUROPARK

With the implementation of an intergenerational project on the left bank (Linkeroever), the municipal authorities want to increase social coherence between different generations and cultures in high-rise quarter Europark. Technum drew up a master plan to this effect.

New social facilities will make housing, care, culture, social development, education and day care accessible to everyone. The project provides for the construction of a rest and care home, a day care centre, the expansion of the existing school infrastructure, a youth centre, a service centre of Zorgbedrijf Antwerpen, commercial spaces, a neighbourhood sport centre and assisted living apartments.

As part of the **first stage** of the project, new assisted living apartments will be built near Emile Verhaerenlaan. A new residential care centre and a day care centre will be established between Carel van Manderstraat and Ernest Claesstraat. In a later stage this will be followed by the youth centre and the neighbourhood sport centre. The construction of the assisted living apartments and the preparatory works for the public utilities were initiated in 2011.

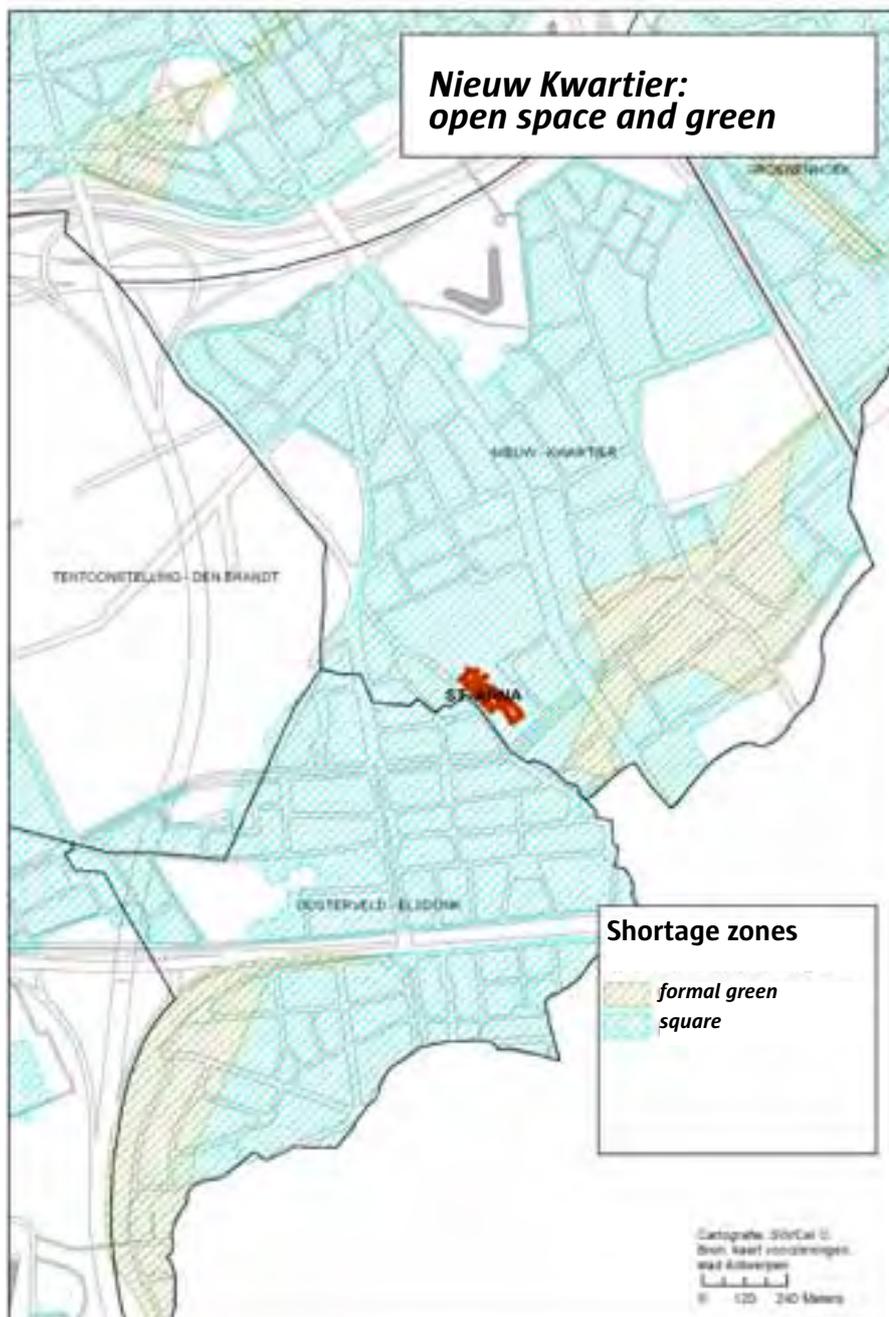
The **public space** will be redeveloped as well. For example, a new street will be laid out between Gloriantlaan and Halewijnlaan which runs straight through Europark. This street will constitute a centre for the quarter and should become a comfortable place for pedestrians and cyclists.



Analysis of public amenities and open space in the district of Borgerhout.

Shortage analyses

The city makes use of GIS ('Geographical Information System') to analyse the needs and the advisable distribution of public amenities. Shortage analyses are based on two approaches: walking distance and capacity. As far as walking distance is concerned, accessibility and spatial barriers (such as the Ring road) are taken into account. Residents who are unable to reach a certain type of facility on foot live in a shortage zone for that facility. It is also possible that a facility can indeed be reached on foot by many residents, but may for instance be too small to be used by all of them. This is why capacity is also kept in mind: the number - or surface area - of accessible facilities per resident.



Shortage analysis for open space in Nieuw Kwartier quarter.



Public buildings

Public buildings

The city's public building patrimony is crucial for housing city services and organising services for citizens. Antwerp's residents should be able to count on high-quality facilities and services in municipal office buildings and district halls, schools, police offices, fire stations, museums, cultural centres, swimming pools, sport centres, day care centres and youth centres. With a view to a good service provision the municipal authorities want to fulfil an exemplary role and ensure the best possible quality of their public building patrimony.

To use the buildings in the most efficient manner, available and needed functions are aligned with every municipal housing request. However, not every request results in a new building project. Renovation, restoration, redesignation and disposal of buildings are other possible scenarios. The starting point is a long-term vision of the public building patrimony in which maintenance, energy and other operational costs are mapped as well.

Every architectural project departs from the context and individuality of the site in question and constitutes a balancing exercise between functionality, safety, full accessibility and sustainability.

CENTRAL FIRE STATION

Antwerp has six fire stations at its disposal for nine districts. As these stations were not optimally distributed over the territory, the municipal authorities decided to build a new central station and to use a number of other stations as outposts. This enables the fire brigade to continue to guarantee efficient service provision. [Jan Van Elzen](#) and [Architectenteam-A](#) created the design. The works started in the autumn of 2006. The construction works were finished two years later.

The new logistic fire station offers room for all administrative services, eighty intervention vehicles and forty containers. Circulation, meeting, techniques and distribution are organised in **two large building volumes** situated along a central street.

The division of the depot into two parts limits the **loss of heat** in case of interventions. Because of the fishbone arrangement the number of gates is also limited. Also with a view to sustainability, the complex was designed in such a way that the building can also be used for other purposes in the future.

The **location** of the new fire station was chosen on the basis of accessibility and the possibility of quick interventions. Thanks to its location, the harbour and the surrounding municipalities can continue to count on efficient interventions. This way the city of Antwerp has increased the safety of the region and even that of the entire province of Antwerp.



Vanhecke & Suls architects combined restoration, renovation and construction in their design for the AMUZ concert hall.



AMUZ: FROM CHURCH TO CONCERT HALL

The seventeenth-century Sint-Augustinus Church is an **architectural maverick** with its early baroque building style, traces of the renaissance tradition in the sidewall, a complete baroque interior and the neo-Byzantine Chapel of Our Lady that was added in 1857. The complex was listed as a monument in 1939. In the 1980s the city used the church for a whole range of art projects.

As Antwerp was mainly in need of a fully-fledged music platform, the municipal authorities decided to convert Sint-Augustinus Church into a **multi-functional music centre**. The design order for architects [Vanhecke & Suls](#) included restoration, renovation and construction. The site's cultural and historical value was respected in the process and at the same time modern functional comfort was created.

