Holland Metropole

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INVESTMENT OPPORTUNITY HIGHLIGHTS



NEWS UPDATE PRIMED FOR THE FUTURE

HOW TO MEET **THE HOUSING CHALLENGE**

DRIVING OUT GAS AND PETROL

Utrecht finalises plans for car-free new city district



The Merwede Canal Zone is a largely car-free project.

Utrecht city council and a number of project developers and investors have finalised their plans for Merwede, a virtually car free neighbourhood on part of 24 hectare former industrial site on the banks of the Merwede canal.
AM, Synchroon, BPD and KCAP are among the Holland Metropole partners involved in the project, alongside the city authorities.

The location, part of a larger redevelopment site known as the Merwede Canal Zone, is within walking distance from the main railway station and the medieval inner city.
The Merwede project has been several years at the design and planning stage and will have up to 6,000 homes, mainly apartments, when completed. The plan also includes schools, shops, cafes, a health centre and sports and cultural facilities.
The use of cars will be discouraged, with parking reserved for visitors. Instead, residents will be encouraged to cycle and to use one of the hundreds of shared cars parked in 'mobility hubs' on the edge of the district.
The entire Merwede Canal Zone is being developed in stages and will have some 10,000 homes when completed.

81,000 more homes: housing completions hit 2019 target

The Dutch national housing stock expanded by 81,000 homes last year, according to new government figures, comfortably beating the government's official target of 75,000 a year.
Most new homes – 5,000 – were built in Amsterdam, increasing the number of homes in the Dutch capital by 1.1%. Holland Metropole partners Eindhoven and Utrecht increased their supply of homes by 1.7%, while The Hague and Rotterdam added 0.6% and 0.5% to their own respective housing stocks.

'We have laid a firm basis for the target over the past two years,' says acting housing minister Stientje van Veldhoven. The minister says there will be challenges to meet the target in 2020 and 2021 because of the downturn in the number of building licences.

Flexible housing
'But I am working hard to keep production at a high level, partly by stimulating housing corporations to build more. I'm also focusing on conversions and more flexible housing forms,' she said.
In 2019, construction companies handed over the keys to almost 71,000 new homes, the highest number since 2009, according to national statistics agency CBS.

The total is up 6% on 2018 and does not include office and home conversions, which according to housing ministry figures, will add a further 10,000 new dwellings to the total.

Dutch house prices continue to rise

House prices in the Netherlands rose by almost 7% last year, according to new figures from national statistics agency CBS and the land registry office.
The picture across the Holland Metropole region is very varied, with Utrecht showing the biggest increase at 8%. By contrast, house prices in Amsterdam rose by less than half the national average at just 3.4%. At the end of last year, the average price of a home in the Dutch capital topped €500,000 for the first time.

Working together is key to tackling today's urban challenges

It will soon be five years since the Netherlands' biggest cities, investors and project developers joined forces as the Holland Metropole, with the aim of highlighting the development opportunities available in one of the most dynamic regions in Europe.
Since then, the Holland Metropole alliance has been focusing attention on the challenges presented by changing demographics, urbanisation and the demand for a more sustainable approach to development, by working in tandem to achieve tangible results.

Accessibility, affordability, inclusivity, sustainability and changes in the labour market are the main drivers of today's urban development. The Holland Metropole alliance believes the public and private sector must work together to tackle the challenges ahead.
'We are looking at the issues from the bottom up – from the perspective of developers, investors and locals,' says Dick van Hal, chief executive of Holland Metropole partner Bouwinvest. 'This is the way to build a sustainable approach to urban development.'



Amsterdam and developers sign deal to build 10,000 affordable homes

Amsterdam city council and a number of leading Dutch developers and investors have signed a deal to build an additional 10,000 mid-market rental homes in the capital within five years.

The homes, which will target middle income professionals such as teachers, healthcare workers and police officers, will have a rent of between €740 and €1,030 a month.
The declaration of intent includes agreement that rents for the properties will rise by inflation plus 1% over the next 20 years.

'This statement of intent underlines the willingness of everyone involved to work together to stimulate affordable housing in Amsterdam, both rental and for sale,' said Desirée Uitzetter, chairwoman of Dutch property developers association Neprom and area development director at Holland Metropole partner BPD.

