



City Expedition Rotterdam Streets as Places

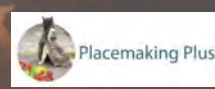
11 October 2017



PAKHUIS
DE ZWIJGER*



Public space is located at the intersection of many global issues from health to sustainability, innovation to equity. Placemaking Week is all about leveraging this convergence.



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List of participants

Abhijit Lokre	Arjen Knoester	Ruud Reutelingsperger
Adib Jalal	(City of Rotterdam)	(Obsevatorium)
Agnieszka Winkler	Bart Cardinaal	Sem Vroomans
Ally Goh	(Flying Grass Carpet)	(City of Rotterdam)
Carolina Huffmann	Christian Gausepohl	Teske van Hooijdonk
Donovan Finn	(City of Rotterdam)	(City of Rotterdam)
Gary Gaston	Eddy Kaiser	Violette Baudet
Jennifer Goold	(Flying Grass Carpet)	(City of Rotterdam)
John Desmond	Emiel Arends	Elske de Ronde
Karina McGill	(City of Rotterdam)	(Pakhuis de Zwijger)
Kirk Vartan	Jeroen van Kesteren	Laura Janszen
Koen Swanenburg	(City of Rotterdam)	(Pakhuis de Zwijger)
Laura Dumas	Joppe Kant	Mattijs van 't Hoff
Magdeline Sng	(City of Rotterdam)	(STIPO)
Marguerite Lee	Kristiaan Leurs	
Marko Zlonoga	(City of Rotterdam)	
Marta Machus-Burek	Marcus Edelenbosch	
Meagan Shinn	(City of Rotterdam)	
Merel Weekenborg	Marieke Middeldorp	
Michael DiPasquale	(City of Rotterdam)	
Nate Hommel	Mattijs van Ruijven	
Päivi Raivio	(City of Rotterdam)	
Pete Wooten	Monique Zwinkels	
Roelof van Wyk	(City of Rotterdam)	
Robin Abad Ocubillo	Mustapha Bouchrit	
Rosa Danenburg	(City of Rotterdam)	
Sandeep Paul	Nadine Roos	
Sem Delaere	(Flying Grass Carpet)	
Shelly Kulshrestha	Ron van Gelder	
Simone Ronchetti	(alliantie West Kruiskade)	
Tim Morgan		

Participants

There was a good mixture of male and female participants from all around the world during this placemaking excursion. There were a lot of attendees from the USA, but also from India, Belgium, Argentina, Australia and other countries around the world. The ages of all the attendees were mixed as well as their professions, although all were involved with placemaking. The overall input of the day was coming from a group with many different background and expertise. On behalf of the city, there were projectmanagers, urban planners, traffic planners, and public space designers as well as stakeholders from the case study areas, to present, participate and interact with the international placemakers.

Many of the participants already had seen each other during past events or met in the early morning at Pakhuis de Zwijger, or during the train journey to Rotterdam. The atmosphere was very informal and everybody was “chatty” and inspired, also due to the inspiration on arrival of the new Central Station and Station square, and the Flying Grass Carpet on the Schouwburgplein (Theatre Square). During the day people were looking after each other, making sure nobody got left behind. All of them were participating enthusiastically and interested in Rotterdam (although some were disappointed they didn’t get to see the Markthal during the visit, however they visited it themselves after the end of the program). And as one of the participants said: “We think it’s so great of you (municipality of Rotterdam) to spend so much time and effort in having us over and ask for our advice. That’s really great!”.



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AMSTERDAM
PLACEMAKING WEEK
OCT 10-14, 2017

Introduction

This trip to Rotterdam explores how the city is reimagining its streets and public spaces. After the bombing of the city centre during WWII, the innercity has been developed as a New Town with separation of functions according to the modernist planning principles. Also the mantra of traffic engineers was “faster and wider.” This evolved in an city centre with the first pedestrian shopping street (Lijnbaan) and broad streets for cars. However, it turned out not to be an attractive innercity to live and stay.

In recent years the City of Rotterdam, the Dutch capital of modern architecture, has worked on the city as urban lounge. It added new architectural landmark buildings like the Markthal and Central Station, in relation to redesigned public spaces like the Stationsplein, the Binnenrotte, and the river banks. It worked on rebalanced streets to work better for pedestrians, bikes and transit such as the Meent. Also there were temporary interventions in public spaces, like the Luchtsingel, the Trap and the new Flying Grass Carpet (visited on arrival in Rotterdam).

But what’s next for Rotterdam? How can we remake our streets into a series of multi-use destinations with many ways to move from place to place? Popular streets like Nieuwe Binnenweg and West-Kruiskade still need new solutions for bikes and pedestrians. Inner-city areas like Wijnhaven district could benefit from efforts to strengthen the community. And the laneways behind Rotterdam’s shopping streets are rich with placemaking potential.

Goals for the day

The municipality of Rotterdam itself has been very active in (supporting) placemaking, especially in the last few years. It recently developed a city policy Places for People Experiment Programme 2017-2018 for the innercity. The chosen areas to look at today, still lead to many challenges and questions amongst the city planners and designer, also related to traffic issues. The municipality is looking for new insights and ideas from placemakers around the world. The goal for the day is to discover what the municipality of Rotterdam can learn from international placemakers?



5 ROTTERDAM DESCRIPTION OF THE CASES

What kind of areas are we looking at?

