Holland Metropole

What you need to know about Europe's best connected region

INVESTMENT OPPORTUNITY HIGHLIGHTS



HOW TO MEET **THE HOUSING CHALLENGE**

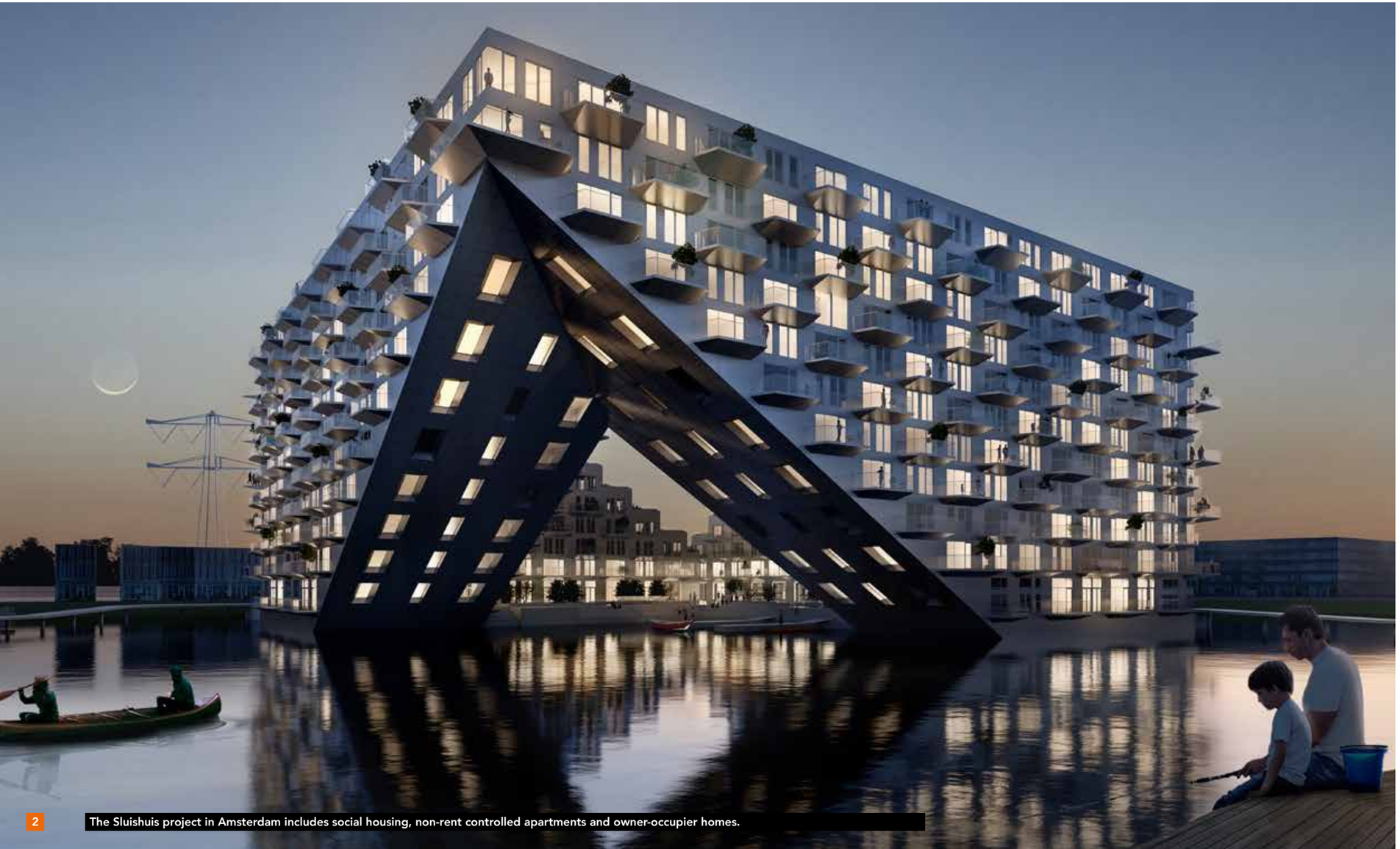
DRIVING OUT GAS AND PETROL

SUCCESSFUL CITIES ARE INCLUSIVE

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

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.'