Affordable homes
Frank van Blokland, direction of institutional investor lobby group IVBN, said his members are doing their utmost to contribute to the need for new housing in the city. Holland Metropole partners Bouwinvest and Syntrus Achmea are members of the IVBN, and have been at the forefront of efforts to stimulate a housing development drive.
'The agreement is the first step to allow continued investment in mid-market rental property in Amsterdam,' Van Blokland said. 'To meet the enormous demand for housing, we need a lot more building locations and, of course, good public transport.'
An integrated mobility plan for new developments is a key part of the Holland Metropole approach as is the challenge of meeting the need for affordable housing.



The Sluishuis project in Amsterdam includes social housing, non-rent controlled apartments and owner-occupier homes.

Five cities

One European region primed for the future

Amsterdam, Rotterdam, The Hague, Utrecht and Eindhoven are thriving cities in their own right. Together, they form one of the most competitive urban regions in the world.



The new Booking.com headquarters in Amsterdam form part of the busy waterfront.

Credit: UNStudio

Urbanisation, globalisation, demographic change, technology disruption and cross-border capital flows are changing the face of cities as we know them. By working together, the five cities of the Holland Metropole aim to make the most of these megatrends, to ensure a stable, innovative and inclusive future for all their inhabitants.

In order to compete successfully in established markets, accommodate innovation, and meet the needs and rising expectations of their residents, cities must strive to become a medium density, multi-centred metropolis, says Greg Clark, chairman of The Business of Cities, a pioneering research group which analyses cities and their potential. 'These ingredients have existed in the Holland Metropole for a long time,' says Clark. 'Yet despite their close proximity and connectivity, its five largest cities – Amsterdam, Rotterdam, The Hague, Utrecht and Eindhoven – are usually observed and measured in isolation.' But the five cities, he says, should be seen as part of one integrated, interdependent region.

Drawing on a database of over 500 city and regional performance benchmarks, alongside numerous metropolitan datasets, Clark and his team show that the Holland Metropole is one of the 10 most important regional economies in the world, comparable in Europe to the London Region, the Paris Region and the Munich Metro Region. Indeed, the latest figures show that Holland Metropole's GDP per capita is growing at over 2%, behind only the San Francisco Region among its nine peers.

This progress is reflected in the way Holland Metropole's cities are rising up the global benchmarks faster than nearly all the other nine regions. This, according to The Business of Cities analysis, is underpinned not only by the success of Amsterdam in terms of lifestyle, technology adoption, inclusion and connectivity, but also by the growing appeal of Rotterdam, The Hague, Utrecht and Eindhoven in terms of the next generation of jobs and talent.

Clark also points out that Holland Metropole's cities tend to rank higher for their objective performance than in the perception of experts and commentators, partly because the world is not yet fully aware of how successful and integrated the region is.

In particular, The Business of Cities report singles out the efficiency of the Holland Metropole's public transport system, which is not only among the fastest and most reliable globally, but is also helping to discourage car use. While other regions are enduring big increases in congestion and pollution exposure, the trends in Holland Metropole are more positive.

KEY ADVANTAGES

The Holland Metropole's USP comes from the way each city has developed its own specialisms. Amsterdam, for example, is the gravitational centre for finance, the creative industries and IT. Utrecht, with its young, well-educated population, excels in life sciences, healthy living and gaming; while Rotterdam's key drivers centre around the port, advanced manufacturing and clean-tech. The Hague, the Netherlands' political capital, is home to many key international organisations as well as The Hague Security Delta, Europe's number one cyber security cluster. And Eindhoven, now a fully-fledged member of the alliance, hosts a highly mature eco-system of advanced IT and materials science.

The Business of Cities report shows that the Holland Metropole has advantages in three key areas: connectivity, innovation and liveability. The Holland Metropole's airports are growing faster than all of its peers in terms of passenger numbers. The region is a major port and sea hub but also has excellent links between its five cities. The average travelling time by public transport to key destinations within the region is 45 minutes, lower than its nine peers apart from Greater Boston. More than that, the Holland Metropole has excellent digital connectivity, with high internet speeds and broadband penetration rates.

