

gent:

ROOM
FOR ALL
GHENT ENEERS

2030 structural vision in a nutshell



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STEDENBOUW IN GENT

De Stad Gent werkt momenteel aan haar eigen toekomstvisie, een ruimtelijk structuurplan voor 2030. Het plan heet 'Ruimte voor Gent'. Ik heb mij laten uitleggen hoe het maken van zo'n plan precies in elkaar zit. Daarbij merkte iemand op dat je onder zo'n structuurplan 'Ceci n'est pas un plan' zou kunnen schrijven. Het is een plan, maar ook weer niet. Een concrete uitvoering volgt vaak niet meteen. De kans is dus klein dat tegen 2030 alles uitgevoerd wordt wat in zo'n plan beschreven staat.

Ruimtelijke structuurplanning raakt aan een soort vertraagde tijd, waarin sommige plannen nieuw lijken, maar voortbouwen op eerdere plannen en waarin een (onvermijdelijke) spagaat zit tussen plan en uitvoering. Een structuurplan is dus eerder een wenselijkheid, een visie voor hoe de stad zichzelf graag zou zien ontwikkelen in de toekomst. Een streefdoel waar de werkelijkheid, van zowel bewoners als privaattontwikkelaars, aan afgetoetst moet worden.

Actie ondernemen is de volgende stap. Het stadsbestuur kan wensen, idealen en keuzes schiepstellen in concrete uitvoeringsplannen, bewoners kunnen hun stem laten horen (bijvoorbeeld tijdens het openbaar onderzoek in 2017) en nieuwe mogelijkheden tonen met hun omgeving als laboratorium.

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Colophon

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Introduction

Society and cities are constantly changing. Ghent is growing and must continue to address the needs of its people: affordable housing in a pleasant area with enough green, options for relaxation, employment, accessibility and open spaces for agriculture and nature development.

This requires thoughtful spatial policy. Policy that shapes the city of the future, and is permanently held to 3 basic themes: sustainability, spatial quality, and spatial capacity. Not only in the short term, but the long term as well.

Space for Ghent – 2030 Structural vision describes the way in which we wish to live, work, relax, get around, and prepare the city for climate change. The plan was developed in association with the people and users of Ghent. A public investigation has taken place, and the city council approved the final version in May 2018.

This brochure summarizes our vision. The full document (in Dutch) is available at www.ruimtevoor.gent/roomforghent



OUR 3 THEMES

Sustainability

We address the needs of the current generation, without jeopardizing the needs of future generations. We use the available space prudently. And we enhance the urban cores so that they may optimally fulfil their residential and professional functions.

Spatial quality

Our goal is high-quality use of space across all levels: planning, image, aesthetic, function, ... We are aware that these matters are subjective, culturally determined, and time-related.

Spatial capacity

We keep in mind that all locations have their limits regarding how much human activity they can bear. For instance, a busy shopping centre may place tremendous strain on a nearby residential area.



Why a new structural vision?

Ghent has a longstanding tradition of strategic spatial planning. The city has had a Municipal Spatial Structure Plan since 2003. Many core projects from this plan have been realized over the past years.

- the urban development project Ledeborg Lives
- the green hub Gentbrugse Meersen
- the former Arbed industrial site
- the KoBra project for the centre squares
- the new city library De Krook
- Dok Noord on the site of the former ACEC plants
- various parks

Others are fully underway:

- the development of the Old Docks
- Sint-Pieters railway station and its environs
- the new business location Eiland Zwijnaarde
- major residential projects such as Zeemanstuin in Sint-Amandsberg and Eco-Quarter Gantoise in Gentbrugge

The 2030 Structural Vision replaces this Municipal Spatial Structure Plan. With the new structural vision, we seek to address new trends, opportunities, and challenges. We have attuned existing and new demand for space to one another, and sought new innovative solutions.

The new plan is less detailed than the Municipal Spatial Structure Plan. We primarily offer a set of assessment framework and processes in order to make responsible choices in a changing future context.

The plan also explicitly aims to not only be a spatial, but also a human-oriented plan. We attach a great deal of importance to the world in which the residents live, and the daily use of space. This is why the vision was broadly co-created with the people and users of Ghent as well as experts. Behavioural change will also form a key focal point later on during the execution of projects.

Space pilots point the way to human-oriented planning

During the participation process, eight ideas put forth by citizens were selected, developed, and immediately tested for feasibility. The experiences of residents and users on the one hand and the technical expertise of city services and external agencies on the other hand were collated. This process challenged them to think outside of their habitual parameters.