AMUZ has been **technically and architecturally designed** in such a manner that concerts as well as other activities can be organised there, such as conferences, recordings, workshops and New Year's receptions. Offices, a reception space for musicians, a foyer and other supporting functions were accommodated in the outbuildings. This way a commercial strategic site at the heart of the city was used to the maximum.

VELDSTRAAT SWIMMING POOL

The city built a swimming pool in the **Antwerpen-Noord** area close to Oude Badhuis ('Old Bathhouse') in Veldstraat in 1933. Thanks to its large capacity for spectators, the Veldstraat baths were regularly used for swimming events. As a consequence of stricter hygiene and safety regulations, the swimming pool was forced to close its doors in 2005.

The city commissioned [Maat_Werk Architecten](#) to restore this listed monument with maximum respect for the **original state and structure**. The basin and glass windows in Art Deco style were completely renovated. The original material was reused wherever possible. The reconstruction of the concrete windows with whitish yellow hammered glass brought back the original incidence of light and serene atmosphere.

The renovated building is aimed at the neighbourhood. As some houses in the neighbourhood still do not have sufficient sanitary facilities, a few of the old amenities, such as the public bathrooms, have been preserved. The former technical space also houses new neighbourhood-oriented facilities, including a bathhouse and a hammam.



Maat_Werk architects created the design for the restoration of Veldstraat Swimming Pool.



Robbrecht and Daem architects ensured the respectful renovation of Saint Felix Warehouse, now home to the city archives.

FELIX ARCHIVES

The **Saint Felix warehouse** was built in 1859 by order of the Compagnie Générale des Chemins de Fer. It was used for temporary storage of bulk materials that were supplied via the River Scheldt. The city bought the warehouse in 1912, but due to the relocation of the harbour activities to the north the building lost its harbour warehouse function in 1975.

The municipal authorities wanted to preserve the monument and gave it a **new function** as city archives. **Robbrecht and Daem** provided the design. The restoration had to create the right circumstances for the preservation of microfilm, parchment and old writings. Eighteen separate mini-depots with adapted air quality were provided on the building's intermediate floors. On the ground floor a public library and commercial spaces were established.

In 2006 the Felix Archives were prepared for over **twenty kilometres** of archives or over 100,000 boxes filled with documents of institutions, companies, private persons and families from Antwerp. The oldest documents date back from the thirteenth century. Every day visitors consult documents in the reading room on the top floor.

ZAPPA, SPACE FOR THE YOUNG

The city wants to create a **youth competence centre** in every district. When the authorities were making plans for an abandoned building at a school site in the Kiel area, the non-profit youth organisation Kavka vzw came forward with the Zappa project.

The city opted for a design with **sustainable techniques** and wear-resistant, low-maintenance materials. Better thermal insulation was provided for the roof, walls and windows, and energy-saving lighting equipment was installed. The building is ventilated by means of an exhaust air heat recovery system. The complex was divided into energy-saving zones so that only the used parts are ventilated and heated. The internal acoustics were improved and noise pollution was limited as much as possible. Finally, a rainwater recuperation system was installed for toilet flushing.



The city transformed an abandoned building into Zappa youth competence centre.

BOEKENBERG SWIMMING POND

Boekenbergpark was landscaped around 1800 as a decor for a small castle belonging to a well-off family. When the domain was passed on to the municipality of Deurne in 1934, the municipal authorities added an open-air swimming pool. In 2005 the swimming pool was closed as it no longer complied with contemporary environmental legislation. By then the park had already become part of a **historically valuable** and listed area.

With the redevelopment of the open-air swimming pool the city wanted to have **nature and history** go hand in hand with ecological ingenuity. The design by [Axima Services \(Cofely\)](#) has restored the view of the castle from the swimming pond to its original condition. The green zone was expanded and the adjacent buildings were replaced by smaller ones with green roofs which blend into the park landscape when seen from the street. Rainwater is used for plant care and contributes to the park's ecological water management system.

No chemicals are used for the swimming pond, yet good water quality is provided for. This makes Boekenberg a completely **natural swimming pond** which is perfectly integrated into the park. The swimming pond measures 160 by 25 metres and has a volume of 4,000 cubic metres. The water in the baby pool is warmer and contains 70 cubic metres of water. The water purification area contains 3,800 cubic metres of water. Three circulation pumps take the water from the swimming area to the water purification area. The pond in Boekenberg is the only public ecological swimming pond in the country and the largest one in Europe.



DEN BELL

In 1882 Graham Bell established the first Bell Telephone factory in Boudewijnsstraat. The tower by architect [Hugo van Kuyck](#) was built in 1958. When Alcatel Bell left the building in 2006, the municipal authorities decided to turn the complex with a surface area of no less than 21,400 m² into their central office building.

Until then, the administrative services of the city of Antwerp had been based at dozens of locations spread over the territory of the city. Since 2010, over **2,200 staff members** have been working at this central location. With this ambitious centralisation project the city keeps a lid on its maintenance and energy costs.

[Vooruitzicht](#) developed the site using sustainable building techniques and making optimal use of the available space. The **inner court** has a lovely layout with sports equipment and tree sections and is publicly accessible. The tower building has twelve floors and houses dozens of multifunctional spaces, meeting rooms, formal reception rooms and an auditorium that accommodates 178 people. These spaces can be rented outside office hours.

Air conditioning is taken care of by automatic blinds and a hybrid ventilation system taking into account the seasons and the time of day. The combination of mechanical and natural ventilation provides a pleasant and ecologically sound indoor climate.



A sustainable city for everyone

The city completed the **Vision for a Sustainable City** early 2011. This policy note describes the vision, ambitions, objectives and the initiatives that have already been taken for 'A sustainable city for everyone' in terms of eight themes (energy, mobility, air and sound, green, water, materials, use of space, and soil).

One of the most important initiatives is the **Climate Plan** (2011), in which the objectives and guidelines are formulated with regard to the reduction of CO₂ emissions in and by the city. 'The city as a good example' and 'Climate-conscious urban community' are key chapters. They describe the measures that are necessary and those that the city has already taken in order to reduce its own and its residents' and entrepreneurs' emissions.

The city works on this on the one hand by making its fleet of vehicles **more sustainable** and implementing a sustainable procurement policy and on the other hand by building in a sustainable manner. Sustainability has become a fundamental criterion for the development and management of the public building patrimony and the houses built and renovated by the city within the scope of its property policy.

More and more tools are being developed for the integration of sustainability into **planning processes**. For large-scale housing developments sustainability requirements are included in the agreement with the property developer or are linked to a 'conditional sale'. Sustainability aspects are also incorporated into spatial implementation plans, project definitions and master plans for the mixed development of larger city areas. Acoustical and ecological surveys are systematically used in the spatial planning process.

In addition, the municipal authorities examine the feasibility of **collective energy facilities** and space is reserved for a potential future heating network (in accordance with the European Union's new energy strategy for 2011-2020). With a view to the potential introduction of urban heating, developers of blocks of flats are obligated to provide for one central heating and / or ventilation system per block of apartments and retail spaces.

The city invests in raising the awareness of and providing support to residents and entrepreneurs. Entrepreneurs can turn to the city's Business Information Desk for sustainability advice. Residents can go to **EcoHuis** in Borgerhout for information and advice regarding low-energy and environment-friendly building, housing and living, the permanent exhibition *Meer doen met minder* ('Doing more with less') and for info sessions, workshops and demonstrations with regard to sustainability. The 'EcoHuis doctor' provides tailored advice to residents who want to build or renovate in a sustainable manner. This service is also offered in all of the city's housing offices.

Finally, people can also seek advice from EcoHuis with regard to the energy and environmental premiums provided by the city and other governments. For example, Antwerp grants premiums for roof insulation, low-energy houses, green roofs and rainwater installations and provides green loans for low-energy renovations in houses. Anyone can consult the thermographic map of the city at EcoHuis or online at www.antwerpen.be/zoominopwdak. It is in fact an aerial view with a colour code demonstrating how much heat escapes through the roofs.