This super-connectedness, argues Clark, provides the platform and the confidence to drive rapid growth in air, port and visitor demand, while the innovation ecosystem is maturing and delivering very high levels of growth and growth ventures, even by global standards.

'Yet despite its global scale and credentials, Holland Metropole remains a relatively affordable region and its strong DNA of tolerance and work-life balance, plus high standard of public services, is shining through in a range of new measures,' Clark says. 'Holland Metropole is creating jobs, but importantly they are more productive and higher value jobs,' says Clark. 'This underpins a stable and robust labour market that not only makes the region appealing to workers but also offers predictability for those looking to invest in the region.' One area that does require action is housing. The Holland Metropole will have to improve the housing supply rate and diversity of the tenure mix, says Clark, 'to serve an increasingly competitive and diverse region.'

Holland Metropole top investments







Amsterdam

Amstel III 1
Area development
250 hectares

This predominately office location will be redeveloped into a mixed use area in the coming years, with places to live and work. By 2027, 5,000 homes will be built and a further 10,000 are in the pipeline for the period 2027 to 2040. The project is high density with some high-rise developments and empty offices will be transformed into housing as well.

Hoogtij
Industrial
30 hectares

Hoogtij is a prime new business location in the port of Amsterdam and Zaanstad area. It offers plots with flexible layout and space for different types of businesses and is located next to deep sea waters.

Haven-Stad
Area development
650 hectares

Twelve existing sub areas in the port of Amsterdam will be transformed during the coming decennia into highly urbanised residential areas combined with offices and industry. The suggested development contains 40,000 to 70,000 homes and 45,000 to 58,000 jobs.

Sluisbuurt
5,500 residential units and
60,000 m² in facilities

The future Sluisbuurt on the Zeeburgereiland will be a new urban living environment in Amsterdam. This will be a sustainable, green neighbourhood with a unique location at the water and a short distance to the city centre.

Lelystad Airport Businesspark 2
Business park
140 hectares

Lelystad Airport Businesspark is situated between the A6 motorway and Lelystad Airport. Plots of between 5000 m² and 2 hectares are available. The excellent ground structure and short permit process facilitates fast and low-cost building.

Zuidas
Area development
One million m², mixed use

This project involves the development of a new, cosmopolitan urban centre just minutes from the airport and old city. Zuidas is the place for international business and stylish living, with the university as a driver of its knowledge-intensive and ambitious culture.

PARK 20|20
Business park

Part of the Beukenhorst Zuid development, Park 20|20 comprises ergonomically-optimised buildings and an inviting landscape with water features and attractive gardens which are designed to motivate employees, increase job satisfaction and stimulate creativity. The park is close to a mainline railway station and bus services, five minutes from Schiphol airport and has direct access to the A4 motorway. The offices are equipped with sufficient parking space for both cars and bicycles





Rotterdam

Rotterdam Central District 3
Business area
Delftseplein: 41,000 m²
Weenapoint: 46,000 m²

Rotterdam Central District is an attractive business and residential area. The area is extremely central, has excellent transport links and is particularly suitable as a headquarters location for companies, as well as for (short-term) rentals. The first plots for development are at Weenapoint and Delftseplein.

Rotterdam Makers District 4
Mixed use
130 hectares

A joint project between the city and Rotterdam Port Authority, this development offers a mix of urban living and innovative manufacturing industries in an area rich in maritime history. Good public and road transport links.

Parkstad Block I 5
Residential

Parkstad has great transport links and is just a 15 minute walk from landmarks such as the Erasmus bridge and Hotel New York. Block I is an excellent investment opportunity which will soon be on the market. The project entails developing a distinctive urban residential block for over 130 dwellings combined with a lively, vibrant plinth programmed with a variety of social and commercial amenities.

Hoogvliet Oudeland Oost
Redevelopment

This plot is located in Hoogvliet, a spacious green living environment close to the city centre and involves creating 250 homes across all price ranges. Oudeland Oost is part of a big redevelopment programme involving the construction of some 5000 units in Hoogvliet.



The Hague

Central Innovation District
Mixed use

There are many rich opportunities for development in this large inner city area. With three stations and excellent transport links, CID is already home to dozens of international companies and organisations, plus tens of thousands of students.