This resulted in instruments that actively improve the quality of daily use of space.

A few examples:

- The E17 underground: looking for alternatives to improve the quality of life of the residential areas around the E17 overpass.
- Protecting inner areas: developing a strategy for giving enclosed areas a high-quality purpose
- Render short-chain agriculture visible in and around Ghent (Space for Mess)
- Densification of 20th-century neighbourhoods (Parkstad Wondelgem)
- Greening the Voskenslaan



What challenges are we facing?

Space is under increasing pressure. This is not just an urban phenomenon, but has to do with a variety of factors such as population growth, immigration, and the increase in the number of families. The basis for all of this lies with irreversible developments such as the enormous increase in mobility, the economic transformation, and increased prosperity. More than ever before, people have been given the possibility to live and work elsewhere.

More residents means more need for homes, facilities, jobs, public space, and green. This spatial pressure strains the city's quality of life. Indeed, as early as 2012, 41 percent of Ghent's surface area was covered and virtually impermeable to water. If we wish to have a liveable and climate-resistant city, then we must ensure that this degree of surface hardening does not increase. At the same time we must formulate a response to the approaching challenges.



QUALITY OF LIFE CHALLENGE

A liveable city is a city where everyone has space to live, and where everyone has access to safe public space, public transportation, and facilities such as education, care, culture, sports, and recreation. It is at the same time an accessible city with sufficient and differentiated employment opportunities.



WE NEED MORE FACILITIES FOR ALL AGES, AND WELL-DISTRIBUTED GREEN SPACES

A liveable city addresses climate change, increasing vehicular traffic, and pressure from the city region for instance through education facilities. It boasts a network of meeting places that contribute to spatial and social cohesion.

Some numbers:

- More than 200 extra places are needed in childcare, more than 400 extra places in primary education, and 3,163 extra places in secondary education by 2030
- More room is needed for sports centres, water sports, boxing, basketball, tennis, football, padel, and judo
- More green is needed in the immediate area and more woodland in the surrounding area

CLIMATE CHALLENGE

A climate-friendly city is organized in such a way that people only need to travel short distances. Renovating homes in a sustainable manner reduces the requirement for energy and thus the emission of CO₂. Green and water provide cooling. An open structure reduces the urban heat island effect. Open spaces catch water in case of heavy rainfall, and retain water to bridge periods of drought.

*WE NEED
SUSTAINABLE AND
CLIMATE-ROBUST
SPATIAL DEVELOPMENT*

In a climate-friendly city, we go for energy reduction. The residual energy requirements are met by means of renewable energy. This is done at various levels: from micro (home/business) to meso (neighbourhood) all the way to macro (city).

Some numbers:

- 50 % of homes in Ghent are more than 55 years old
- CO₂ emissions must be reduced by 40 % by 2030 and by 80 to 95% by 2050
- Energy performance levels of valuable buildings must be improved to 70 kWh/m² by 2050
- The urban heat island effect causes temperatures in the city to be 3 to 8 degrees warmer than outside of the city



DEMOGRAPHIC CHALLENGE

A demographically modified city provides a response to the major population increase, when it comes to the registered population as well as students and 'hidden' residents (undocumented persons, the homeless, and owners of second residences). It accommodates rejuvenation, ageing, and coloration. And the growth in the number of one-person households, large families, newly composed families, single persons sharing a home, households with one parent caring for the children half the time, intergenerational households, ... Thus, it focuses on a varied and affordable residential and care offering.

*WE MUST ACCOMMODATE
THE GROWTH AND
CHANGING COMPOSITION
OF THE POPULATION*

Some numbers:

- The population of Ghent will grow to at least 269,000 residents by 2030
- There will be about 9,000 extra households by 2030
- There will be about 7,600 extra persons over 60 by 2030
- About 870 extra assisted living residences and 350 extra places in residential care centres will be needed by 2025
- There are now over 70,000 students and a rising number of boarding students
- At the moment, 51 % of private rented housing does not meet the minimum standards from the Flemish housing code; only 1/3 of social housing is of sound quality
- About 10,800 effectively added residences are planned by 2030

MOBILITY CHALLENGE

A mobile city provides smooth selective throughput of the growing number of residents, students, and commuters. It addresses the immediate traffic intensity from the city region and searches for creative solutions to the public transportation network. The use of bicycles is promoted and supported, and reachability and accessibility for pedestrians is guaranteed.

