

Imaginative ideas for a 'greenlight district' in Amsterdam

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Seven students from Wageningen University were asked by Alterra to come up with original ideas to 'green up' Amsterdam city centre in order to improve the living climate and enhance sustainability. For eight weeks the students worked tirelessly on a creative mix of ideas which they presented in an advisory report.

One recommendation was to use movable shrubs and plants to make the street scene greener. Another was to change the regulations for new hotels and encourage the proprietors to install [green roofs](#). The report also suggests that the job of tending the greenery be assigned to local communities. Not only would this keep down the maintenance costs, it would enhance [social cohesion](#) into the bargain. It further points out that the pressure on the [city](#) centre could be eased by spreading tourism across adjacent areas. ICT facilities and neighbourhood participation are just two of the tools with the potential to deliver added value in this scenario.

Amsterdam city centre is overcrowded

Amsterdam is very popular as a tourist destination and a place of residence, but the city centre is generally experienced as far too busy. Visitors are flocking to Amsterdam and will continue to do so in the future. However, the geographical area in which most of them stay is too small to accommodate the ever-growing influx.

A green city centre has a lot to offer

A greener street scene in Amsterdam city centre would deliver benefits all-round. It would boost the physical and mental health of the residents and enhance social cohesion among tourists and residents alike. It would also help to make the ecosystem in the city centre more resilient. And there are countless financial benefits that a [green](#) city centre can confer, such as higher property prices and lower healthcare costs. Last but by no means least, more greenery would change the image and perception of the city.

Fleshing out the ideas

The key to creating a greener city centre is to introduce small adjustments. For instance, ideas that are already being implemented on a small scale could be expanded so that they do actually make a difference to the living climate and sustainability in the city. The seven students from five different Master's programmes put forward some original options in their report 'Greenlight District Amsterdam', ranging from green roofs for stations, hotels and parking garages to green tram rails and floating gardens in Amsterdam's canals. Alterra will flesh out these ideas and take steps to implement the best ones.

Provided by Wageningen University

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