Combining and adjusting all initiatives in its Vision for a Sustainable City, Antwerp has developed a **coherent vision** on sustainability. With a focus on energy and environment, concrete and measurable objectives are defined which are linked to a phased plan in the short and long term and to a guidebook to embed sustainability even deeper in the urban policy.

7. Mobility

Antwerp strives for a pleasant city with a high quality of life. Sustainable transport, road safety and easy accessibility for residents and visitors are important levers in this context. A central element in this process is the improvement of the 'lower network' of footpaths and cycle tracks, local roads, parking facilities, shopping streets and public transport, especially the tram network. However, because of its central location in a highly urbanised region in a European network and with the second largest port in Europe in its territory, the (supra-local) commuter traffic and the international transit traffic are of course also part of the traffic flows in and around the city.

The city wants to influence these traffic flows as well. However, the powers with regard to mobility are strongly fragmented. The regional roads and tram and bus transport are Flemish powers. The railroads are managed by the federal government and the province coordinates the regional cycle network. In turn, the local roads and the local public domain are mainly controlled by the district authorities.

There are three large policy frameworks in terms of mobility in the territory of Antwerp. The city has its own Mobility Plan, which is elaborated at the level of the districts and the quarters in quarter circulation plans. The Flemish Masterplan 2020 contains measures for the solution of supra-local and local traffic issues in and around the city. Last but not least, there is the States General's White Paper on Road Safety. These three policy frameworks contain measures and projects for the different modes of transport.

The city bases its multi-modal mobility policy on the STOP principle, which takes into account every mode of transport. In the field of safety, flow and comfort, however, priority is given to pedestrians, cyclists, public transport and private vehicles in that order.

Policy frameworks

MOBILITY PLAN

The city drew up a Mobility Plan in 2004 within the scope of a mobility covenant entered into with the Flemish government and the provincial authorities. With this plan, the city strives for a better **traffic organisation** and for the development of sustainable transport behaviour in Antwerp. These ambitions require measures in several fields.

A well-thought-out **spatial policy** limits the need for travel. Living, employment and recreational facilities are located in one another's vicinity and made accessible through public transport.

Infrastructural measures - large and small-scale works in the public domain - stand out the most. This type of measures include projects of the Flemish Masterplan 2020 (e.g. tram extensions) as well as for instance the '100 km cycle track' project.

There are also **supporting measures**, such as awareness campaigns to stimulate more sustainable and safer transport behaviour and the Parking Policy Plan by Autonoom Gemeentelijk Parkeerbedrijf Antwerpen ('Autonomous Municipal Parking Company of Antwerp'). Last but not least, there are combined measures, such as infrastructural works within the scope of road safety and sustainable mobility. Another combined measure is the municipal corporate transport plan linked to the use of Den Bell as the new office building for the municipal administration.



Masterplan 2020: Measures to complete the Ring road

A new toll tunnel (1, 2) underneath the River Scheldt with 2 X 3 lanes, from the left bank (Linkeroever) to Noordkasteel.

The Oosterweel hub (3) at the Noordkasteel site.

Four tunnel tubes underneath the docks, connecting to the Ring road (4). Each tube has two lanes and an emergency lane.

The demolition of the viaduct at Merksem and the construction of an open slot with a new entrance and exit ramp at Groenendallaan (5) and Schijnpoort (6) and with small adjustments to the junction with the E313.

A truck ban in the Kennedy tunnel (7).

MASTERPLAN 2020

A smoother traffic flow, safer roads and increased liveability. These are the **objectives of Masterplan 2020**. The city, the periphery, the harbour and traffic: all have to be improved. So this master plan is much more than a collection of road works. It comprises a whole range of measures to deal with the heavy traffic, accidents and rat-run traffic in and around Antwerp. The public transport network is expanded further. New, safe cycle networks will be created and the waterways will be developed further as well. Incidentally, Masterplan 2020 has a very specific aim: by 2020 at least half of all transport in the Antwerp agglomeration should occur by public transport, on foot or by bike.

Masterplan 2020 is aimed at less congestion and less accidents on the main road network in the region of Antwerp and less rat-run traffic on the minor road network. The best-known project is definitely **the completion of the Ring road**. When the development of the Ring infrastructure was decided upon in the 1960s, the objective was to build a large and a small ring road. However, the plans for the large ring road were never implemented. As the (small) ring road had to process both local and supra-local traffic, it quickly became saturated. In addition, congestion on the access roads to the Ring road keeps on increasing. Apart from the completion of the ring road, the development of the **tangents in the east (A102 and R11bis)** should provide part of the solution. This way the main road network around Antwerp is completed and the Ring road is relieved of north-south through traffic and port traffic.

The Masterplan wishes to reinforce the urban tram network and to improve access to **public transport** in the region. Apart from tramline extensions to surrounding centres in the region, Masterplan 2020 also includes the redevelopment of the Leien traffic artery and the development of Operaplein. For **freight transport** specific efforts will be made to boost inland waterway navigation, e.g. by renovating locks, broadening the Albert Canal and raising bridges. For **cyclists and pedestrians** new infrastructure will be provided within the framework of e.g. the works on the Leien and a series of new and renovated cycle routes such as the District Route. Railroad transport is also included in the master plan as part of the solution, but is not included in the Flemish powers.

WHITE PAPER ON ROAD SAFETY

In 2008 the municipal authorities appointed a coordinator to guide the progress of all internal and external partners in the city's road safety policy. This progress is reported on in a biennial **States General of Road Safety**. During the first States General in 2008 all partners came together for the first time in order to formulate their ambitions, objectives and commitments for a city with safe roads. The municipal authorities combined those commitments in a White Paper, and this document has constituted the framework for the city's road safety measures since that time.

Pedestrians

Pedestrian safety and comfort take centre stage in the elaboration of mobility projects and the development of public space. Pedestrians are not considered the weakest of road users, but the **largest group of traffic participants**. After all, all of the city's residents and visitors cover distances on foot, as one never travels from door to door by bicycle, public transport or car. A policy that pays special attention to pedestrians, people with disabilities and cyclists contributes to a significant extent to the creation of a city that is pleasant to visit and to live and work in.

For this reason the city is working on the development of one of the **longest and most attractive pedestrian axes** in the country. This axis will extend from Central Station, over De Keyserlei, the Meir shopping promenade, Groenplaats and the historical city centre to the Scheldt Quays, which in turn will be transformed into a long promenade along the water. In time, this pedestrian axis will be extended with a comfortable and attractive pedestrian connection to the MAS museum and het Eilandje.

All residential areas will get a **quarter circulation plan**. This plan is a translation of the Mobility Plan at the level of the quarter. Quarters will become 'residential islands' where living, working, walking, cycling and playing are top priorities. So the use of cars will be discouraged. The municipal authorities have already drawn up several quarter circulation plans.

In the short term the city strives for a significant increase of the **number of 30 kph zones** (zones with a speed limit of 20 mph), especially in the district centres and in school areas. The delimitation of the 30 kph zones is coupled with traffic guidance measures. These are relatively limited, yet well-thought-out interventions that are carried out quickly and increase the clarity of the traffic situation.