Binckhorst 6
Mixed use

Binckhorst is a former industrial area now being transformed into a modern city district combining residential property with offices and shared spaces. The district borders the HS railway station and offers plenty of opportunities for development.

Tech Security Campus The Hague
Mixed use

A former government ministry now transformed into accommodation for students, refugees and cyber security start-ups is at the heart of plans to bring new life into a large site close to the city centre. When completed, new, energy efficient high-rise will blend in with the early 20th century low-rise homes.

Holland Metropole top investments


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Utrecht

Leidsche Rijn 1
Mixed use
33,000 residential units and working space for 40,000 workers

Leidsche Rijn Centre has outstanding architecture, it's own train and bus station and direct access to the A2 highway. The complete Leidsche Rijn project will eventually house 110,000 people. Opportunities in the central district include office plots and a high-rise building plot.

Station area Utrecht 2
Mixed use

This major transport, retail and business hub is used by 88 million people yearly. The redevelopment will result in 2,200 homes, 250,000 m² of office space and 47,500 m² of retail and services by 2030.

Utrecht Science Park 3
Research companies, start ups, 300 hectares

This hotbed of growth and innovation currently serves 27,000 workers and 51,000 students. The campus offers high-quality institutions, companies and facilities with a focus on health, life sciences and sustainability. Various opportunities for development available.

Merwede canal zone 4
Mixed use
60 hectares

This wide-ranging project involves the urban redevelopment of a former industrial area to create 6,000 to 10,000 homes for 20,000 inhabitants. It will focus on innovative, sustainable solutions for high density building and low car use.

Cartesius Triangle 5
Mixed use

This project involves transforming a former railway yard and repair workshops into a mixed use development. The aim is to create the healthiest and most public transport and bicycle friendly district in the Netherlands. When completed, the project will have some 2,500 homes and the former tram and train repair shops will house shops, cafes, and community and cultural spaces.

Eindhoven

Brainport Industries Campus 6
Business park
65 hectares

This project will be the face of the high-tech manufacturing industry, where innovation and strengthening competition are central. The campus is home to both knowledge institutions and successful companies, who work together to realise ideas and develop business cases.

High Tech Campus Eindhoven 7
Business park
100 hectares

There are considerable opportunities for new development on the High Tech Campus Eindhoven. The business park is said to be the smartest square kilometre in the Netherlands, with more than 160 companies and institutions. Some 40% of all patent applications in the Netherlands derive from companies based here.

Strijp-S 8
Area development
30 hectares

The creative and cultural heart of Eindhoven is being realised on this location, once the home of Philips' development labs, where the electric light bulb, radio, cassette player and CD were developed. This new area will be a mixed-use development where thousands of people will live and work.

Eindhoven Internationale Knoop XL 9
Area development
50 hectares

Some 200 people currently live on this site which will eventually house 15,000. A mixed-use development, this project will have a park-like feel because of the amount of greenery and the lack of cars. Good rail and international airport connections.

Inner city Eindhoven 10
Area development
40 hectares

Eindhoven's compact centre offers a wide range of shops, cafes, bars and restaurants but work is underway to increase the residential population. Several major projects are in development for increasing the amount of residential and recreational facilities.

Dutch cities are driving out gas and petrol

Ambitious plans to phase out the use of gas in private homes and encourage alternative forms of transport are driving the Holland Metropole approach to modern urban development.

All over the Holland Metropole region, new residential projects are being realised which focus on downsizing use of the family car. Shared electric cars are being given space in car parks, cycling is being encouraged and the importance of developing public transport networks is moving higher up the political agenda.

It is all part of a government drive to reduce the impact of climate change, by tackling the issue at source. If the ambitious plans are realised, by 2050, no homes in the Netherlands will be attached to the gas supply. No new homes are currently being built with gas connections for heating or cooking and work on transforming the country's current housing stock is beginning to pick up steam. The petrol driven car is also on its way out. By 2030 the Dutch capital Amsterdam aims to have banned all but electric cars from city centre streets.