Sustainable housing must be guaranteed

Housing everyone in the Netherlands in comfortable, affordable homes is a huge challenge, says Dutch home affairs minister Kajsa Ollongren.

In July, the Amsterdam Metropolitan Region signed an agreement with the home affairs ministry to push through plans to build 100,000 new homes by 2025 - the fifth agreement of its type this year. The deal is part of a strategy to head off a major shortage of housing – according to some estimates, the Netherlands will need to build one million new homes to meet future demand.

Everyone in the Netherlands must be able to live a pleasant and comfortable life in rented or owner-occupied accommodation and this is a huge challenge, says Dutch home affairs minister Kajsa Ollongren, who includes housing in her portfolio. 'Not only must we build more houses, more quickly due to the housing shortage, but we must also guarantee affordable, sustainable homes now and in the future, often in locations where space is already at a premium.'

At the same time, however, the Netherlands also faces the challenge of implementing a huge energy transition in the framework of climate change, which, the minister points out, will have a major impact on the housing market. In particular this involves phasing out the use of gas for heating and cooking in private homes.

'In other words, not only must we give priority to building houses but also to making existing homes more sustainable,' the minister says. 'The eventual outcome must be a sector that is even more resilient, in which corporations and developers, builders and the housing authorities work together in harmony in a housing market with fewer excesses and in which eventually everyone lives in a sustainable manner.'

In order to achieve this, the minister argues, it is very important that the public and private sectors work together. 'Only by working together can we face up to the challenges facing the housing market. There is a clear role for investors, builders, municipal authorities and myself. The Netherlands also has more than 300 non-profit housing corporations that are involved in the construction, management and letting out of affordable rented accommodation.'

Ollongren believes it is of crucial importance that all these groups follow the same course. 'No single party can succeed on its own,' she says. 'The housing market is currently extremely tight and our focus is on the construction of new homes.' Foreign investors and developers can also make a contribution to an accessible and affordable housing market in the Netherlands, the minister says. 'I welcome any party that wishes to establish a long-term relationship with the Dutch housing market. However, investors that operate in a speculative manner and that are only looking to earn the maximum profit will be rejected.' This, she adds, applies both to Dutch and foreign investors.

> I welcome any party that wishes to establish a long-term relationship with the Dutch housing market

PRIVATE INVESTMENT

But does the minister see a role for foreign and domestic private sector involvement in social housing, or should this be up to city councils and housing corporations? Providing homes for lower income households is the corporations' primary task and it is them who reach agreement on projects with local authorities.

But this does not mean that housing corporations are the only parties that are able to accommodate lower-income families. 'Private companies – Dutch or foreign – are able to provide regulated rental accommodation subject to specific agreements with municipal authorities,' the minister says. These agreements could, for example, include a discount on the price of land in return for lower rental prices. Nevertheless, she points out, the rental price regulations apply to everyone, be it housing corporations or domestic or foreign private companies.

But how can the Netherlands ensure affordable housing for everyone who needs it? The country has a large social rented accommodation sector for the lowest incomes, and housing benefits for the very poorest in society.

But the government's focus is not just simply on low-income housing. The problems facing middle income families trying to rent a home have also become increasingly acute. 'The five housing deals signed this year are with five urban regions facing huge housing shortages,' the minister points out. 'These deals are aimed at specific regional problems for example student accommodation, rented homes for middle incomes and flexible housing.'

In its September budget the government said it is setting up a €1bn housing fund for local councils and will also cut housing corporation taxes. There are also plans in the pipeline to give more help to first-time buyers. Together, officials hope, the proposals will kick start everyone into building more middle income homes.

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.

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 will become the place for international business and stylish living, with the university as a driver of its knowledge-intensive and ambitious culture.

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.