WE NEED
SUSTAINABLE MOBILITY
IN A SELECTIVELY
ACCESSIBLE CITY

Throughout the previous decades, Ghent has pioneered sustainable urban mobility. We are now reaping the first benefits thereof. Guaranteeing selective accessibility of the city (region) remains our number one challenge.

Some numbers:

- More than 650,000 trips take place in Ghent every day
- For the first time, over 50 % of trips in Ghent take place on foot, by bicycle, or using public transportation
- The majority of trips in Ghent remain below 5 to 10 kilometres
- Bicycle usage has grown from 22 % to 30 % in 3 years



*inspiration day bicycle tour –
Citizens share ideas during an inspiration day.*

ECONOMIC CHALLENGE

A growing residential and professional city yields additional differentiated and appropriate employment opportunities. It continues to cleverly diversify and innovate the economy by creating enough space for existing businesses and for businesses in growth sectors. In this context, innovation is strategically embedded within the fabric of the city through support for innovation, focus on (future) strengths, close cooperation between government, education, businesses, and external users and positioning within an international context.

WE MUST
BE ABLE TO
ADDRESS THE
CHANGING ECONOMY

Some numbers:

- Ghent will need 30,000 extra jobs by 2030
- A varied range of manufacturing industry, offices, knowledge-based economy, creative economy, and trade is needed
- The city has seen 2,500 new start-ups per year since 2014
- 168 hectares of land is available for economic purposes: 129 ha of business area, 30 ha of scientific and knowledge parks, and 9 ha of office area (2016 figures)





Building a city together

Spatial planning is best done for and with all residents and users of the city. This is how the structural vision Space for Ghent arose; it was co-created with a broad range of target groups. Schools, businesses, residents, ... helped develop a shared vision for a high-quality residential, professional, and living climate in Ghent.

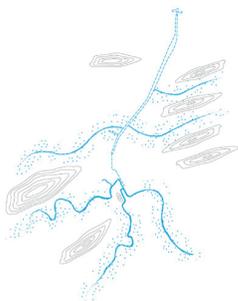
The challenge consists of building enough flexibility into the spatial policy, without compromising the functionality of the city as a physical and spatial system in the long term.

Desired spatial structure

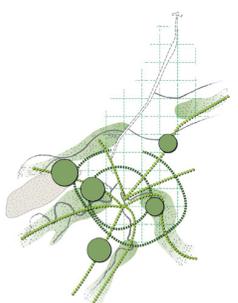


THE SPATIAL STRUCTURAL VISION 2030
BUNDLES OUR STRATEGIES AND MAKES
THEM COHESIVE

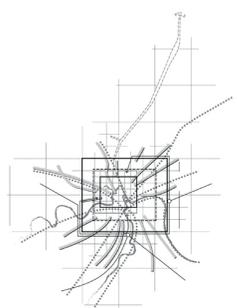
Supporting concepts



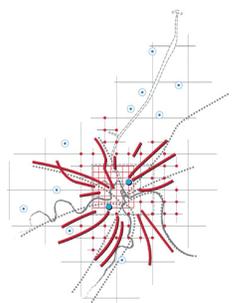
water, topografie en bodem vormen de basis voor de groeiende stad



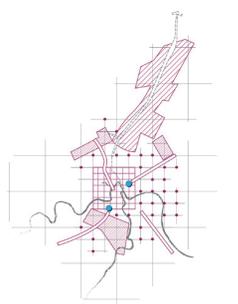
water en groen geven zuurstof aan de stad



een netwerk van voet- en fietspaden en verbindingen voor het openbaar vervoer



dynamiek in de nabijheid van voorzieningen, knooppunten in het mobiliteitsnetwerk en water en groen



