

Inspire and be inspired: an innovative, crowd sourced design of the Spatial Structural Vision 2030 'Room for Ghent' (Belgium)

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Ghent looks forward to an ambitious and innovative future

Ghent is a city of approximately 320,000 inhabitants (approximately 250,000 inhabitants and over 70,000 daily college and university students), situated in the centre of the Flanders Region (Belgium). The city has a strong tradition of strategic urban planning. Monitoring and analysis have shown that the spatial vision of the current Spatial Structure Plan of Ghent (for 1999 to 2003) is actually still accurate. Nevertheless some aspects require further explanation or renewed insights. Some emphases and priorities need to be revised. The result will be a renewed plan: the Spatial Structural Vision 2030, 'Room for Ghent'. We are pursuing a shift of emphasis for several subjects. This includes:

- a thorough update to formulate a coherent and forward looking answer to the new challenges as regards a liveable, climate proof and child-friendly city;
- a more strategic policy document that is less detailed and prescriptive, albeit with well defined limits, capable of weighing up and using the development potential of the city at any time and in a more flexible manner;
- focusing on a systematic policy driven use of space while taking account of the living environment of the inhabitants, as well as their everyday use of space;
- developing a planning policy in which citizens can play a more active role (co-creation).

Overall, spatial capacity and spatial quality are key concepts.

Social and spatial challenges of the future

Which new challenges are to be expected?

The liveability challenge: transforming the city into a liveable environment for young and old with sufficient and well distributed green areas

The liveability challenge is quite broad and comprises very divergent aspects (social, cultural, economic and ecological) that often interfere with other challenges: a liveable city is simultaneously an accessible city, with a balanced and affordable housing market, as well as sufficient (differentiated) job opportunities. Climate change and growing car traffic puts urban liveability under pressure. A liveable city is also a child-friendly city. This requires an integrated approach: all children need education, should be able to move safely, to play and to engage in sports. Spatial planning plays a crucial role in this regard.

The climate challenge: sustainable and climate proof spatial development

The depletion of fossil fuels and climate change are global issues which also require answers at the local scale. Spatial measures are playing a vital role. For instance by organising the space in such a way that the mobility pattern of people is changing, or by means of sustainable house renovation, we are able to reduce the need for energy - and thus CO₂ emissions (mitigation). In Ghent green areas and water can positively contribute to the cooling of the urban environment. A more open urban structure decreases the urban heat island effect (currently already 3 to 8 ° C hotter than outside the city). Open spaces are also

necessary to capture water in case of heavy rainfall and to retain water in periods of drought (adaptation).

The demographic challenge: tackling the growth and altering the composition of the population in a sensible way

Ghent's population keeps expanding and 20,000 extra citizens are expected by 2030. Moreover, family and social structures are changing. There are more small households, as young families are leaving the city. All these demographic trends are creating new social and spatial challenges.

On the one hand, these questions require a policy which focuses on a differentiated, suitable, affordable and high-grade living (10,000 suitable dwellings are needed). This implies measures tailored to the family composition, age and / or physical disabilities. They encompass sufficient (supporting) facilities: education, greenery, recreation, (child friendly) public areas and more.

On the other hand, we need to pursue a policy which facilitates a well-considered use of scarce available space and land. We are looking for smart methods of densification: new high-grade housing typologies and densification of the 20th century districts. The challenge of the future is to provide compact and high-grade housing with ample open space. The duality of our society also plays a role in the city dynamic; we therefore need to address the spatial consequences of social segregation and will investigate how we will be able to mitigate their effects from a spatial viewpoint.

The mobility challenge: the need for selective access of the city and its region

As regards mobility, we can observe two tendencies in Ghent.

On the one hand, Ghent is subjected to an increasing force of attraction, owing to demographic growth, an increase in the number of students and commuters, and a higher activity level. On the other hand, Ghent has been playing a pioneering role in the past decades as regards sustainable urban mobility. We are reaping the first fruits of these developments.