Beukenhorst-Zuid
Office park
28 hectares

This asset borders the Geniedijk, a Unesco heritage site and is the most sustainable full service office park in the Netherlands. Situated in the municipality of Haarlemmermeer the park is close to Schiphol airport, Amsterdam and connected directly to the A4 motorway.

Rotterdam

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

Rotterdam Central District is an appealing business 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 150 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
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.

Koningin Julianaplein 6
Mixed use

Koningin Juliaplein, on the main square in front of the city's central railway station, will provide a new entrance to the city. It comprises 350 new apartments spread between two towers. The project also includes retail, F&B, conference facilities and underground parking for bicycles.

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 alderman 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, says Theo Rook, regional director at Van Wijnen. 'Developing cities is no longer just about putting up buildings,' he says. 'We look at a building's place in the locality and how it relates to the rest of the area. We cannot take a one-dimensional approach. The context of a building is very important. We are no longer just talking about bricks, but about the experience.'

Take the Bajes Kwartier project in Amsterdam. This 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 prisons 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 Tech & Security Campus in The Hague is home to refugees, students and start-ups in one space.

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.'

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 18,000 homes in the next four years. 'But we have no available space to put them, and so we have to build these homes inside our already overcrowded city,' he says. 'And that requires smart and innovative solutions.'

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

VORM's De Puls project in Amsterdam's Zuidas district is a case in point. Offices and residential property are normally strictly separated but in De Puls the two worlds are pulled together and connected by common ground.

In Rotterdam, Heijmans is converting 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'.

Cities should not be designed around efficiency targets, says Caroline Bos, co-founder and principal urban planner at UNStudio. 'What matters is how



SAX in Rotterdam.





The Fenix project (centre) in Rotterdam and Harvest in The Hague.





The HS Kwartier in The Hague (top), De Puls in Amsterdam (centre) and Wonderwoods in Utrecht (right).

the city is experienced, is lived. In the end, we want to put us, the collective 'we', at the center 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 alderman Klaas Verschuure. 'We have set sustainability goals and we work with everyone who has a role – bus companies, energy companies, housing corporations and residents platforms.'

The Cartesius Triangle development in Utrecht is one example of this. 'There is a difference between the hardware and the software,' says



Onno Dwars, director of Ballast Nedam Development, which is involved in the project. 'The hardware is based on the physical elements, like energy-neutral buildings, circular use of materials and biodiversity, all of which influence our well-being. The software influences the mental and the physical part of us as human beings. Think of good food, an active living environment and social cohesion. A pro-active approach can create a living space where well-being is central to the design, effectively creating an area where people can live five years longer.'

Indeed, 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 which is also working on the project. '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.'

Rotterdam, too, is making healthy living a key issue. The city has a number of initiatives underway, including Gezond10 (healthy 10, from the city's postcode) a platform comprising local entrepreneurs, professionals and social organisations which are working together to encourage healthy lifestyles.

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. 'In the Netherlands water is a big problem, particularly when it rains heavily over a short period of time,' says Theo Rook, regional director at construction group Van Wijnen. 'We are looking at ways to both reuse and dispose of water, such as through the development of green roofs.'

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.'

Across the Dutch real estate sector, sustainability targets are becoming increasingly important. Property investment group Altera, for example, has aligned its corporate targets to the UN's sustainable development goals and measures the value it creates alongside them. The strategy, says chief executive Jaap van der Bijl, is to 'show our stakeholders in a transparent way how we anchor sustainability across company policy.' Investor Bouwinvest, too, adheres to the UN's SDGs and has made the societal return on its investments as important as the financial returns it books. Inclusivity has become a key word.

INVESTORS

'Every investment we make involves looking at the impact on climate and sustainability,' says Pieter Vandeginste, head of the ASR Dutch Mobility Office Fund. 'We look at how people commute and ask if it is possible to change the way they travel and make developments both more sustainable, and healthier places to live and work.'

'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 Cartesius Triangle development in Utrecht.

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 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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