The city's Zuidas business district largely falls outside that zone but here, too, efforts are being made to reduce the popularity of the car. 'Accessibility has been a key driver of Zuidas development and the combination of road, rail and city-based public transport remains strong,' says director David van Traa. 'We can keep adding more asphalt and railway tracks, but the high level of population density is going to require a different mobility behaviour. The work we are doing on the development of a multi-connection, technology-enabled transport hub will make the last mile shorter and therefore more convenient and sustainable.'

In Eindhoven, the city has a strategy of keeping cars out of the centre, in an effort to reduce airborne pollution. 'We are stimulating people to park at the edge of the city and come into town by public transport,' says Eindhoven alderman Yasin Torunoglu. 'We are developing special cycle routes to make it more attractive to use a bike, and we are encouraging alternatives for traditional delivery lorries, such as electric-powered services.'
Aside from reducing dependency on cars, Dutch cities are also working towards a tough timetable to phase out the use of natural gas – a complicated issue involving boosting energy efficiency and developing alternative sources of heat and power.

Real estate services firm Fakton is closely involved with a number of energy transition projects. 'We work with local councils, investors, housing corporations, energy firms and tenants to structure the business case for change,' says partner Wouter van den Wildenberg. 'We have a national energy agreement but how are we actually going to put it into practice? It is a very complex issue and everyone has a role to play.'
The situation is different for new residential projects – where the legal requirement that all homes be connected to the gas supply was dropped in 2018. 'The Netherlands is unique in the way agreement has been reached on transitioning to a gas free society across such a broad range of groups and organisations,' says Harm Janssen, regional director north west at Dutch developer BPD.

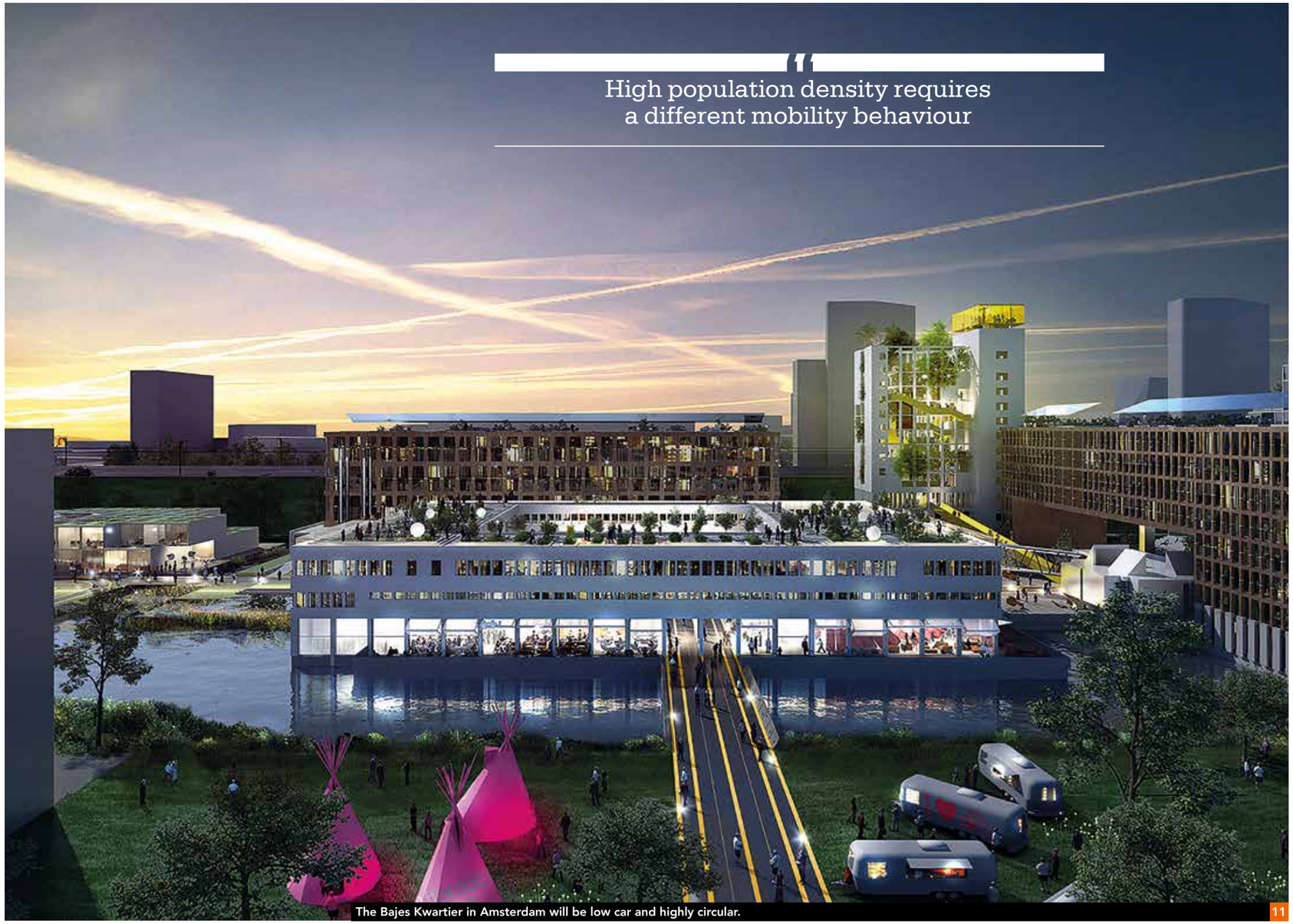
'We are focusing more and more on both mobility and climate and we are intensively working on alternatives such as shared car systems and climate adaption, as well as circular building processes. In practical terms that means all our new housing is gas free, with heating provided by city and thermo heating schemes.'