The immediate pressure from the metropolitan region remains the key mobility challenge: in absolute numbers, the car traffic from the neighbouring suburbs is still increasing, owing to growing housing provision and other activities. Public transport supply and safe and direct bicycle links are often lacking, thus raising car dependency and increasing traffic on the main roads towards the city. Moreover, historically the current transport model, including trams and buses, has a strong radial orientation towards the city centre. However, because many (large-scale) functions are situated outside the historic centre, Ghent has gradually evolved towards a polycentric municipal structure. This means a larger spatial and mobility interaction between various urban growth centres, enhanced further by often mono-functional developments which affect the distribution of activities (housing, working, shopping, education). These developments are partly breaking up the historic radial movement pattern, with a huge impact on overall mobility.

If we want to maintain the persistent current mobility trends, we will have to adopt smart growth strategies for the urban districts and suburbs to safeguard and enhance manageable and sustainable mobility. Besides car traffic, we will have to develop bicycle traffic and public transport as fully-fledged mobility systems, tailored to the Ghent region. This challenge requires a quantum leap of mobility and spatial policy. The current transport systems are insufficiently adapted to the existing spatial organisation, and vice versa. Next to promoting and accommodating bicycle use, we will also need to focus both on managing flows and impacts of spatial developments on the mobility system. As regards public transport, we will increasingly build on the potential of locating spatial developments on interchanges and public transport axes. Individual motorised traffic needs to be disconnected from individual vehicle ownership; car sharing systems are gradually outgrowing the niche level. The perceptible revolution in the freight and distribution systems requires spatial support.

The economic challenge: spatial support of the growing, changing and innovative economy

In order to meet our employment objectives and to reduce unemployment we need additional, differentiated and suitable job opportunities in Ghent. 30,000 new jobs will be needed by 2030. A future-oriented employment development will be required to raise – or even to maintain – job opportunities. We have to take into account new economic trends and tendencies. High-grade space for the economy is one of the essential conditions to create jobs.

The challenge consists of well planned economic growth for further diversification of the economy, by creating sufficient space for companies in growth sectors, such as energy and environmental technology, as well as the creative sector.

Through monitoring and target-oriented research, we can react more swiftly and make a correct assessment of the new economic trends. This will enable us to provide an appropriate high-grade offer.

Opting for a crowd-sourced design of spatial planning

We opt explicitly to design the Structural Vision 2030 "Room for Gent" as a spatial but also a crowd-sourced plan. This human-centred approach means that we:

- pursue the ambition to pay more attention than before to everyday spatial planning on behalf of the citizens (planning based on their living environment);
- give citizens an active role in spatial policy formulation (co-creation), besides traditional involvement of experts, sector organisations and decision makers.

These two aspects of crowd-sourced planning are closely related to investigating which social and spatial knowledge and competences are required for the spatial policy. On the one hand, we need to count on active participation of citizens in co-creating the space by mobilising their local knowledge of the area and its use.

On the other hand, it means that the preparation of spatial project briefs and the analytical phase of the spatial policy plans draw on more than physical-spatial expertise. This should avoid that the planning process is prematurely narrowed down to physical-spatial tasks (e.g. densification). Thus, we will identify which other actors we need to involve during spatial interventions. We are aware that there is a need for inputs by social scientists and professionals (social planners, social workers, participation professionals) who can provide expert knowledge on social trends and (their impacts on) the use of space into the spatial policy process.

Whoever approaches the space from the perspective of the users and enables them to play a more active role in spatial policy, will inevitably be confronted by the social stratification of society. Citizens differ in their socio-economic position (class), level of education, gender, ethnic-cultural background, sex, age, lifestyle, etc. These differences are compounded by power relations, which express themselves in the unequal capacity of the various groups to shape the use and design of space to their proper interests, needs and aspirations. From the 117,665 families in Ghent 30% have foreign roots. The population density is 1.622 inhabitants/km².

Ultimately, spatial policy has to reach a position. However, based on their democratic mission spatial policy makers will have to ensure that all social groups are treated more or less equally. This means that planning policy is also an instrument of community building. This includes providing space for diverse human activities in accordance with spatial planning and certain types of land use, choice of locations for service provision and economic activities, flexibility of spatial rules, access to the use of spatial and other instruments, and throughout the role of citizens in spatial policy making.

When regional policymakers are entering into negotiations with various space users they have to see to it, according to their democratic mandate, that all social groups are equally addressed. Based on their status and mandate as spatial experts, they are reconciling the demand of citizens as regards the use of space with the capacity of spatial systems. Until now, their mission statement was all too often included in the instrument of judicial rules, which led to a deficient anticipation of social trends, changes in land use and the desire of citizens to jointly determine the space. Crowd-sourced planning will provide a new meaning. Where planners previously facilitated predetermined (desired) socio-environmental practices, they now develop target-oriented instruments and flexible budgets which should enable them to proceed more effectively to achievements.