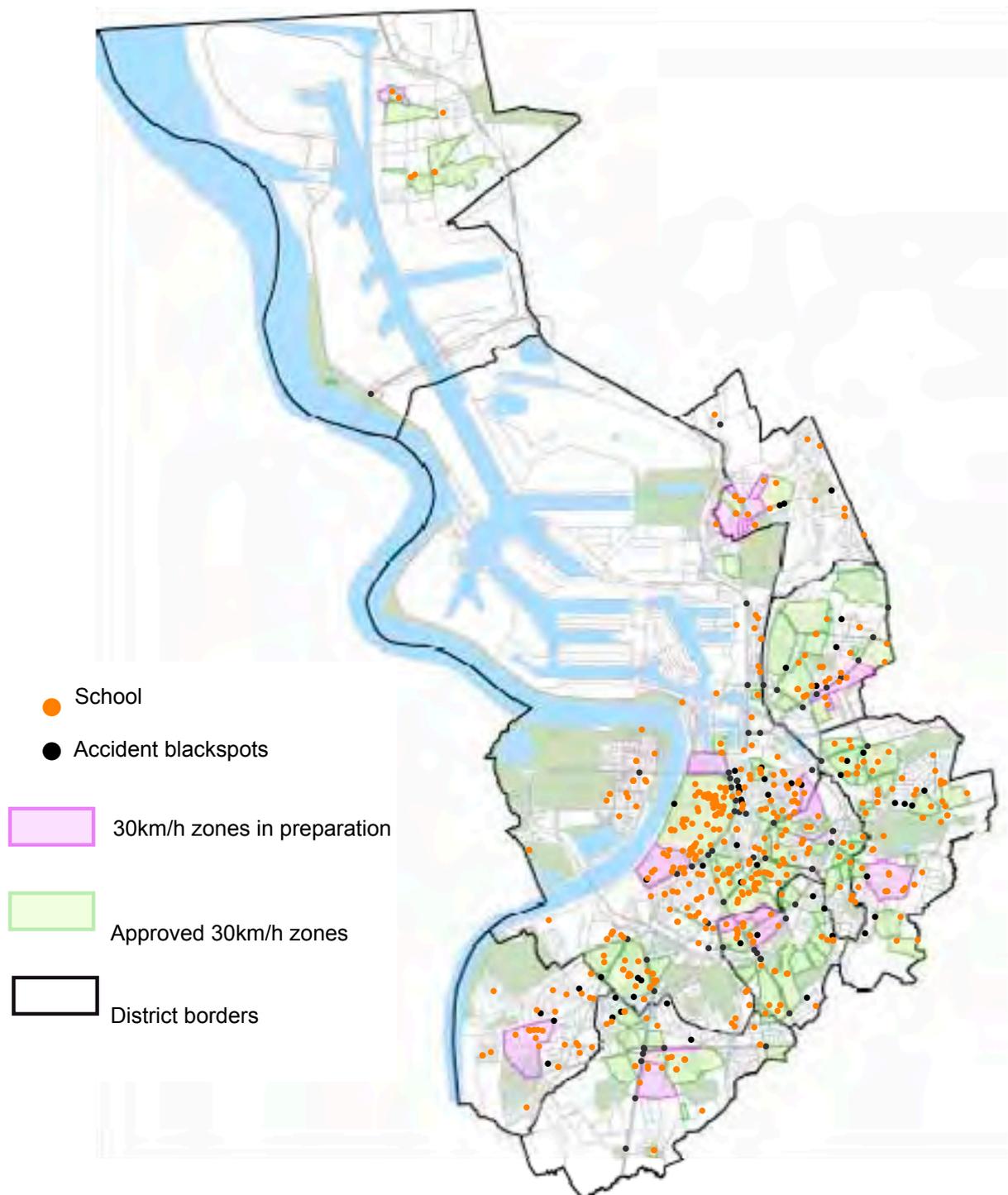
The most dangerous places on the city's roads are eliminated in the short term. On the basis of objective data and criteria the traffic police annually draws up an inventory of intersections or road segments where similar accidents regularly occur. These so-called '**black spots**' are addressed with priority.

The city also provides more comfort to pedestrians, walkers, shoppers and strollers with the installation of **pedestrian signage** and **retractable traffic bollards**. Retractable traffic bollards are used to temporarily close off low-traffic streets and pedestrian zones to motor traffic. Several streets and squares have already been equipped with retractable traffic bollards, such as Grote Markt, a few streets in the Sailor's Quarter, Wilde Zee, Offerandestraat, Kammenstraat and Meir.

Last but not least, the city adjusts the **traffic lights** so as to enable as many pedestrians as possible to cross the street in one go, so that they do not end up in the middle of the street between the traffic. In 30 kph zones the city even intends to remove the traffic lights.

30 kph zones, black spots and school environments

Planned and realised projects



Cyclists

The municipal authorities want to stimulate as many people as possible to cycle. The **Cycle Policy Plan** reflects the city's strategy to create a comfortable and safe cycling environment. The plan includes actions on three fronts: Riding, Parking and Steering. The top priority as to Riding is the 100 kilometre cycle track project. The Parking component is dealt with in the Cycle Parking Plan. As far as Steering is concerned, several supporting measures are taken such as signposting, a cycle route map, the Cycle Day for Employees, the possibility to rent a bicycle,

With the development of a **100 km cycle track**, the municipal authorities wish to eliminate the missing links in the cycle route network together with the districts, the Flemish government and the province of Antwerp. Within this scope, the municipal authorities receive subsidies from Flanders, the province of Antwerp and the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF). Between 2007 and October 2011 a total of over 95 km of bicycle track was developed. Places like Carnotstraat, Rubenslei, Montignystraat, Scheldelaan and Park Spoor Noord were provided with a new (piece of) cycle track. A strategic project within the framework of guaranteeing the continuity of the cycle network was the renovation of the Ring Cycle Track in 2011.

Also in 2011, 'Velo' was introduced in the city: public bicycles in about one hundred bicycle racks (in the first instance within the Ring). The bicycles can be rented by anyone at a reasonable price. They were specially designed for intensive use in the city and are replaced every three years.

Special attention is paid to the **safety** and **comfort** of the cyclists. Examples are the use of concrete or asphalt instead of concrete paving bricks, the elimination of kerbstones and irregularities, the development of comfort strips and the provision of safe places to cross intersections with good visibility. The city also undertakes to provide safe public bicycle parks and **bicycle racks**. The Building Code stipulates that sufficient in-door bicycle storage space needs to be provided when building or renovating. Parkeerbedrijf organises neighbourhood bicycle racks for residents who live in neighbourhoods that have a **shortage** of bicycle storage space.



Public transport

Together with NMBS (the Belgian national railroad company) and Flemish transport company De Lijn, the municipal authorities are working on the **optimisation of the public transport network**. Masterplan 2020 provides for a tram connection for Deurne, Ekeren and Wilrijk and for redesign of the Leien and Operaplein. A number of the largest public transport infrastructure works fit into the framework of the area-oriented programmes in the strategic Spatial Structure Plan. For example, het Eilandje will be made more accessible with new lines, the Green Singel programme includes a new tramline ('Singel line'), and a 'Quay Tram' will ride along the Scheldt Quays. In addition, the arrival of the high-speed train, the transformation from terminus station to through station and the renovation of the station building were key actions in the Central Station Area programme.

The **expansion of the city's tram network** falls within the scope of the Railway City image, which is part of the strategic Spatial Structure plan. The authorities want to stimulate the use of the tram as a sustainable electric mode of transport. Within this scope they invest in accessible tram stops, paying special attention to senior citizens, wheel chair users and people with a disability. The municipal authorities furthermore see the **tram network** as a structuring element for the Lower Network and the Urban Centres. Moreover, the tram network is not only optimised on the city's territory, it will also be connected to the whole Antwerp region.

Over the past few years several **tram projects** have been carried out. For example, the previous terminus of tram 8 at Lambermontplaats was moved to the new palace of justice in 2007, and in 2009 from Eksterlaar to Silsburg. The development of a free tram and bus lane on Sint-Bernardsesteenweg in 2006 provided Hoboken with a good connection to the city centre. Numerous tram projects are furthermore in preparation or under implementation.



OLYMPIADE JUNCTION

The Olympiade junction is where Boomsesteenweg (N177), VII-de Olympiadelaan, Jan Van Rijswijcklaan, Jan De Voslei and Populierenlaan meet. It is one of the busiest and most dangerous intersections in the inner city's periphery and constitutes an **important junction** for all traffic going from and to Wilrijk. The Flemish government, the city of Antwerp and De Lijn are working together in order to make the junction safer and clearer to all road users.

Design office [Omgeving](#) was commissioned to draw a design for this junction. The design entails the relocation of the balloon loop of tram 6 and a **new terminus** at Generaal Robertsplantsoen. At that square a peripheral car park will be established with space for 195 cars. Visitors can switch to public transport at this location. The tram stop and the new car park will also be provided with bicycle racks.

BRABO 2

This project comprises the (re)development of Noorderleien, Operaplein, a tram connection to het Eilandje by tram, a tram connection to Ekeren and a new tram line in Brusselstraat. The northern part of the Leien will get the same profile as the southern part. Operaplein will become a low-traffic zone with lots of **space for trams, pedestrians and cyclists**.

