



Annual Report

Rotterdam Goes Green; the 2023-2026 Green Agenda



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Foreword



'Our goal is to add at least 20 additional hectares of greenery to the city before 2026'

What did we do in 2022 and 2023 to make Rotterdam extra green? You can read all about it in this report. Lots of projects have recently been completed and put in motion – adding greenery to public spaces and city squares, with green routes and close to close to people's homes.

There's a good reason we're doing all of this. Green spaces are important for your health. Greenery ensures cooling in the summer and improved water collection during heavy downpours. Exactly what we need to absorb some of the consequences of climate change. What's more, good and varied greenery is extremely important for biodiversity in cities.

Our goal is to add at least 20 additional hectares of greenery to the city before 2026 (to put it in visual terms, this amounts to almost 30 soccer fields!). The status after almost two years: 8.1 hectares. We're right on schedule and I'm very happy about that! We still have two years to achieve our goal of 20 hectares before 2026. Will we succeed? I truly hope so!

We're receiving a great deal of support from more and more residents and organizations, who are also making an effort to make our city greener themselves. They understand the importance of greenery in how we experience our city today, as well as its significance for the future. And they're rolling up their sleeves and working hard to make their own environment greener and nicer. We're not the only ones adding greenery to the city as a municipality; the numerous residents and green partners are also involved with the greening effort. This is amazing and very much needed. Because we, as a municipality, can't do it alone.

Vincent Karremans

Maintenance, Outdoor Spaces and Mobility Councillor

Status

We'd hereby like to present you with the first annual report of the
"Rotterdam Goes Green: the 2023-2026 Green Agenda" Action Plan

This Action Plan will help us to realize a greener Rotterdam. There is still a great need for more and more varied greenery in the city. Implementing the Action Plan will allow us to create a city which can absorb the consequences of climate change, with measures to prevent heat stress and improve rain water storage. We're also focused on biodiversity and are trying to reverse the decline in plant and animal species. But we're also working on green connections within the city and from the city outwards.

The Action Plan states we'll be realizing another 20 hectares of additional green space during the 2022-2026 period. This goal was set by the municipal council.

After 18 months – from July 2022 to December 2023 – the counter is at 8.1 hectares of additional greenery in the city. We're expecting to be able to realize an average of 5 hectares per year, so we're actually ahead of schedule. We've agreed on the measuring method we use with the Court of Auditors. We aren't able to properly calculate the square meters on private land, such as that owned by private individuals and businesses, so we don't count this land. Although these square meters are naturally still important.

But the Action Plan is about more than 20 hectares of green space: We're also implementing 50 projects with measures which will prepare our city for a changing climate (climate adaptation). And we're installing 40 hectares of bee landscape. In addition, we're improving

15 city squares and are working on four green routes along the water.

We're also right on schedule with other green agenda goals:

- 2 climate adaption projects in progress
- 24 climate adaption projects in various preparatory phases
- 2 city squares completed
- 2 city squares in progress
- 11 city squares in preparation
- 13.8 hectares of bee landscape completed

This is how the green space was identified up to 2023:

- Infrared calculations resulting from annual aerial photos of green roofs. The greenery provides a reliable picture.
- Square meters in design plans for streets and city squares which were identified between July 2022 and November 2023. This green has not yet been installed, but the decision to do so has already been made.
- Square meters of green in design plans which were implemented after July 2022 and had not yet been included as a plan during the previous municipal council term.

The most important results per track

8,1 ha of green space

(of the 20)



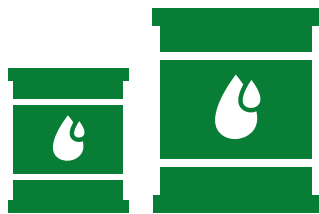
13,1 ha of bee landscape

(of the 40)