The pilot projects that are elaborated in parallel to the intrinsic process of the Structural Vision 2030 'Room for Ghent' represent an ideal test case for the transition toward crowd-sourced planning (see Inbox).

Broad societal debate

Various actors are playing a role during the preparation of the Structural Vision 2030 'Room for Ghent'. It is essential that all of them know their jobs and can provide input. That is why consultation and feedback run like a thread throughout the process. Good consultation structure and direction, a social debate, active communication and thorough data monitoring are crucial during the entire process, from the elaboration of the vision up to and including its actual completion.

To keep this in mind, a thorough internal process structure is necessary.

A project team represents the various municipal services involved. At regular intervals, they are providing vital input, based on their expertise (green areas, mobility, housing, etc.). From the early beginning, the City of Ghent was keeping a finger on the pulse by means of a think tank. This consists of a diverse group of approximately thirty broad-minded Ghent citizens who experience the entire structure planning process. The group includes people who are feeling involved in the future of Ghent, can debate with an open mind, respect views of others and have sufficient motivation to participate during the entire process. During the think tank meetings, brainstorming sessions are held on a rather abstract and conceptual level about the spatial future of the city of Ghent. The results from these discussions provide inputs to the project team to achieve an innovating, future-oriented and sustainable spatial vision of Ghent.

Creating involvement

The preparation of such a structure plan is impossible without the involvement of a broader audience. From the beginning we opted for active public debate. Eventually, we will be dealing with an abstract message that may not be able to keep the attention of many people going. 2030 will indeed not quite occur in the immediate future. A structural vision is not immediately translated on the ground, old viewpoints do not change overnight. Moreover, it is certainly not a ready-made reality, but a vision in the making. The audience is required to show not only interest but also active participation. The target groups include a very wide range of ages, professional categories and social profiles. The challenge is to keep the process interesting, both for the specialised spatial planner as well as the student, young family, the elderly couple, the tourist, the entrepreneur, the employee in the social economy and so on.

Creating urgency was taking the first hurdle. How could we bring to the attention that 'Room for Ghent' is imminent, should be achieved, and will have consequences for all Ghent citizens? At the end of January 2015, a broader communication trajectory and a social debate was initiated, including a press conference and a 'stunt'. At the 'Gravensteen' (Castle of the Counts), Ghent's most important historical monument, a giant banner announced that the castle would accommodate luxury flats. Needless to say that press attention and 'buzz' were assured.

With the cooperation of a communications agency, the campaign was supported by social media. The proper media channels of the City of Ghent were also fully deployed.

www.ruimtevoor.gent

To reach the broadest possible diverse audience, the communication occurs via various channels, both online and offline. The online communication takes the lion's share, and constitutes the basis of the debate.

A tailor-made interactive website was created, next to the existing municipal website. In Spring 2015 everyone could post their own ideas about the future of Ghent. People could also share and like ideas of others. To make this comprehensible, a different theme was highlighted every month: working and learning, housing, leisure and meeting, nature and environment, care, transportation. Via social media a question was 'pitched' each week, boasting the necessary challenge to lure people towards the website and post their own ideas. Every month, a 'room maker of the month' was speaking in a film, spreading inspiration about the monthly theme.

The launch of two playful promotional films with renowned Ghent citizens generated interest of the regional and national press.

Besides a gathering place for inspiring ideas, the online platform also provides a calendar mentioning the activities as regards the city of the future, a news forum with reports, background information on 'Room for Ghent' and a newsletter.

Links to existing initiatives

The offline communication is just as important. Not everyone has access to the internet or is actively using social media channels. Billboards in the Ghent cityscape were supporting the campaign.

Furthermore, trajectory intakes were held from the very beginning, including a wide spectrum of organisations, research institutions and associations to jointly examine when and how their specific target audience can participate in the debate. Their participation is therefore tailored to the specific target group and their input is gradually incorporated in the intrinsic process. Whenever possible and relevant, the City of Ghent links to current (policy) trajectories and meetings, such as 'District of the Month', highlighting a specific urban district. Internal communication, within the city administration, occurs with intranet messages, so-called 'lunch meetings' and articles in the staff magazine.