Between De Keyserlei and Violierstraat a tunnel for automobile traffic will be built underneath the Leien. An underground car park will be provided together with a large public transport hub and a new metro station. Operaplein, Franklin Rooseveltplaats (Franklin Roosevelt square), the underground car park and the metro station constitute a single project that was designed by [Manuel de Solà-Morales](#).

The **tram line** to Ekeren will run from Operaplein and Frankling Rooseveltplaats square over Noorderleien, Noorderplaats (North Square) and the new Noorderlaan bridge to Groenendaallaan, and finally via Noorderlaan and Ekersesteenweg to its turning point 'De Mieren' near the centre of Ekeren. The tram infrastructure was designed by [TV SAM](#).



LIVAN PROJECT

The LIVAN tram project (Lijn-Invest Antwerpen) consists of **two parts**: the commencement of operation of the currently unused pre-metro tunnel underneath Carnotstraat and Turnhoutsebaan (station area) and the above-ground tram extension along Florent Pauwelslei and Ruggeveldlaan (Deurne). In addition, a new tram connection will be established which will initially run up to the parking area near the Wommelgem roundabout on E313. Motorists can switch to the tram at this location. Implementation is planned for 2014. In a second stage the tramway will be extended to Ranst. Arcadis has been appointed for the reference design, mobility studies, the plan-MER ('environmental impact assessment') and the preparation of the application for a planning permission, among other things.

Private transport

Public space should be designed in such a manner that residents and visitors find it pleasant to spend time there. **The quality of the public domain** makes a city liveable and accessible. Traffic liveability is inseparable from this. Consequently, it is logical that the design of public space enables residents and visitors to make use of sustainable modes of transport. The more transport behaviour becomes multi-modal, the more liveable the city, the districts and neighbourhoods become.

Everything starts with a **well-thought-out location policy** at a city level in which living, employment and facilities are located near one another and are embedded in the cycling and public transport networks. In the end it comes down to elements that seem like mere 'details', such as the integration of bicycle sheds in buildings.

A city that makes efforts regarding sustainable mobility can and may not ignore the automobile. Residents, visitors and business continue to rely on motor traffic. However, motor traffic as a primary choice for everyone is no longer feasible. Cars are present, but play a **complementary role**. The city translates this evolution into quarter circulation plans, the establishment of 30 kph zones, the division of city areas into paid parking areas, the demarcation of car-free zones and the systematic approach to black spots. These interventions are to prevent that the use of cars is detrimental to sustainable modes of transport and the quality of life and should also prevent excessive car use from causing traffic jams.

It is crucial that the **parking policy** for cars supports the location policy. This means that a distinction is made between the needs of visitors (car *parking* policy) and those of residents (car *storage* policy). The philosophy is that cars of visitors are intercepted in the periphery of the city as much as possible by means of parking spaces (park and ride) that are well connected to the public transport network. Visitor traffic can also be kept away from the public domain by means of a supply of underground parking garages with appropriate pricing (the more centrally situated, the more expensive) and parking signage, etc.

Residents are stimulated to **use indoor parking spaces or neighbourhood car parks** so that the public domain is increasingly freed from cars. This creates more space for pedestrians, cyclists and visitors.

Car traffic not destined for Antwerp should be organised in such a manner that it causes as little nuisance as possible to the city and its users. To this end, a whole range of **infrastructural measures** were established in the Masterplan 2020. The completion of the Ring and the development of tangents in the east (A102 and R11bis) are the spearheads in this respect. Measures to make road traffic more sustainable (additional tramways, higher bridges over the Albert Canal ...) that make other modes of traffic more attractive also fit into that framework. The aim is to achieve a general 50/50 modal split in the metropolitan area by 2020 (50% motor traffic, 50% other modes). Today the City already has a 63/37 split in the city centre in favour of sustainable traffic modes.

The coherence of measures to stimulate the use of sustainable modes is called steering by means of **'choice architecture'**. The municipal authorities try to apply this at all levels of scale, both at the level of the agglomeration and in urban development areas and buildings.

PARKING POLICY

In 2001 the city established the Autonoom Gemeentelijk Parkeerbedrijf Antwerpen ('Autonomous Municipal Parking Company of Antwerp') for the implementation of its **integrated parking policy**. The basic principles of the parking policy are optimal use of available parking spaces and area-specific solutions for parking problems. This includes that the parking standards will be applied more strictly in areas that are easily accessible by public transport and that parking in the street in the city centre will be more expensive than in a parking building or than parking at a distance. Less people parking their cars in the streets for a long time implies a more efficient use of the same number spaces and more parking spaces for **shopping visitors**.

The city strives to stimulate **residents** to collectively park outside the public domain at an acceptable distance from their home. They should be able to park their cars near their homes without having to look for a spot. Parking spaces disappearing from the public domain offer opportunities for the development of a high-quality pleasant public space with sufficient room for pedestrians and cyclists.





The city appointed a parking broker in 2009 to match parking supply and demand. In streets where it is difficult for residents and short-term parkers to find a parking spot near their home or destination the **parking broker** looks for solutions, such as making corporate car parks accessible to residents at night. The parking broker provides safe, dry and affordable neighbourhood bicycle storage spaces in rented buildings or garages in the neighbourhood.

MODIFICATIONS TO THE MAIN ROAD NETWORK

The completion of the Ring road is the best-known infrastructure project of the Masterplan 2020. The Masterplan for Mobility in Antwerp (2005, the first version of the Masterplan 2020) called for the construction of a viaduct near het Eilandje. Over the years, more and more people started arguing for an **underground solution** and for keeping through traffic further from the city. Following the results of a referendum on the proposed Lange Wapper project, the Flemish government opted for a tunnel solution in combination with two new tangents at a larger distance from the city in September 2010. This decision lay at the basis of the updated Masterplan 2020.

The underground solution includes two tunnel complexes: one immersed tube underneath the River Scheldt with two roads with three lanes each and four cut and cover tunnels underneath the docks up to R1, each with two lanes and a shoulder, thus providing access in four directions. These tunnels are connected to one another by the Oosterweel junction, which provides access in every direction. The Merksem and Luchtbal viaducts will disappear and an underground road will be developed instead. The target date for completion is 2021.

Apart from the completion of the Ring, the **tunneling of the R11 (R11 bis) and the connection via A102** should relieve the Ring road from north-south traffic on E19. A102 will run underground from Ekeren (Ring-A12-E19 North junction) to Wommelgem (E313-E34 junction). At the Wommelgem junction a tunnel will start underneath Krijgsbaan (R11) to the E19 South junction in Wilrijk.

FREIGHT TRANSPORT BY WATER

In view of the planned widening of the **Albert Canal**, a series of bridges between Antwerp and Meerhout will be raised and widened. Some of these bridges in (the) Antwerp (area) are the Noorderlaan bridge, Spoorweg bridge, IJzerlaan bridge, Theunis bridge, Deurnebal bridge, Kruiningen bridge and Hoogmolen bridge. Combined with the widening of the canal (to 63 m), the higher bridges (to 9.10 m) should allow for more shipping traffic on the canal.

A design contest was organised for a master plan that guarantees a qualitative integration of the bridges. The Albert Canal Bridges Master Plan was drawn up by [uaps](#) and shows a **high level of ambition** for the bridge design. There is a strong emphasis on the sustainable, spatial integration of the bridges in their surroundings. Much attention is also given to the public space by the canal and the connection of the space to the surrounding residential areas.

Noorderlaan bridge

The Noorderlaan bridge is the bridge over the Albert Canal near Noorderlaan, Groenendaallaan and IJzerlaan. The previous bridge was replaced **by two bridges**: one for car traffic and one for public transport. There is a wide footpath and cycle track on both sides of the first bridge. The bridge is longer than before, resulting in more space beneath it. As the two bridges are separate, the incidence of light underneath the bridge is greater as well. The renovation design for the Noorderlaan bridge was drawn up by [TV SAM](#).