Utrecht started working on taking its first district off the grid in 2017 and is still in close consultation with the people living in the area, says deputy mayor Klaas Verschuure. 'This means that our strategy is a real joint production between the general public and the private sector. Next year we will finalise our plans to phase out the use of natural gas by, hopefully, 2040. Healthy urban development involves places to live and work, but also green spaces, good mobility infrastructure and a sustainable approach to energy.'
This approach – looking at the way developments fit into their surroundings – is a key part of making sure cities remain viable in the future. In Haarlemmermeer the trend towards more informal work locations and towards mixing industry and residential areas has not gone unnoticed. The local authority area, which also includes Schiphol airport, is keen to make its mono-functional work locations more mixed, where possible, because this will help make them future-proof.
And whether people work in offices or in industry, Haarlemmermeer is keen to make sure that they are spending their days in safe, healthy and attractive areas which are easily accessible. This involves using fast, dedicated cycle routes, for example.

The Bajes Kwartier in Amsterdam involves developing the site of an old prison to create a new city district. 'Sustainability and climate adaptive development are key in this project,' says AM chief executive Ronald Huikeshoven. 'In fact 98% of the building material salvaged from the demolition work will be reused. The doors from the prison cells will be made into balustrades for the bridges and the bars from the windows are being turned into balconies. We want to respect the site and its history. One of the prison blocks will even be turned into an urban farming project, where people can learn about growing vegetables.'

'We understand the importance of working together within the Holland Metropole group,' says Dick van Hal, chief executive at real estate investment company Bouwinvest and one of the main drivers of the alliance. 'We also know that it is crucial to look creatively at area developments to ensure they remain attractive places to live. Mobility is key and we must make sure the infrastructure is there before the buildings. We are looking at the issues from the bottom up – from the perspective of developers, investors and locals. This is the way to build a sustainable approach to urban development.'

> "High population density requires a different mobility behaviour



The Bajes Kwartier in Amsterdam will be low car and highly circular.

Working together to create inclusive cities



The Fenix project is transforming the Rotterdam waterfront.

Amsterdam, Rotterdam, The Hague, Utrecht and Eindhoven are working closely with developers and investors to revamp abandoned areas and to ensure they provide homes for everyone.

Amsterdam, a recent conference on future-proofing cities was told, is growing at 'dazzling speed'. The city's northern flank, once seen as a remote, and rough, part of town with abandoned shipyards and high unemployment, is now booming. New housing is springing up, old warehouses are becoming cafes and co-working spaces. It is the place to be if you want to feel the pulse of the city.

On the other side of Amsterdam, outsiders might be surprised to find that the Zuidas, where most of the city's upscale offices are found, is also home to thousands of people and will have 10,000 housing units when complete. 'This is seriously going to change the way the area looks and thrives,' says director David van Traa. 'But it is not just about building homes. International investors, developers, pension funds, employers – they all need an environment that is hyper mixed, so as to create an area that works from both a business and a social perspective.'