Switch between macro and micro levels

One of the key challenges in the public debate is translating the abstract message to the various target groups, while ensuring that the input of these groups transcends the local level, as to include them in the intrinsic process. However, the real story of the citizen is the starting point to achieve a broader vision.

Hence, every target group is encouraged and inspired on a micro level that is proper to its **situation**. Every single thing is relevant that could inspire people to tell how important life and work in the city is for them and which are their expectations. The Ghent citizens are indeed the experts with respect to life in the city. This activity is followed by an in-depth moment during which the stories are raised to a higher level. Discussions in different groups are moderated by a representative of the municipality or municipal staff member. Experience has shown that such an approach allows a constant switch between the micro and macro level and yields quite a satisfactory input.

The web link www.ruimtevoor.gent is using this method. The 'question of the week' or the 'space maker of the month' formulate a concrete discussion item, often providing broader answers. For example when someone in a film is telling about how he shares his garden with

the neighbours, this starts a discussion about more meeting places in districts or the demand for more district parks.

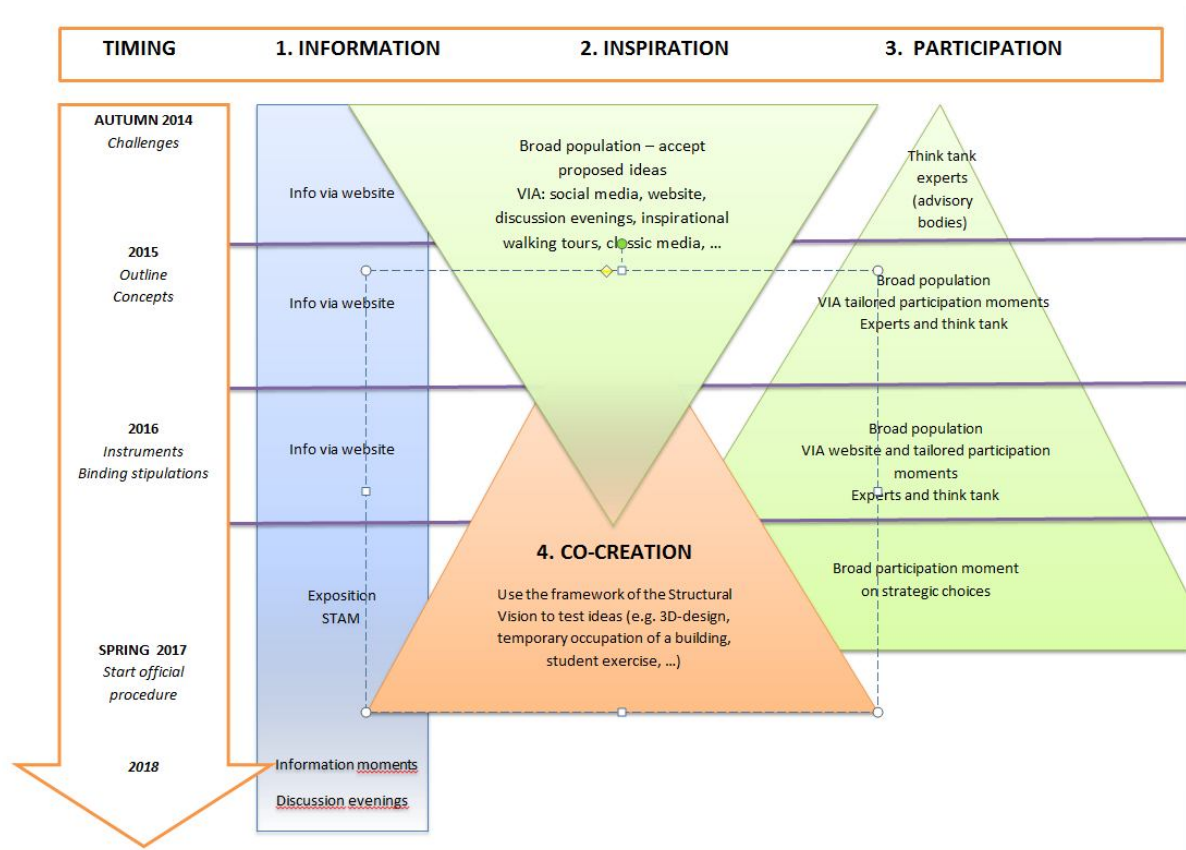
Introduce landmarks

Since the campaign is stretched over such a long period of time, it is necessary to keep attention alive. Depending on the phases of the intrinsic process, the campaign is subdivided into several smaller campaigns, each with its proper focus and landmarks. These landmarks are important since they provide a feedback moment. The turning point was an inspiration day on behalf of a broad audience, including walking tours on several themes. Some ideas, assembled via the website and activities, are elaborated with an expert and public jury.

Pilot projects

Experts from the think tank, together with the City, selected some ideas suggested by Ghent citizens. In consultation with the authors of these proposals, a process of co-creation was initiated. Their ideas represent a possible future for Ghent. They incite to reflect on actual solutions and show what is feasible. Thus a study and an animation will show the potential when we remove a piece of the motorway from a residential district (E17 in Gentbrugge). Another pilot project will illustrate how unoccupied churches can be deployed in a different manner. A group that submitted an idea to pay more attention to short-chain agriculture started working on a vacant lot. An entire district gets a proper master plan and is examining how to improve the occupancy rate of unused inner areas. In turn, these bottom-up ideas offer inspiration for the Structural Vision 2030 and are revealing something about the spatial lines of force in the future.

By the end of 2016 the Structural Vision 2030 will be incorporated in the official procedure. Citizens will be informed about the contents of the structural vision during an information meeting and will be able to formulate their objections, remarks and comments during the public inquiry. A publication and several short films will clarify the selected choices. The structural vision will also be illustrated during an exhibition at the STAM City Museum.



Scheme of participation and communication process. ©Stad Gent

Vision and spatial concepts for spatial development: 'Room for Ghent'