IJzerlaan bicycle bridge

The IJzerlaan bridge will be converted into a **pedestrian and cycling bridge**. This also offers possibilities to use the surrounding terrains differently. This will create space for urban development, green spaces and for the construction of dwellings and/or offices.



Noorderlaan bridge now has wide paths for cyclists and pedestrians © TV SAM

8. Spatial quality

Spatial quality is an integral concept. It does not only refer to buildings, but to all projects that have to do with the development of a city, such as public space or traffic infrastructure. In addition, spatial quality is more than just aesthetic quality. It is also about interaction with the environment, a good functional organisation and liveability for the users. Sustainability, in every meaning of the word, is also a main component of spatial quality: time resistance, energy efficiency, efficient use of space, environmental consciousness, respect for the city's history, (road) safety, low maintenance, The city of Antwerp consults several external and internal advisory bodies in order to take into account all these aspects of spatial quality as early as in the design phase.

Because of his independent position, the Stadsbouwmeester ('Chief City Architect') plays a special role with regard to quality control. The Stadsbouwmeester is not part of the municipal administration; he reports directly to the Mayor and Municipal Executive. However, with his team he is close to the daily operation of the municipal companies and the daughter companies.

The municipal authorities have adapted the planning permission procedure in order to boost and, where necessary, adjust quality at the private initiative level. Finally, the city itself commissions its own projects in a correct manner by organising design contests.

Stadsbouwmeester (Chief City Architect)

The function of *Stadsbouwmeester* was created in Antwerp in 1999. This was **a first in Flanders**. René Daniëls, who was then in charge of het Eilandje's process and project management, became Stadsbouwmeester for the period between 2000 and 2005. After that period, the city decided to make the function a permanent component of the municipal structure in the form of a mandate. The Stadsbouwmeester would from then on also be supported by his very own team. In 2006, Kristiaan Borret was appointed as Stadsbouwmeester for a period of five years. His mandate was renewed in 2011.

The Stadsbouwmeester's **core task** is to control the spatial quality of all projects in the city of Antwerp from an independent position. So this applies both to urban development plans, the development of public space and infrastructure and to architecture. It furthermore does not only concern projects commissioned by the city, but also initiatives taken by other governments or the private sector.

The Stadsbouwmeester has the explicit role to **advise** and to **sensitise** with a view to spatial quality. He provides advice to the Mayor and the Municipal Executive on the development and implementation of the spatial policy and the quality and sustainability of projects at their request or on his own initiative. Together with a jury he selects the designers for design commissions. He monitors these projects and provides content support to the different city services. In the case of private projects he is involved in the preliminary consultation phase of the planning permission procedure.

The Stadsbouwmeester develops tools to **boost** spatial quality, strives for broad support and, to that end, propagates Antwerp's spatial policy in Belgium and abroad. Not just the city services and the Public Centres for Social Welfare can make use of the services of the Stadsbouwmeester. Daughter organisations (AG VESPA, AG Stadsplanning, ...), other governments active in Antwerp (such as social housing companies) and private persons (such as property developers) also call upon his expertise.



External advice

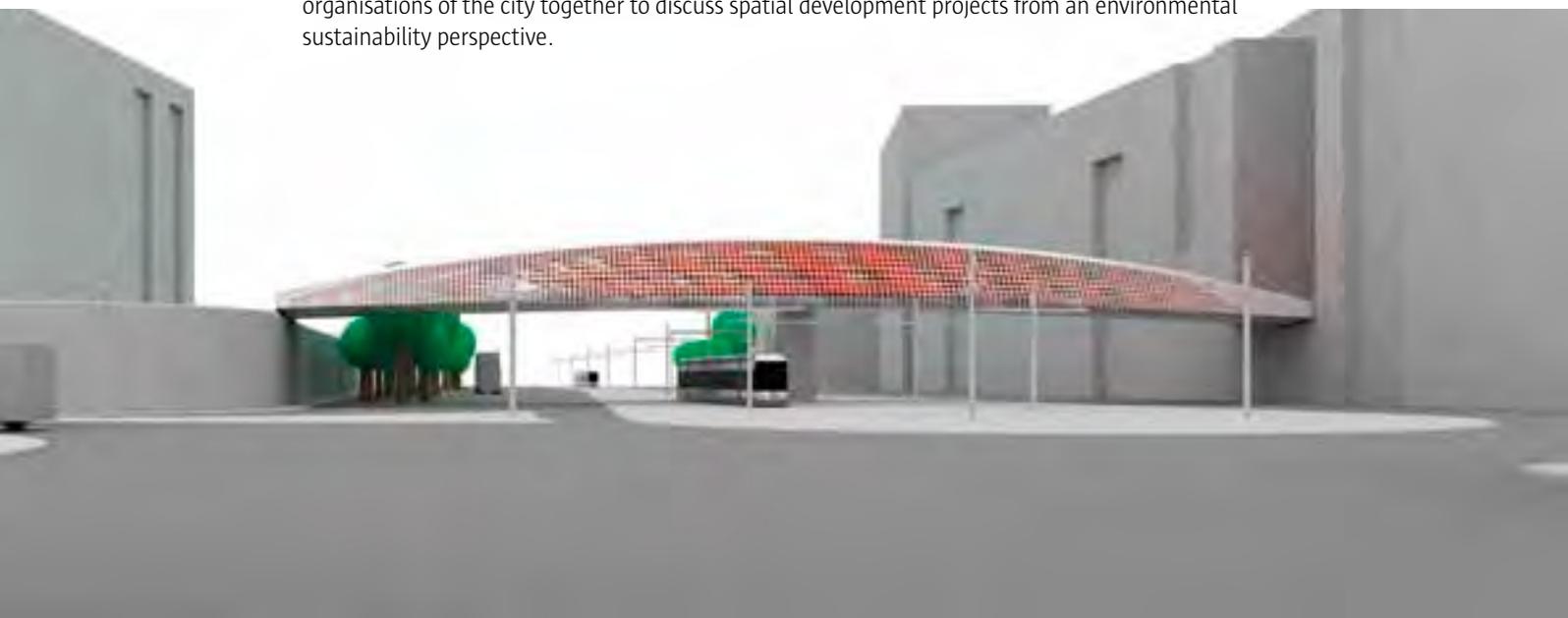
Numerous **social advisory bodies** contribute to the city as a high-quality living environment: the Environmental Council, the Youth Council, the Senior Citizen Council, the Sports Council and the Culture Council. Furthermore, residents are involved in the developments in their neighbourhood by means of the organisation of participation meetings by the city service for participation, Stedelijk Wijkoverleg. Here, the advisory bodies with the most direct impact on the spatial development of the city are mentioned.

The **Welstand Committee** was established within the scope of the Architecture Memorandum drawn up by the city in 1996. It consists of four external architects and the Stadsbouwmeester. The Welstand Committee focuses on the quality of buildings. It advises the Mayor and the Municipal Executive on applications for planning permissions for projects that will have an impact on the image of the city and works together with the Permissions service and the Stadsbouwmeester's team to that end.

The **Gemeentelijke Commissie Ruimtelijke Ordening** (Gecoro; 'Municipal Spatial Planning Committee') is an advisory body required under the Flemish spatial planning decree (1999). Gecoro takes a close look at spatial implementation plans and construction ordinances as well as at master plans and other projects, plans and themes that are important in terms of urban development. The members represent on the one hand the different layers of society (such as employers, employees, educators, environmental societies, small- and medium-sized businesses, ...) and on the other hand experts in the field of architecture, landscape design, spatial planning, property development, water management as well as legal or sociological experts. All Gecoro members are external with regard to the city services. Gecoro provides direct advice to the Mayor and the Municipal Executive.

The **Commissie Openbaar Domein** ('Public Domain Committee') was established by the municipal authorities in 2010 to substitute the Plenary Consultations and advises the Mayor and the Municipal Executive and the district executives on the quality of public space projects. It is chaired by the Stadsbouwmeester. Apart from the project leaders and designers involved, the different city services for the development, programming and maintenance of the public domain are also represented in the committee together with the traffic police and the municipal parking company. There are also external experts, such as representatives of Werkgroep Antwerpen Toegankelijk ('Accessible Antwerp Study Group') and the Fietsersbond ('Cyclists Union').