verweven werk, ondernemerschap en innovatie in de stedelijke ruimte

legend

-  te verweven binnenstad (historisch centrum en kunstenviertel)
-  gericht te herstructureren en te verluchten verweven kernstad
-  selectief knooppuntsgewijs te verdichten en economisch te verweven groeistad
-  te verdichten en economisch te verweven groeistadskern
-  laagdynamisch evolverende perifere kern in buitengebied
-  te versterken plek/knooppunt met eigen eigenheid (plein, park, plek, voorziening of gecombineerde plek)
-  steenweg met hoogwaardige tram-/ buslijn en/of fietsas en een kraal van verdichtingspunten
-  verblijfsvriendelijker en vlot oversteekbaar te maken stadsboulevard met verdichtingsmogelijkheden
-  fors in te breiden haven
-  te intensifiëren plek met focus op niet-verweefbaar werk
-  recreatief en natuurlijk uit te bouwen groenpool (ook deel buiten Gent)
-  natuurlijk uit te bouwen en van bebouwing te vrijwaren vallei
-  beleefbaar en beter bereikbaar te maken en meer ruimte te geven rivier/beek
-  als kralenkettingen uit te bouwen groene (recreatieve) ringen
-  volwaardig uit te bouwen groenas
-  actief in te richten koppelingsgebied
-  verbindende fiets- en groennetwerken
-  te versterken (fiets) veer
-  Vlaamse hoofdweg met hoofdknooppunt
-  bovengronds te verwijderen zuidoostelijke doortocht hoofdweg
-  te optimaliseren primaire weg I (+ zoekzone)
-  te optimaliseren primaire weg II
-  te optimaliseren hoofd- of verzamelweg
-  verder uit te bouwen spoorlijn / station als ontwikkelingspool
-  te vrijwaren open ruimte voor grondgebonden professionele landbouw en passende bosontwikkelingen

How do we grow wisely?

Space in Ghent is limited. Therefore, we wish to grow 'wisely'. This means situating the desired spatial developments within the current residential, professional, recreational, and facility destinations..

How will we accomplish this?

Here are our 5 strategies for facing the challenges in a sustainable and clever manner.

SMART DENSIFICATION AND AERATING

Smart densification and aeration is our goal. This means doing more with the available space. For instance building new homes in easily accessible places, and providing more open spaces in other locations.

Densification can be done in different ways:

1. **Stacking:** building taller, utilizing underground space or adding storeys to existing buildings
2. **Sharing:** using buildings, parking spaces, ... for various purposes at various times
3. **Repurposing:** giving new life to existing terrains and buildings that are no longer being used
4. **Temporary usage:** using spaces that are temporarily disused, for instance because they await development, for other purposes in the meantime
5. **Urban parcelling:** (re-)parcelling larger parcels into smaller plots, allowing for more efficient use of space
6. **Smaller housing:** stimulating residents to choose smaller-scale residences, adapted to the family composition



*Boerenhof Kwakkelstraat:
hardened core turned into green oasis.*

One of the main challenges lies in cleverly densifying the 20th-century neighbourhoods of Ghent. This can be done for instance by creating villa apartments, bundling parking facilities (underground), optimizing public transportation, and making public space attractive for pedestrians and cyclists, including more green and less surface hardening.

Densification cannot be done without 'aeration'. This is achieved for instance by opening up 'enclosed areas' in the inner city and the 19th-century neighbourhoods. These are clogged-up areas between blocks of houses that are now often occupied by concrete or garages.

We combine this with sustainable energy systems such as geothermal energy, local (existing) district heating, or exchanging energy flows. This way, we develop sustainable neighbourhoods, business areas, and government buildings that remain affordable at the same time.