The Structural Vision 2030 includes the global targets and ambitions of the City of Ghent as regards its spatial development. Based on this mission statement and the desire for a crowd sourced design, 'Room for Ghent' can be interpreted as 'Room for all Ghent Citizens'. The spatial development is intended to give all Ghent citizens (Ghent residents and Ghent users) the necessary liveable space for their development. The two parts of the title of this Structural Vision 2030 are each covering their share of its contents. 'Ghent' stands for everything that the municipality and the Ghent citizens (want to) accomplish:

- Ghent as an resilient and family friendly, coherent city boasting a mosaic of places with a proper identity
- Ghent as an authentic city
- Ghent as a high quality, viable and intertwined living and working city
- Ghent as an innovative city
- Ghent as a versatile city of knowledge and culture
- Ghent as a multi-layered, sustainable and climate proof city, which intends to remain liveable for future generations of Ghent citizens
- Ghent as a self-confident, pioneering, seducing and ruling cooperating city.

'Room for' illustrates the way in which we intend to achieve this in respect of the spatial aspect.

The vision elements can indicate how to offer a spatial response to the challenges we will be facing, in the (medium) long term, thus how to offer guarantees for a future proof city.

1. We are building a liveable city

Each spatial project is founded on the basic assumption that it needs to contribute to an increased quality of life. When a project can no longer warrant the viability of an area and its

surroundings, the spatial capacity of that area is exceeded. Elements of capacity are protection, comfort, experience and focus on children and youngsters.

2. We are taking the physical system as the basis of spatial development

Throughout history Ghent developed itself on the physical system of the confluent river valleys of Scheldt and Lys. This physical system is also the basis of the further spatial development of the city. Certainly the water structure and the water system are determining spatial bearers. Many other patterns are adapting themselves to the physical system and, in particular, to the water. The substratum is often literally an un-reclaimed area; it does not only impose preconditions during development, but it also provides a lot of (spatial) opportunities that we want to highlight. The subsoil codetermines the structure of the overhead spatial development.

3. We are opting for a cautious urban development

The spatial uniqueness, functionality and quality of the Ghent area (landscapes, urban structures, open and public spaces and buildings) are three criteria that occur at each spatial development. How it works (functionality) and what it looks like (image) are equivalent and have a strong mutual dialectics. We are taking into account the present characteristics, the significance and history and the possible future of a place, as well as the relation to its environment (genius loci): cautious urban development respects the stratification of an area. We continue to build on the existing city and reckon the existing spatial and social fabric (improvement without displacement). Cautious urban development supports the social dimension of living and working of the Ghent residents in the city. Spatial interventions are adding value, at a social, functional, scenic, economic and ecological level (in any case more value than the one that could have been lost).