The **Werkgroep Duurzame Stedenbouw** ('Sustainable Urban Development Study Group') is mainly an internal consultative body which brings companies, daughter companies and other organisations of the city together to discuss spatial development projects from an environmental sustainability perspective.



Planning permission applications

A thorough **assessment** of planning permission applications is important in order to guarantee the spatial quality of all private projects in the territory of the city. In general, the city strives for a thorough preliminary consultation (or pre-advice) process preceding the formal permission stage. This enables interaction with the initiator about the design from the very beginning, gives a better chance of achieving a satisfactory result together, and ensures that the permission stage itself can go as smoothly as possible.

Thanks to the **pre-advice** every applicant can discuss their plans with an official of the city's planning permission service prior to the formal procedure. This official can point out the various compelling requirements, guidelines and rules, but also stimulate the applicant to increase the project's spatial quality.

Furthermore, in consultation with the Stadbouwmeester's team, the official can ask for **Welstand advice** regarding projects that will have a significant impact on the city image. After an introduction by the official granting the permission, the Welstand Committee exchanges ideas with the commissioner and the architect of the building project in order to formulate advice. This is how the Welstand Committee has developed into an important tool to converse on the architectural quality of planning permission applications in a structural manner.



Design contests

It is important to **boost** quality as early in the design process as possible. A correct commissioning process starts with a clear description of the project and the selection of an appropriate procedure to appoint a designer. In Antwerp, design contests have been accepted as the most interesting working method to select the best designers and designs for one's own projects.

The **Open Call** of the Flemish Bouwmeester (Chief Government Architect) enables cities and municipalities to publish projects twice a year and open them up to national and international designers. The city of Antwerp gratefully and frequently makes use of this procedure for the most characteristic projects.

As not all of Antwerp's city projects are included in the Open Call procedure, Antwerp has developed its own contest tool: the **designer pool**. After an open application process, ten to fifteen designers are selected on the basis of their submitted portfolios for a maximum period of four years. The commissions that present themselves during that time are then divided between those designers according to the nature of the projects and the required expertise. This may or may not happen after an additional mini-competition between three contestants.

Pools were composed **according to** the different types of commissions: large and small-scale architectural commissions (over and under approx. € 500,000), urban development master plans, commissions for the development of public space and restorations. This resulted in a municipal tool to appoint designers quickly and efficiently without losing quality.

As the municipal authorities have eagerly made use of the Open Call tool early on, Antwerp has developed a long tradition of **working with top designers** in comparison with other Belgian cities. Its own contest procedures and the numerous and varied design commissions also attract an interesting mix of candidates. One of the main evolutions to be noted is that more and more local talent presents itself.



Annex

The work of many hands

WHO IS WHO IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF OUR CITY

Actieve Stad ('Active City')

Actieve Stad consists of the divisions Algemeen Onderwijsbeleid ('General Education Policy'), Antwerpen Studentenstad ('Antwerp Student City'), Toerisme en Congres ('Tourism and Congress') and Werk en Economie ('Work and Economy'). Actieve Stad wants to make Antwerp the most attractive environment to learn, start a business, work, visit and enjoy oneself. The company is aimed at network development, takes initiatives in assuming a coordinating role and looks for synergies within and outside the company's different divisions.

Antwerp Headquarters

Antwerp Headquarters is a unique partnership between the public and the private sector. It offers independent advice and support to (international) companies who wish to start operations in Antwerp and to companies from Antwerp who wish to expand.

www.antwerpheadquarters.be

Bedrijvenloket ('Business Information Desk')

The Business Information Desk is part of Actieve Stad. The desk answers questions about (local) entrepreneurship in Antwerp. The services of the Business Information Desk range from advice on small, practical and administrative matters to guidance in the search for an appropriate location and guidance for starting up a business.

www.antwerpen.be/bedrijven

***Cultuur, Sport en Jeugd* ('Culture, Sport and Youth')**

Cultuur, Sport en Jeugd works on the development of the city's cultural and sport activities and infrastructure. It is responsible for the daily operation of museums, cultural centres and libraries, swimming pools, sport fields and other facilities. The company consists of the Sport en Recreatie department ('Sport and Recreation'; infrastructure), the non-profit organisation Antwerpen Sportstad ('Antwerp Sport City'; promotion and organisation), the Jeugd department ('Youth') and the Musea en Erfgoed department ('Museums and Heritage'). The cultural policy is also propagated by Antwerpen Boekenstad ('Antwerp Book City') and Antwerp's libraries and cultural centres. The company has its own patrimony division for maintenance and construction works.

***AG Parkeerbedrijf Antwerpen* ('Autonomous Municipal Parking Company of Antwerp')**

The Autonomous Municipal Parking Company was established in 2001 by the municipal authorities to draw up a parking policy for the city of Antwerp. Since then, the company has geared the parking needs of residents, visitors and traders to one another within the lines of the spatial and the mobility policy.

www.parkereninantwerpen.be

***Patrimoniumonderhoud* ('Patrimony Maintenance')**

Patrimoniumonderhoud takes care of the city's buildings. The departments Huisvesting & Masterplanning ('Housing & master planning'), Projectbureau Bouw ('Construction Project Office'), the Energiebeheercel ('Energy Management Division') and the operation & maintenance team research the distribution of public amenities, strive for qualitative architecture with sustainable techniques and redesignate, restore and renovate the city's buildings. In addition, they also take care of the management and maintenance of these buildings.

Mailing address: Grote Markt 1 - 2000 Antwerpen
Tel. 03 338 2210 | PO_Communicatie@stad.antwerpen.be

***Samen Leven* ('Living Together')**

Samen Leven consists of the divisions Woonomgeving ('Living Environment'), Ontmoeting ('Meeting'), Inburgering ('Integration'), Sociale Interventie ('Social Intervention'), Stadstoezicht ('City Surveillance') and Bestuurlijke Handhaving ('Administrative Enforcement'). The service Stedelijk Wijkoverleg ('Neighbourhood Participation') of the Woonomgeving division organises communication, participation and consultation regarding urban development plans and projects. Communication for supra-local projects is mainly taken care of by the business unit Stadsontwikkeling ('Urban Development') and the autonomous municipal company Stadsplanning Antwerpen ('Urban Development in Antwerp') with the cooperation of the business unit Marketing en Communicatie ('Marketing and Communication').

Stadsbouwmeester ('City Chief Architect')

Stadsbouwmeester Kristiaan Borret controls the quality of projects and construction works in the territory of Antwerp. He monitors both large-scale area developments and individual construction works and interventions in the public domain. The Stadsbouwmeester is the chairman of the Welstand Committee, which formulates advice on building applications for projects that will have an impact on the image of the city. Finally, the Stadsbouwmeester's team is also responsible for the (international) exchange of knowledge on urban development, architecture and space with other cities and institutions.

Mailing address: Grote Markt 1 - 2000 Antwerpen
Tel. 03 338 2335 | stadsbouwmeester@stad.antwerpen.be
www.antwerpen.be/stadsbouwmeester

Stadsontwikkeling ('Urban Development')

Stadsontwikkeling is comprised of the divisions Ruimte en Mobiliteit ('Space and Mobility'), Ontwerp en Uitvoering Publieke Ruimte ('Design and Implementation of the Public Space'), Beheer en Onderhoud Openbaar Domein ('Management and Maintenance of the Public Domain'), Vergunningen ('Permits'), Onroerend Erfgoed ('Heritage'), Energie en Milieu ('Energy and Environment') and the States General of Road Safety. The company is responsible for the spatial policy, the mobility policy, projects and interventions in the public space, planning permissions and environmental permits, monument conservation, archaeology and the environmental and energy policy.

Mailing address: Grote Markt 1 - 2000 Antwerpen
Tel. 03 338 6666 | SW_communicatie@stad.antwerpen.be
www.antwerpen.be/stadsvernieuwing | www.antwerpen.be/structuurplan

AG Stadsplanning Antwerpen ('Autonomous Municipal Company for City Planning of Antwerp')

The autonomous municipal company (AG) Stadsplanning Antwerpen coordinates the implementation of area-oriented programmes and strategic city projects. The focus is on an integrated, multidisciplinary and cross-sector approach in which projects, investments and actors and views involved are aligned with one another in an optimal manner.