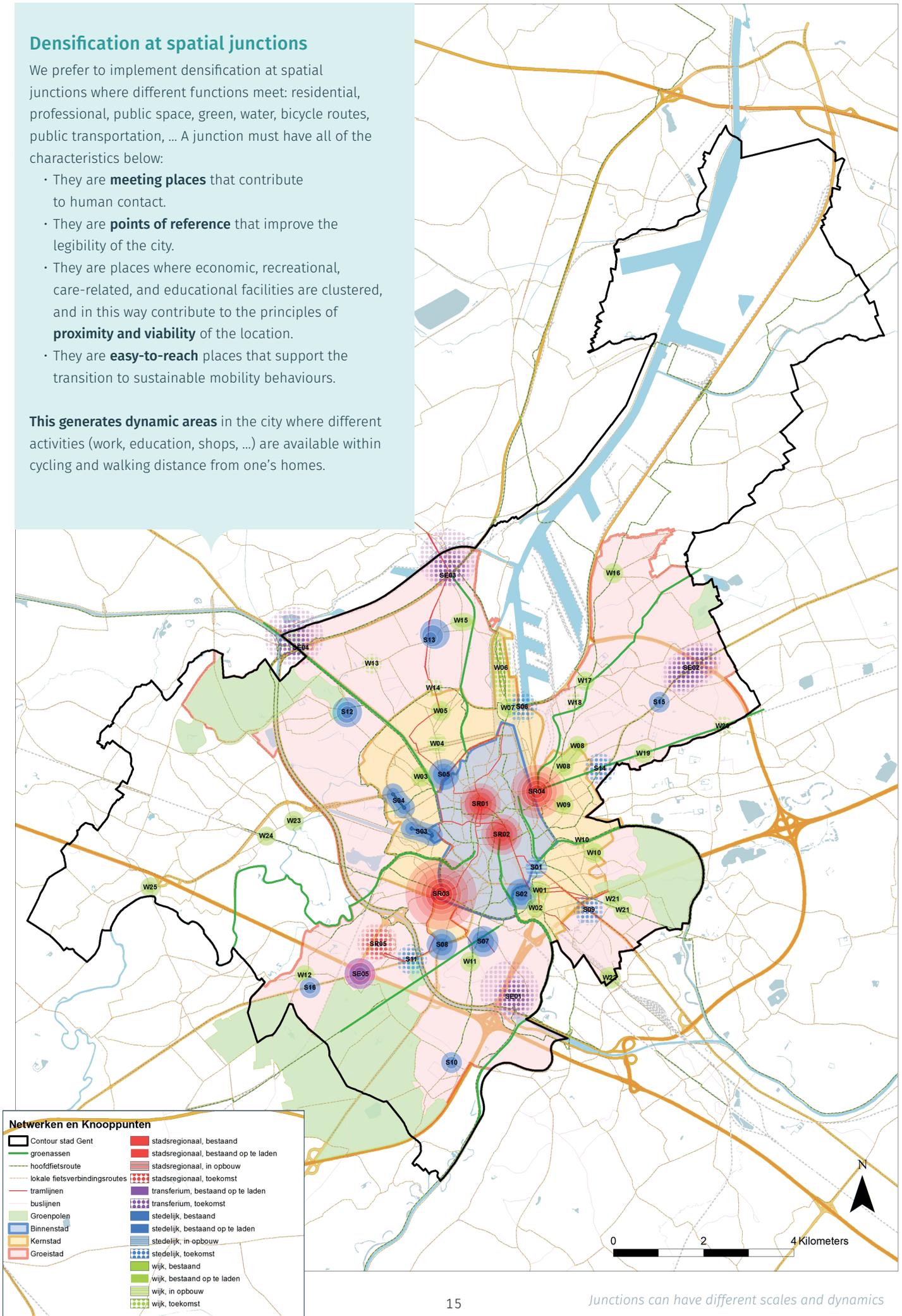
*Den Draad is a project with energy -
efficient housing and green public space*

Densification at spatial junctions

We prefer to implement densification at spatial junctions where different functions meet: residential, professional, public space, green, water, bicycle routes, public transportation, ... A junction must have all of the characteristics below:

- They are **meeting places** that contribute to human contact.
- They are **points of reference** that improve the legibility of the city.
- They are places where economic, recreational, care-related, and educational facilities are clustered, and in this way contribute to the principles of **proximity and viability** of the location.
- They are **easy-to-reach** places that support the transition to sustainable mobility behaviours.

This generates **dynamic areas** in the city where different activities (work, education, shops, ...) are available within cycling and walking distance from one's homes.



CLEVERLY INTERWEAVING FUNCTIONS

Clever densification means more than creating extra residences. We also create **proximity and microcentrality**: housing, work, and facilities are found in close proximity to one another, the area boasts green, and people can safely travel by bicycle and public transportation. This is done by interweaving functions.

Interweaving can be done at various levels: at the neighbourhood level, the housing block level, and even the building level. We mainly wish to interweave more employment and manufacturing into residential areas.

Working closer to home means fewer trips and more opportunities for shops and the catering industry in the area. Not every form of economy is suited for this purpose, but in principle separation becomes the exception.