4. We are making the city climate-proof by means of water and greenery

Green areas and water, varying from the large green poles at the edge of the city, over the green(blue) axes and the district parks, and also including street trees, green façade and rooftops are making the city attractive, liveable and climate proof. Green areas combined with water are cooling the city in summer and are mitigating the urban heat-island effect. Greenery also provides shade to cool urban areas on hot days.

The smallest green spots, including even a solitary tree, are also playing a crucial role. Green structures are not only significant in residential areas or within busy public areas, a fully-fledged green structure in economic clusters also constitutes an essential link for the management of urban temperature, the water system and the air quality in the urban fabric. Greenery plays an essential role in retaining, infiltrating and buffering rainwater and thus helps to prevent flooding. Reducing surface hardening is important to allow a maximum water infiltration into the soil.

At the urban level, greenery certainly has a positive impact on air quality. The direct effect (by absorption) of vegetation of noise is rather limited. However, the indirect effects are often more significant: we experience noise as less annoying in an attractive green environment.

5. We are striving for a sustainable use of space by innovating instead of merely expanding

When the city is expanding, this must be done in a sustainable way. Sensible growth is the key word. This can mainly be achieved by renewing the urban tissue and coping with urban expansion within the existing infrastructure. We are opting for innovative solutions in which the available space and the existing heritage are used in an (more) efficient manner, while simultaneously reckoning with its spatial capacity and spatial quality. An efficient use of the available space is also a prerequisite if Ghent wants to be a viable, child-friendly, climate neutral and climate proof city.

6. We are strongly focusing on public space

Optimal residential quality of public space is essential. We are designing a space in which everyone can stay and move independently, and is arranged in a child friendly way. Next to

cohesion, design criteria also include (traffic) safety, scale, quality, readability, comfort and usability.

7. We are pursuing interweaving and diversity and are opting for proximity

One of the key assets of Ghent is its unique intertwinement. In the future we intend to highlight its vibrant mix of functions, atmospheres, architectural styles and cultures. The proximity and accessibility – a result of the city's scale – generate opportunities. The spatial options need to enable and strengthen this intertwinement. In this regard, not only inhabitants, but also other users (students, tourists, commuters, employees, etc.) should each get their proper spot(s) in the city without jeopardising the balance within and the viability of these spots.

Within its neighbourhood (within walking or cycling distance) every Ghent citizen should have access to (local) basic services such as local food, exercise and play, greenery, employment, education and health care. By introducing new amenities and services and by opening and creating easy access to large, multifunctional complexes of enterprises and facilities (hospitals, schools, sports halls ...) we will create micro-centrality. Thus we are reducing the number of car trips of a family. We will also enhance social cohesion, anticipating demographic growth and the demand for facilities, as well as creating space for economic development. By focusing on densification and proximity new densification opportunities will arise.

8. We are opting for a selective, but high-grade accessibility

Intertwinement, diversity and proximity require selective accessibility. More people means more flows. The city needs to be accessible to everyone, but not at the expense of quality of life in and around the city. We are striving towards an accessible and liveable city, with high-quality contemporary urban mobility. Diversity should once again be the keyword, deploying diverse modes of transporting goods and passengers, thus effectively achieving a symbiosis between accessibility and liveability. Cycling and walking are the basis of this strategy.

9. We are stimulating dynamic and change-oriented constructions

By taking into account the future modification and usage opportunities of design and realisation, it is possible to prolong the useful life expectancy of buildings and building elements. Thus, we anticipate a change of needs and a reduction of environmental impacts of construction.

10. We are looking for spatial synergies in the metropolitan area

Spatial structures and developments do not stop at the city boundaries. Spatial developments such as housing, employment, mobility, security, the use of infrastructure and facilities, nature and greenery (poles) or food supply are discussed at the level of the urban region. Thus we adapt the (spatial) policy to the existing interweaving between Ghent and its neighbouring municipalities, we ensure that synergies occur and we also develop the urban region in a balanced, sustainable manner.