'Urban planning is not just about buildings and the quality of the amenities depends on the social mix. Inclusivity and quality need anchoring, and that is why we are so pleased to have, for example, a big public library where it's all about learning and digital awareness for all 'Amsterdammers'. We are building the social framework for a complete city and that means schools, cultural hotspots, doctors, sports facilities and the like.'

TRANSFORMATION

Throughout Amsterdam, Rotterdam, The Hague, Utrecht and Eindhoven, neglected sites are being transformed into vibrant areas where people live and work, and more is on the way. In Rotterdam, alderman Bas Kurvers says there are several major challenges ahead, one of which is to build at least 50,000 homes by 2040. 'But we have no available space to put them, and so we have to build these homes inside the existing city boundaries', he says. 'And that requires smart and innovative solutions.'

Kurvers is a strong believer in multi-functional spaces. 'A football club canteen area which is only used at weekends is a perfect place for a daycare centre,' he says. 'And in Rotterdam we have 18 square kilometres of roofs which we can use for gardens, patios, collecting water, for solar panels and so much more. If we work together we can do so much more with the space we have available.'

The Hague's focus is on making clear choices about where to build and the city is concentrating its development efforts on the central area between the three main railway stations and on the Binckhorst district. Good public transport connections are key, says Boudewijn Revis, The Hague's alderman for city development and housing. 'These main investment areas will be subject to an integral development programme, which will not just include housing, but improvements to the quality of the district and the way it works,' he says. The Hague expects its population to go up by 4,000 to 5,000 a year and to reach 630,000 by 2040. The three districts will offer a total of 10,000 mainly rental homes and will include a significant number of high rises. One project has involved transforming a former government ministry into accommodation for students, refugees and cyber security start-ups. Architect and urban design bureau KCAP is working on another project to revitalise the back of the city's HS railway station. 'We are trying to create a human-oriented space with open ground floors and green spaces,' says KCAP's Jeroen Dirckx. 'The station will be key in this new urban development. It was once on the edge of the city but when it is finished it will act as a gateway to the larger area beyond.'

PUBLIC TRANSPORT

Redeveloping areas around public transport hubs like stations is the right thing to do, says Dirckx, but the challenge is that a lot of mobility issues need to be incorporated. 'You need to provide a very good alternative to the car,' he points out, 'and promote different modes of transport. This is what makes redeveloping transport hubs so interesting.'

KCAP is also working on a station redevelopment project in Eindhoven, known as Internationale Knoop XL, which will cover one million square metres when completed. 'Cities are always moving and in transformation,' says KCAP partner Irma van Oort. 'The separation of city users – into residential, working areas and stations – was very functional but it led to unbalanced and uninspiring environments. In a mixed setting you have office workers during the day and then at night the people who have worked elsewhere come home. They feed off each other. And this in turn



The Brainport Smart District project near Eindhoven is a mix of residential properties and decentralised work spaces.



SAX in Rotterdam.



Wonderwoods in Utrecht.

Smakkelaarsveld in Utrecht.



Credit: Absent Matter

creates the lively neighbourhoods which attract more companies and people.'

In Rotterdam, Heijmans has converted former dockside warehouses into the Fenix, a project with 212 rental and owner occupier apartments with shops, galleries, restaurants and a theatre.

'Redeveloping this part of Rotterdam is enriching the way people from different cultures and with different interests are intermingling,' says Heijmans Vastgoed director Maarten van Duijn.

UNStudio is involved in developing a master plan for the Brainport Smart District in Helmond together with Eindhoven's Brainport organisation. The project, the studio says, will develop around the demands of its inhabitants as it grows. The plan entails building 1,500 new homes and 12 hectares of business premises over a 10 year period. The development will be characterised by the application of the latest technologies and knowledge, becoming a 'living lab'.

POSITIVE IMPACT

Cities should not be designed around efficiency targets, says Caroline Bos, co-founder and principal urban planner at UNStudio. 'What matters is how the city is experienced, is lived. In the end, we want to put us, the collective 'we', at the centre of a holistic approach to the digital future of the city and find the appropriate solutions for our time and for the future. And our goal is not technology or data collection. It is to have a positive impact on the way we live in cities.'