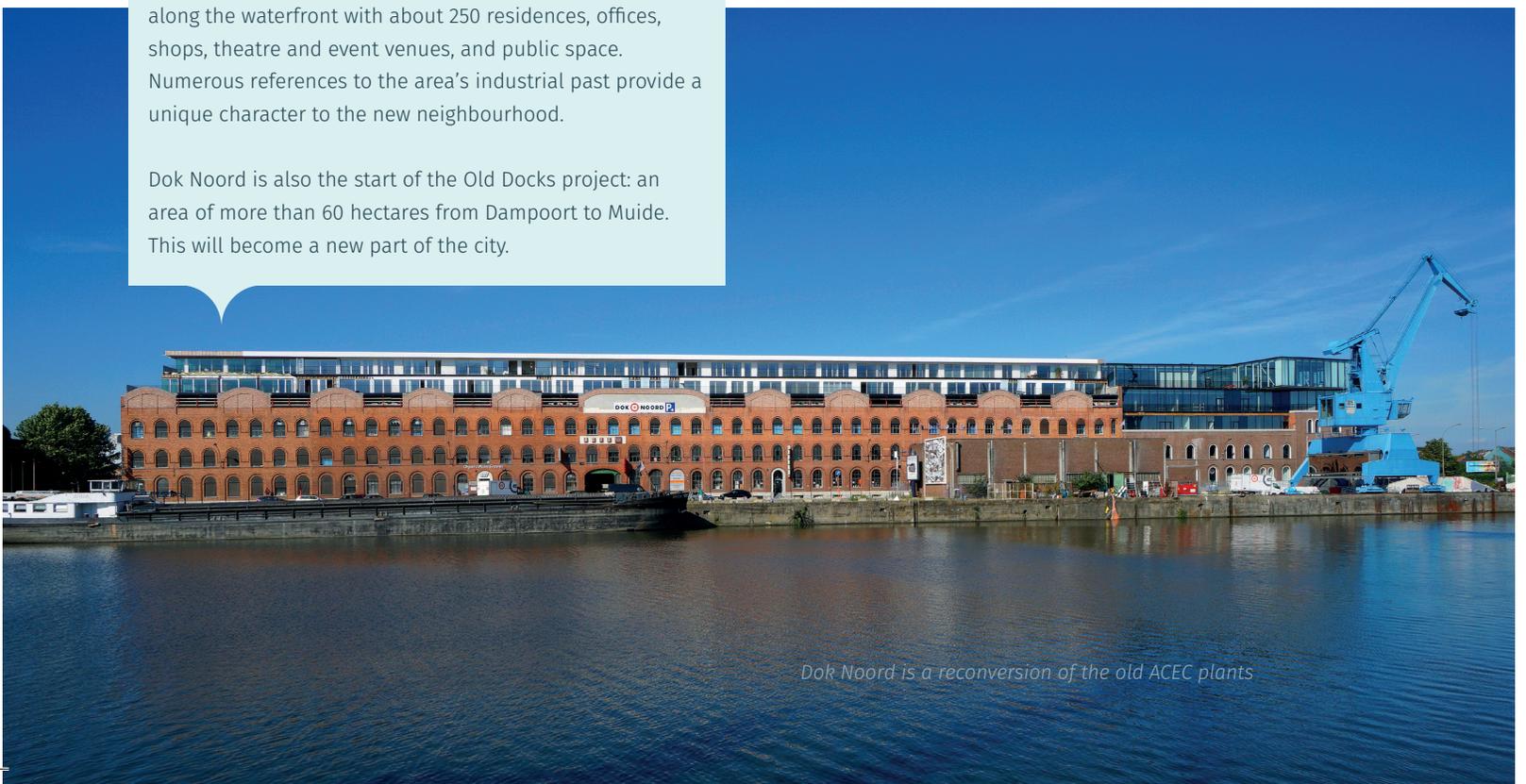
We hereby also aim to achieve short-chain agriculture that contributes to a climate-neutral Ghent. By interweaving the functions, we create agricultural possibilities without occupying additional land.



Dok Noord, interweaving junction

On former factory grounds arose a modern neighbourhood along the waterfront with about 250 residences, offices, shops, theatre and event venues, and public space. Numerous references to the area's industrial past provide a unique character to the new neighbourhood.

Dok Noord is also the start of the Old Docks project: an area of more than 60 hectares from Dampoort to Muide. This will become a new part of the city.



Dok Noord is a reconversion of the old ACEC plants



STIMULATING SUSTAINABLE MOBILITY

We interweave more economic functions into the residential area. The result is **fewer trips (by car)**, generating dynamism in the city.

This offers opportunities for **bicycle urbanism**. A network for pedestrians and cyclists forms the basis for urban development. In this context, facilities are geared towards this structural cycling network, and bicycle routes become firmly entrenched in the spatial structure of the city.

At the same time, we aim to achieve **selective accessibility**. A liveable city must be accessible, but not all the time, everywhere, or in every way. The priority here are pedestrians, followed by cyclists, then comes public transportation, and lastly there is private transportation. This causes people to reflect on the use of means of transportation depending on the moment, need, and nature of the trip. People will combine means of transportation. For instance, think of park & ride, park & bike, and park & walk.

We do guarantee the accessibility of the city for everyone who needs cars for professional or physical reasons. To this end, we are developing a set of **innovative sustainable** means of transportation adapted to the Ghent context. Individual motorized traffic is thereby dissociated more and more from individual vehicular ownership. Car sharing reduces the need for parking spaces, and allows us to utilize the freed-up space for different purposes.