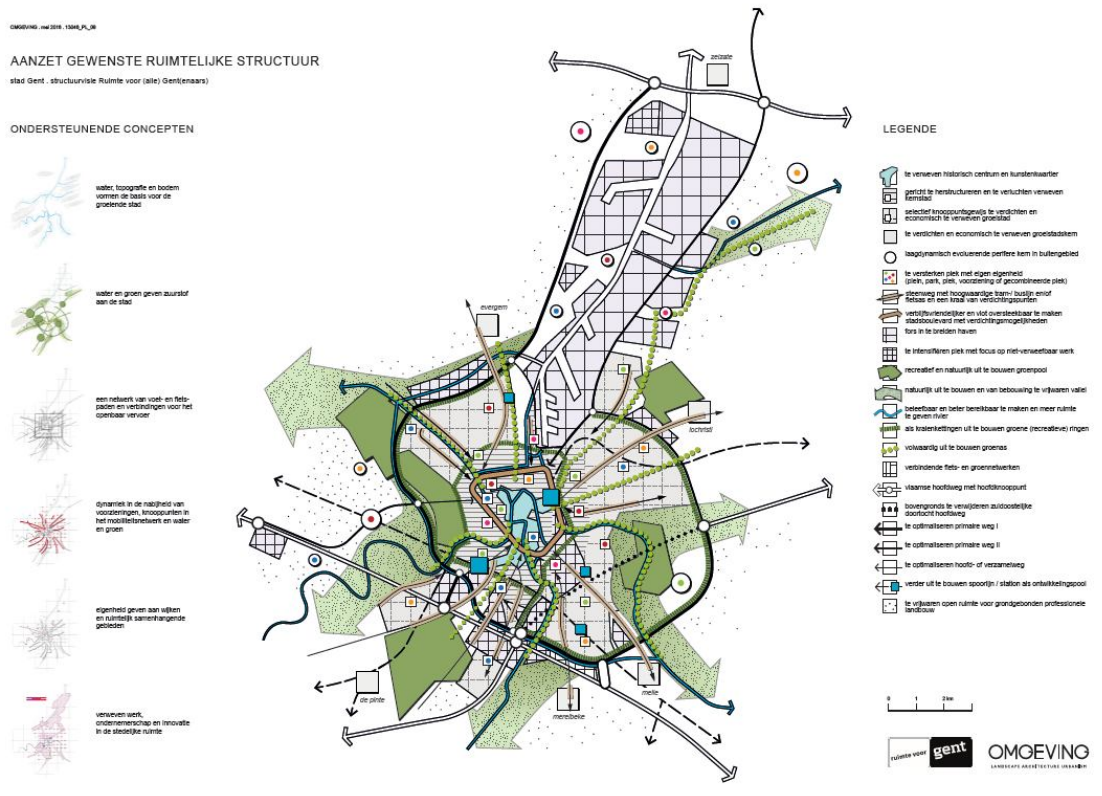
The **spatial concepts** indicate in short the main features of the way in which we are dealing with space in and around Ghent, and especially with structuring its subdivisions, and how they need to be developed to achieve the spatial vision. They are the basis of further development of the Structural Vision 2030 in later projects, plans and instruments. They are stable and are looking forward (at least) to 2030, and whenever possible even until 2050.

The following five spatial concepts are involved:

1. water, topography and soil are the basis of the expanding city
2. water and green areas are giving oxygen to the city
3. the network of pedestrian paths and cycle tracks and connections to public transport are providing selected accessibility
4. the densification occurs in a smart way in the immediate vicinity of infrastructures, at junctions in the mobility network and in the urban green-blue areas

5. employment, entrepreneurship and innovation are interwoven in the urban space.

The desired spatial structure combines five (equivalent) spatial concepts with spatial networks and emphasises its internal cohesion.



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Looking for implementation

The City of Ghent, the provincial and regional authorities, the private initiators and Ghent citizens are assuming different roles in the spatial development of the city.

The local authority plays a significant initiating and active role in achieving a robust structure of the spatial networks. This is the case for the realisation of new (green) public space, raising the residential quality of existing public space and strengthening the bicycle network.

The local authority is the key partner of other authorities in the development of the public transport network, the protection and safeguard of open space.