In Rotterdam three areas were visited by three separate groups:

1) The first group visited the Wijnhaveneiland / Maritime district. This is an area in-between the innercity and the river Maas, that has been undergoing a major transformation in recent years from mainly a desolated business area with offices into a new residential area with new high rise along existing streets and quays. However, this area is still a bit of an isolated island: how can we make it more attractive?

2) The second area was in the city centre: the small back alleys behind the main pedestrian shopping streets. These alleys often are abandoned and empty streets, only used for expedition and parking. However with the new vibe in the innercity, these spaces offer a lot of opportunities for an upgrade, leading to a new kind of use and public space in the innercity. What can be done to bring more atmosphere, and do we need even more public space in the innercity?

3) The third group went out exploring two high streets of Rotterdam, both with very different identities and thus with their own challenges and opportunities. The West-Kruiskade is a melting-pot with a lot of small shops and entrepreneurs of different cultural backgrounds. The street is a main street into the city for both cars, bikes and streetcars, not offering much space for pedestrians. How can we change the use of public space, making it a street to stay? The Nieuwe Binnenweg is an attractive street with a lot of cultural and catering amenities. The street is undergoing major roadworks for renovation of the streetcar tracks; how can we make sure the street will be easy to cross and improve walkability without losing its distinct character?



6 ROTTERDAM MARITIME DISTRICT

CHARACTERISTICS

Strengths

- Proximity to water
- Historical aspects
- Families with young children

Opportunities

- Relation with water → The Harbour Island
- Branding and creation of an identity
- The best quality of the island is the water, make use of it! Café on the water, playground on the water

Weaknesses

- Isolated
- Nothing to do for residents
- A lot of cars
- No communities (formal or informal)

Threats

- Complaining residents if there is more recreation or if the cars are banned
- Impossible to create children playground because of the water (danger to fall in the water)



PROPOSED SOLUTIONS

- Diminish number of cars, especially along the water sides/quays, more space for pedestrians
- Increase connections to the surroundings but keep island character
- Branding of the island, identity of the island
- Connect to the water
- Apple tree: only tree that survived WO2: place red chairs around it.
- Attract people to the island, a reason to come: e.g. create an indoor play area on first floor instead of parking space → activating for families with young children
- Oblige developers to work on placemaking



7 ROTTERDAM BACK ALLEYS

CHARACTERISTICS

Strengths

- Abandoned places, thus perfect for experimenting.
- Places that could be added to the public space.

Opportunities

- Make temporary functions: day / night to attract more pedestrians during the day / place to enjoy at night.
- Art on the walls or lighting scenes
- Vertical green walls

Weaknesses

- Most back alleys feel rather unsafe and not very attractive
- Lack of accessibility (at the moment)

Threats

- Complaining neighbours (no / less parking spaces, noise at night....)
- Already enough public space in the inner-city of Rotterdam to think about?



PROPOSED SOLUTIONS

- No parking, more green and trees
- Better connections for bikes and pedestrians to surrounding streets (e.g. Lijnbaan)
- Add identity and value
- Add a destination in the area so more pedestrians will pass by
- Add more shops/entertainment to attract more pedestrians during the day / place to enjoy at night (container – pop-up cafés, night galleries etc)
- Art-exhibitions, wall paintings and lightshows to make it more attractive
- Make it safer, cleaner and lighter, make sure there is a good pavement and green (trees)



8 ROTTERDAM HIGH STREETS

CHARACTERISTICS

Strengths

- Vibrant streets and entrepreneurs
- Small initiatives that can create something bigger
- Mixed opportunities due to high collaboration

Opportunities

- Less parking: make only one side of the street for parking, or parking only at specific places and times
- Create more sitting opportunities, make green space.

Weaknesses

- Different kind of functions are needed in these street so it's difficult to make it for pedestrians only

Threats

- Complaining residents if there is more noise in the area or if the cars are banned



PROPOSED SOLUTIONS

- Less parking and more places to sit (both public and cafés)
- Parking: time frames, time restrictions,
- Better ways to cross the street
- Facilities for bikes
- Introduce temporary pop-ups: art and other things
- Shop owners and entrepreneurs are positive so help them to create a unique street



9 ROTTERDAM CONCLUSIONS

Proposed solutions are both short and long term, because the perception of time frames differed per country and thus per place maker. For them it was not clear what would be feasible in Rotterdam on short terms, also regarding local policies, permits and engaging local stakeholders. What we see here as short term solutions can be seen as long term ones in another part of the world

Main conclusions based on the analyses and presentations:

- **Less cars in the city!** This is a complicated political issue, however due to gentrification cars become more and more abandoned from the identity of the city.
Goal: making areas in the city car-free; get rid of parking spaces.
- **More small spaces for people.** Not only big squares and parks: more green, and possible to do it in small steps. Also temporary projects and installation.
- **Use blank walls for placemaking:** you can make art on walls or make it green (although that can be expensive).
- **Create different time frames** for proposals and experiments, like day/night, day one/day two, weekdays / weekends etc.



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DE STAD OP OOGHOOGTE IN NEDERLAND

Samengesteld door Jeroen Laven, Sander van der Ham, Siënna Veelders & Hans Karssenber

blauwdruk

You can read more stories on
the City at Eye Level and Placemaking in the Netherlands
in our new book

The City at Eye Level in the Netherlands

More info on
www.thecityateyelevel.com

City Expedition Rotterdam

Streets as Places

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