Utrecht has made healthy living a key part of its urban development strategy. 'In Utrecht there is a widely shared belief that healthy urban living is key for future development,' says deputy mayor Klaas Verschuure. 'We have set sustainability goals and we work with everyone who has a role – developers and investors, energy companies, housing corporations and residents' platforms. Innovative projects such as Smakkelaarsveld, Wonderwoods and the Cartesius Triangle are examples of the way we are working together to solve problems on the housing market and speed up development.'

Developers have moved on from the days of packing as many people as possible into a small place, says Bart Meijer, chief executive of MRP Development. 'The Cartesius Triangle is car-free, with schools, shops and some 2,500 homes. 'It is all about getting people moving, healthy eating, having enough light,' Meijer says. 'All these little things add up to a more healthy lifestyle.'

HEALTHY LIVING

The Parkbuurt development in Rotterdam, which involves Heijmans, takes healthy living as its starting point as well. The project, which involves the realisation of 137 energy efficient ground-floor homes, is part of a larger project to redevelop a large swathe of the city. 'This is a nature-inclusive project,' says Heijmans' Van Duijn. 'We will use the existing park as a starting point and use a wide range of climbing plants. We'll also use semi-open paving to drain rainwater.' That might seem a minor issue, but in a densely populated country like the Netherlands, disposing of excess rainwater is a major headache.

'We are keen to shape a healthy living environment and that increasingly means by using smart technology,' he says. 'For example, we are involved in the Ruggedised project in Rotterdam alongside telecoms and transport firms, and research institutes. The aim is to create a living lab to test and implement all sorts of smart solutions for energy, transport mobility, and digital technology. After all, by improving sustainability through using alternative energy sources and being efficient with our use of space and materials, we can create long-term health living environments, and resilient cities, not just in Rotterdam.'

Eindhoven is a green city, apart from the centre, and as some 80% of Eindhoven's inner city buildings are privately owned, the city works closely with local companies and residents to work out how the centre can be made greener. Including lots of green is important both for coping with the heat and for creating the green environments that people enjoy,' says Eindhoven alderman Yasin Torunoglu. 'We are not just talking about green walls or plant pots but about providing areas with lots of shade, and choosing trees which can stand the heat, as well as taking steps to deal with excess water.'

UN GOALS

Across the Dutch real estate sector, sustainability targets are becoming increasingly important. Investor Bouwinvest adheres to the UN's sustainable development goals and has made the societal return on its investments as important as the financial returns it books. Inclusivity has become a key word. 'We believe that delivering stable returns in the long term goes together with investing in sustainable real estate in our chosen sectors and regions,' says chief executive Dick van Hal. 'This is also the best way to combine stable financial returns with the social returns our investors want and to create attractive and sustainable mixed-use environments.'

Bouwinvest are not alone in this and the themes of affordability, inclusivity and sustainability are echoed across the Holland Metropole approach.

'Investing is about much more than financial returns,' says Nicole Maarsen, CIO Real Estate at Syntrus Achmea. 'For us, investing is about integrating themes such as sustainability, mobility and inclusiveness. How, for example, can we contribute to reducing loneliness in Rotterdam Zuid through urban development, and make sure the local population represents all ages.'

'AM is a socially-involved developer and we believe in inclusive cities, which everyone has the right to live in,' says chief executive Ronald Huikeshoven. 'Developing real estate is no longer just about putting up a building. It is about the role we have in society and making things better. We are producing living environments for the future and for our children. This is not something which can be done by a single party. It requires local residents, other innovation companies, local and national government to work together and to believe in what they are doing.'

The HS Kwartier in The Hague.



Credit: WAX

The Holland Metropole: a public private initiative

The Holland Metropole initiative is an alliance between Amsterdam, Rotterdam, The Hague, Utrecht and Eindhoven and a number of leading development and investment partners. The aim is to highlight the development opportunities available in the Netherlands' five biggest cities. All five are well known in their own right, but together they form one of the most successful city regions in the world. As Europe's best-connected region, with many international and innovative institutions and stable economic growth, the Holland Metropole offers investors a world-class business and investment climate.

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