The local authority has a pioneering and directing role in fulfilling objectives such as interweaving, densification, quality and uniqueness. For a number of goals, it remains the leading party: the realisation of social infrastructure is a prime responsibility of the authority.

By planning these provisions at the appropriate places in the urban tissue, we can strengthen and support the network structure. Yet, in future, these kind of achievements will evolve towards cooperation and shared responsibility with residents and users.

The majority of spatial realisations are private initiatives. The local government is assuming a directing role to ensure that these private initiatives do contribute to an enhanced quality of a place, a district and the city as a whole.

To implement the ideas and options from the Structural Vision 2030 we count on the following aspects.

1. The significance of design, design research and quality monitoring

Good design is often the result of design research. High-quality design and design research are stimulated in various ways as methodology:

- by accompanying private parties and inciting them to design competitions

- by organising proper design competitions
- by conducting design research (research of building blocks).

A 'city architect' cooperates with a Quality Chamber for spatial and architectural quality.

2. Stimulating behaviour modification and consciousness as regards spatial quality
There is a need for an evolving mentality as regards property. The basis of our property model dates from Napoleonic times, ensuing in individual and collective capacity development. In Ghent 50% of the residents live in a home they own. However, all sustainability insights indicate that an evolution from property to use as the basis of a sustainable society is the next logical step. We are also stimulating increasing consciousness with respect to quality of proximity, greenery and water.
3. Implementing spatial strategic projects
We distinguish strategic places the transformation of which is essential in implementing spatial ambitions. On the one hand, it involves some large-scale places within the built fabric in which space will become available in the coming decades that can be developed or transformed. On the other hand, in the rural areas we have areas for which we will make sharp strategic policy choices. The structure planning process includes reflection and design exercises that will portray the potential as well as the surplus value of these strategic locations.
4. Deploying (innovative) instruments
We will elaborate instruments for the gradual implementation of spatial options: incentive instruments (e.g. books of examples (prototypes / models) and subsidies), co-productive instruments (e.g. setting up and supporting bottom-up experiments), directing instruments (including regulatory and policy guideline frameworks, acquisition) and internally directive instruments (e.g. organising workshops, efficient project structures).
5. Monitoring and assessing the spatial development
Because of the process-oriented character of structure planning, systematic monitoring and assessment is anchored in implementation. By determining the correct (feasible) indicators, we will monitor the impact of spatial choices in a transparent way. Spatial strategic projects are continuously assessed and checked as to their spatial policy choices.
6. Cooperation with other authorities
Achieving the options of the Structural Vision is a combined action between diverse actors, in which other authorities are playing a significant role. For those aspects which explicitly belong to the competence of other authorities, we as local authority are submitting suggestions and initiate cooperation.

Conclusion

The Structural Vision Ghent 2030 is innovative in a Flemish and an international context, both intrinsically and with respect to the process.

1. The Structural Vision 2030 'Room for Gent' is the first local spatial structure plan in the Flanders region that completely fits into the current strategic and financial long-range plan of the city and posits itself as a coordinating spatial vision document next to (agreed and supported) sectorial policy documents, of which they are the spatial framework.
2. It is the first local spatial structure plan in the Flanders region with the ambition and the instruments to achieve a 100% space efficiency within the current urban configuration, meaning that on balance it does not have to include new hard developments (turning ground into hard surfaces?).
3. It does not mention detailed and localised statements, but contains a set of assessment frameworks and procedures and a practiced organisation structure in order to make spatially and socially responsible choices and use the available opportunities throughout all urban challenges.
4. It opts for a radical interweaving of functions and an economic use of space and it translates this into appropriate assessment frameworks and instruments.

5. It is the first crowd sourced local spatial structure plan in the Flanders region; vision and content are elaborated by means of broad co-creation and include a thoughtful component of co-creation and behaviour management to achieve its implementation.
6. It is the first local spatial structure plan that looks beyond 2030 to 2050, as regards the consequent building on the physical system, future-oriented infrastructure and climate resilience (including effective spaces for water and growth of green areas at all scales). The structural vision does not only provide a framework for necessary short-term achievements, but simultaneously links them to – equally indispensable - long-term goals and strategic projects
7. It is the first local spatial structure plan that deploys the bicycle as a basis of urban development, more than public transport, and considerably more than the car.



Children at work in one of the “Room for Ghent”-workshops. ©Stad Gent