Kramersplein before and after the mobility interventions



We optimize urban logistics by means of a city distribution platform for resupplying the inner city. A key role is hereby reserved for spatial junctions where water, bicycle, and (international) car traffic networks are linked.

Safe and comfortable bicycle connection along green climate axis 3

The Gentbrugse Meersen (240 ha), the Arbedpark (3.5 ha), and the Keizerpark (2 ha) are a few projects connected by one of the eight green climate axes. Their location along the Scheldt and Lys rivers provides a unique landscape experience along the connective bicycle axis.

In the inner city, the green climate axis is continued through the realization of green spaces and meeting places along the water, like a string of beads. Fine examples of this are the Visserijpark and the renovation of Portus Ganda and the Baudelopark. Cutting out the Baudelokaai and lowering the quay provide cohesion between the park and the water, enhance the continuity of the green climate axis, and increase safety for cyclists.

By introducing bicycle bridges and bicycle underpasses, we create a safe, connected, and pleasant bicycle route that interconnects the green spaces. For instance, the Keizerpark got a pedestrian and bicycle bridge that connects Ledeberg en Gentbrugge with the city centre.. Its success is so overwhelming that traffic measures and new solutions were necessary, such as the conversion of the Visserij to a bicycle street.



Green climate axis 3 ensures a unique scenic experience

GREEN AND WATER FACILITIES

On a metropolitan scale, we want everyone to have a **nature area** within cycling distance. These are the 5 green hubs. They are all larger than 100 hectares:

- Parkbos Zwijnaarde
- Vinderhoutse Bossen
- Oud Vliegveld Oostakker
- Gentbrugse Meersen
- Bourgoyen-Malem-Blaarmeersen-Sneppemeersen

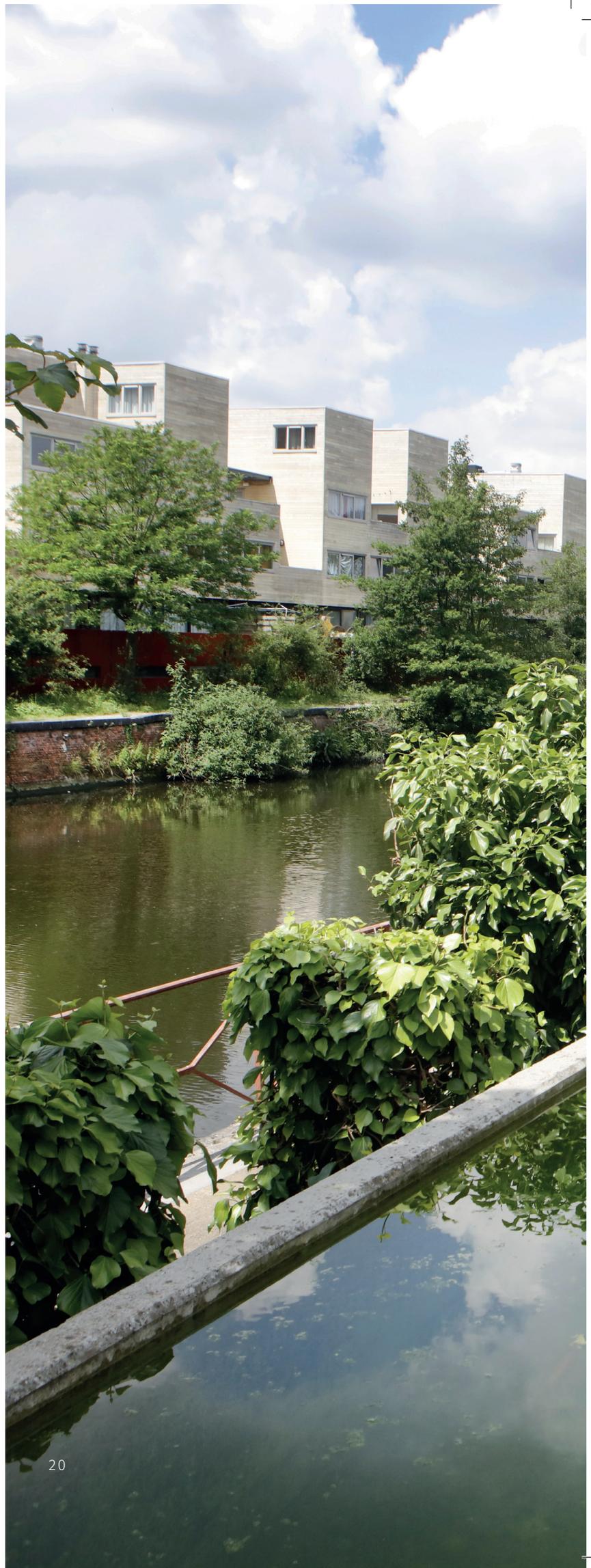
Eight green climate axes connect the open space and mainly the 5 green hubs with the (inner) city for vulnerable road users. Some green climate axes are already highly recognizable. For instance green climate axis 5 in the direction of Parkbos. The old railway track has been converted to a pedestrian and bicycle axis. Bicycle bridges across the E40 and Ringvaart/R4 provide continuous connectivity. We still need to enhance the green climate axis near the De Pintelaan. Green climate axis 3 in the direction of Zeeschelde has also been largely completed.