Mailing address: Grote Markt 1 - 2000 Antwerpen
Tel. 03 338 2181 | info@stadsplanning.antwerpen.be
www.agstadsplanning.be

AG Stedelijk Onderwijs ('Autonomous Municipal Company for Education')

The autonomous municipal company Stedelijk Onderwijs is in charge of the municipal educational offer in the city. In implementation of the Municipal Education Master Plan, AG Stedelijk Onderwijs strives to provide an adequate, sustainable and architecturally qualitative school infrastructure through its Cel Vastgoed en Projecten ('Real Estate and Projects Division').

www.so.antwerpen.be

AG Vespa

AG VESPA, the Autonomous Municipal Company for Real Estate and City Projects in Antwerp, specialises in real estate, construction projects, development projects and fund management. AG VESPA strives for quality and sustainability in all its real estate projects and plays an important role in public-private partnership projects, e.g. by purchasing plots of land.

Generaal Lemanstraat 55 bus 4 - 2018 Antwerpen
Tel. 03 259 28 10 | info@vespa.antwerpen.be
www.agvespa.be

Werk en Economie (Work and Economy)

The Werk en Economie agency centralises and implements Antwerp's economic policy. Werk en Economie is comprised of the divisions Ondernemingen ('Enterprises'), Detailhandel en Horeca ('Retail and Hospitality') and Werk en Sociale Economie ('Work and Social Economy'). Werk en Economie closely cooperates with the companies and divisions for urban development, especially with regard to the development of offices and business parks. One of the main projects for the following years is the development of the Blue Gate Antwerp business park.

www.bluegateantwerp.eu

Zorgbedrijf ('Care Company')

Zorgbedrijf Antwerpen is responsible for making quarters suitable for every age group by providing an appropriate combination of housing and care to the elderly in their own neighbourhood. With its own real estate development division, the company initiates construction and renovation projects in order to integrate residential care centres into neighbourhood life.

www.zorgbedrijf.antwerpen.be

Expo ‘Designing Antwerp’

In 2011 an informative exhibition was established on urban development in Antwerp in the building of the Felix Archives at het Eilandje. Twelve thematic tables disclose ambitious short- and long-term plans ranging from the renovation of streets, squares, parks and buildings over large-scale projects like Park Spoor Noord, het Eilandje, the Scheldt Quays and the Green Singel to the creation of new residential areas such as ‘t Groen Kwartier (‘Green Quarter’), Regatta and Groen Zuid (‘Green South’).

Location, opening hours and other practical information:

www.antwerpen.be/antwerpenontwerpen

Municipal info line: +32 (0) 3 22 11 333



Publications

Antwerpen, Herwonnen Stad. Synthesenota Globaal Structuurplan

Antwerpen, Vanreusel, J; Vermeulen, P.; Koschak, L., Planning Department of the City of Antwerp, 1990

Stadsvernieuwing in beweging, Knops G.; van den Broeck J.; King Baudoin Foundation, Brussels, 1992

Taking sides. Antwerp's 19th-century belt: elements for culture of the city. / Enmarge des rives. La ceinture du XIXe siècle à Anvers: éléments pour une culture de la ville. Uyttenhove, P. [ed.], Antwerpen Open Stad, 1993

Spoor Noord. Een stedelijk park in zicht, Ludion, Antwerp, 2003

Spoor Noord. A city park off the beaten tracks, Ludion, Antwerp, 2003

Antwerpen Ontwerpen. Strategisch Ruimtelijk Structuurplan, City of Antwerp, 2006

Inspirerende renovaties in de stad. Nieuw leven voor Antwerpen-Noord en Oud-Borgerhout, Lannoo, 2006

Een rode draad voor het Schipperskwartier, City of Antwerp, 2007

Bouwblokkenboek, University Press Antwerp, Antwerp, 2008

Antwerp, territory of a new modernity, SUN, Amsterdam, 2009

Den Bell. Het verhaal van een legendarisch gebouw, Canfyn, F., Linkeroever Uitgevers, Antwerp, 2009

Groene Singel. Geschiedenis van de Antwerpse ringruimte. Plannen, verhalen, dromen. 1906-2009, Ludion, Antwerp, 2009

Antwerpen innoveert. Out: Petroleum Zuid. In: Blue Gate Antwerp, Uitgeverij Snoeck, Heule, 2011

Anvers, «Faire aimer la ville», Masbounji, A. [ed.], Groupe Moniteur, Department of Architecture / Housing and Nature Planning, Paris, 2011

Masterplan Scheldekaaien. Tussen stad en stroom, AG Stadsplanning, W&Z, 2011

Park Groot Schijn. «Een spraakmakend pad naar een nieuw park», AG Stadsplanning, 2011

Park Spoor Noord. Van idee tot park, AG Stadsplanning, 2011

Awards

Year	Project	Award	Category
1992	Urban renewal in regeneration areas	Agora Award	
2002	De Coninckplein area	Thuis in de Stad-prijs	Spatial project
2003	Designcenter	Belgian Building Award	Best corporate building
2003	<i>Gezondheidshuis</i> in Sailor's Quarter	Johnson & Johnson Medicine Award	
2003	Designcenter	<i>Bouwheer</i> Award New construction	New construction
2003	Re-opening of De Roma	<i>Thuis in de Stad</i> award	
2003	Tweemontstraat Square in Deurne	<i>'Publieke ruimte, kinderen toegelaten'</i>	
2005	<i>Gezondheidshuis</i> in Sailor's Quarter	Bouwheer Award	New construction
2005	Sailor's Quarter	<i>Thuis in de Stad</i> award	Spatial project
2006	Sailor's Quarter	DIFA Award Special Award	
2006	Land and property policy	Provincial Award for Architecture	
2006	<i>Droom de stad</i>	<i>Thuis in de Stad</i> award	Resident, neighbourhood or quarter initiative
2006	AMUZ	Flemish Monument Award	
2006	Sailor's Quarter	Flemish Spatial Planning Award	
2007	Felix Archives	Belgian Building Award	Cultural heritage
2007	Property policy	<i>Bouwheer</i> Award	Integrated contract
2007	Felix Archives	<i>Bouwheer</i> Award	Reuse and redesignation
2007	<i>Opsinjoren</i>	<i>Thuis in de Stad</i> award	Resident, neighbourhood or quarter initiative
2008	Strategic Spatial Structure Plan for Antwerp	ISOCARP Award for Excellence	
2008	<i>Theaterplein, het dak op de markt</i>	<i>Thuis in de Stad</i> award	Spatial project
2008	studies regarding the Green Singel Master Plan	Flemish Spatial Planning Award	
2009	Corporate Transport Plan Den Bell	Business Mobility Award	
2009	<i>Central Station Area</i>	<i>Le Palmarès des Mobilités</i>	
2009	<i>Park Spoor Noord</i>	<i>Bouwheer</i> Award	Public space
2009	New administrative centre in Hoboken	Bouwheer Award	Energy-efficient new construction
2009	Scheldt Quays Participation Process	<i>Thuis in de Stad</i> award	Resident, neighbourhood or quarter initiative
2009	<i>Park Spoor Noord</i>	<i>Thuis in de Stad</i> award	Spatial project
2009	<i>Park Spoor Noord</i>	UDiTE Knowledge sharing Award	
2009	Veldstraat swimming pool	Flemish Monument Award	Redesignation
2010	Master plan for Lillo	Provincial Award for Architecture	
2010	<i>Park Groot Schijn</i>	Flemish Spatial Planning Award	Participation
2010	Scheldt Quays: www.onzekaaien.be	Website Monitor Local Authorities	Most innovative municipal web initiative
2011	Urn forest at Schoonselhof	Funeral Awards	Redesignation
2011	<i>Thank you for not speeding campaign</i>	OVK Sinterklaas Award	Road safety initiative
2011	<i>Thank you for not speeding campaign</i>	IMC European Awards	Best non-profit activation campaign
2012	Driekoningenstraat-Statiestraat	Public Space Award	