At the neighbourhood level, there are **neighbourhood parks**. By the end of 2018, Ghent will boast 62 of these parks. They are larger than 1 hectare and are within 400 metres from every residence.

Smaller green public spaces in turn yield liveable streets and neighbourhoods. This is called **neighbourhood greenery**. These bits of green have a surface area smaller than one hectare, and are within 150 meters of every residence. A nice example is the Appelbrugpark in the Jan Breydelstraat.

Waterways bring green into the centre and provide cooling, reducing the heat island effect. We green the banks and improve the water quality. Waterways that were covered or filled in, are restored. This creates a network of blue and green throughout the city.

We not only enhance the visibility of the water, but also the liveability. Space on and along the water can – certainly in urbanized areas – fulfil **various functions** side by side: mobility and transportation, recreation, landscape and experience, nature and green, ecology, housing, ... The lowered quays, pathways, and parks create openness, and this openness makes the space attractive to live in, work in, and spend time in.



Visions of water in the city

For centuries, Ghent has been a water city. We seek to enhance this with our spatial vision. The visions below demonstrate in what way we can make the dense inner city more climate robust and attractive by once again making historic waterways visible.

Vision of Ottogracht

Cutting the street in the purview of the Mobility Plan was the first step. We can further green the street, and also restore the historic water network.



Vision of Ottogracht

Vision of Blaisantvest

Here too, there used to be water (hence the 'pleasant'-sounding name). Today, Blaisantvest still serves as a split section of the city ring road. We aim to reduce this functionality. In time, the Nieuwe Vaart and/or the Gasmeterlaan can be converted to city boulevard, thereby downgrading Blaisantvest and freeing up a great deal of space of green and water, for togetherness and activity.



Vision of Blaisantvest



THE HUMAN FOCUS

Our point of reference when we shape space is the living environment of the residents and users of Ghent. We are creating a city for everyone, with everyone. The spatial policy processes are developed in conjunction with the users of this space, and with experts providing us with insights into societal trends. This is called **cocreation**.

This stimulates encounters and social cohesion. Hence, we emphasize the collective over the individual: we share spaces where we can live, work, and be creative (cohousing, coworking, cocreation). The growing number of cohousing projects shows that this has a future. People retain their privacy, but share facilities such as bicycle stalls, laundry areas, ... People will be sharing transportation more and more as well, think of the success that is car sharing.

Temporary destinations in turn breathe new life into locations, in between their old and new destinations. The past few years have seen various initiatives within the city:

- DOK at the Old Docks
- Living streets
- Pastory in Sint-Amandsberg, ...

Such human-oriented planning requires specific guidance. This approach is considerate of the diversity of society and possible leverage functions, and offers space for negotiations.



The residents of Rabot show that allotment gardens were important to them. Therefore, the gardens received a definitive place in the eventual project.



In living streets, we experiment with new forms of planning, green, and mobility

Living streets

The living streets project was co-created by citizens, the business community, and the authorities. It experiments with temporary low-traffic streets, freeing up more space for green, encounters, and togetherness.

Through the participation project, the City of Ghent seeks to improve social cohesion in the neighbourhoods of Ghent, and strengthen dialogue and solidarity at street level.

Residents organizing a living street are given the opportunity to take matters into their own hands, they commit to preserving the living street and assume responsibility for the organization this entails.

We make use of the experiences with the living streets when developing policies regarding street planning, area parking, street furniture, and mobility.

Information

For all information about Room for Ghent, visit www.ruimtevoor.gent/roomforghent

There you will find the full document on the structural vision (in Dutch), and view the main themes in a video. You will also find an overview of the space pilots and all submitted ideas.

Would you like extra information?
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