225 streets

with a new rain barrel



2,8 ha of green space

along with a roof



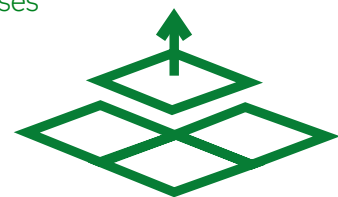
1013 streets

actively working on green spaces



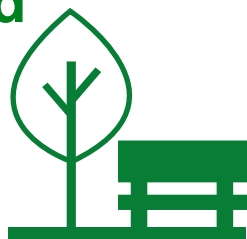
113.537 tiles

picked up with the Tile Taxi
at 770 addresses



2 city squares completed

2 in progress
11 in preparation



10 green-blue school playgrounds completed







A Community Garden for the district

'We have a Community House, but why don't we have a Community Garden?' This is how the then 10-year-old Aya articulated her wish for the Afrikaanderplein in 2019. And the garden was indeed created. A total of 160 m² of paving stones were removed for Aya's wish to come true. "The most important thing is for the residents to consider this 'their' garden," says Paula Zwitter, District Approach Coordinator of the Rotterdams WeerWoord program.

Paula was closely involved in the installation of the garden. "I was asked by the Green Agenda – Green Close to Home, Biodiversity and Rotterdams WeerWoord – to ask residents of the Afrikaanderwijk what their wishes were," she says. "We asked the residents what they wanted to happen with their square and what their expectations were. Based on this input, we came up with a design together with the residents.

At the end of 2022, we installed the first part of the garden. We did this so that the neighbors would all see that something was happening, and they might also become enthusiastic about it. And that's exactly what happened. In the spring of 2023, it was time for the second part. The residents manage and maintain the garden themselves."

"It's primarily a meeting place, but it also serves as an inspirational garden. All of the plants are edible and native, so that's good for biodiversity. For the garden, we use rainwater that is collected in the raw materials station, where the waste from the Afrikaandermarkt is separately collected. And people can obtain additional information in the Community House, for example if they want to join together with their neighbors to greenify a part of their street. In addition, the Stichting Steensoep foundation gives nature and environmental lessons to elementary school pupils. The Community Garden is so special because so many different parties within the district collaborate on it. And the ownership resides with the district. This is perhaps the nicest result." The Garden won the national Steenbreekrofee (Steenbreek Trophy) in 2023.

Green close to home

The outside begins at the front door. The street, neighborhood and district are the places where many residents spend most of their time. That's why encouraging and achieving green spaces close to home is an important part of the green approach.

Residents' initiatives

Having additional green spaces near your house makes living there nicer. These don't need to be huge spaces; even a little bit of greenery will have a positive effect on living enjoyment. People often greatly appreciate small green spaces. Residents who want to make their surroundings more green themselves have various options. For example, they can take the initiative and add greenery to their street and subsequently look after this themselves. Or the municipality can handle the maintenance after the greenery has been planted. We provide a maximum of EUR 10,000 for these types of residents' initiatives per initiative.

Residents' projects were carried out in the following locations, among others, in 2023: the Water Tower in De Esch, the Hofdijk building in Oude Noorden, Gerrit Jan Mulderstraat in Rotterdam West, Raadhuisstraat in Rozenburg and Ernst Groosmanplein in Rotterdam South.

The Rotterdams WeerWoord program's district approach includes working together with residents on campaigns intended to absorb the consequences of climate change. There were dozens of green-blue campaigns during the past year; from placing rain barrels and installing facade gardens, to creating green sections and Community Gardens (Tuinen van de Wijk). The Afrikaanderwijk Community Garden even won a national prize: the Steenbreektrofee (Steenbreek Trophy)! The TegelTaxi (Tile Taxi) picks up tiles and sand which residents need to get rid of once they've made their garden or neighborhood greener during the planting season. Some 113,537 tiles were picked up from 770 addresses in 2023. In addition, 160 cubic meters of sand were also picked up.

Opzoomer Mee

The Opzoomer Mee campaign encouraged residents to work together to make their street or neighborhood greener in 2023. Residents were able to claim up to EUR 250 per street for their green initiatives. There was plenty of enthusiasm: Residents carried out some 225 new green initiatives in streets and neighborhoods, resulting in over 1,300 square meters of new greenery being planted. And residents initiated a campaign to jointly maintain the new green spaces in 788 streets. Residents in Delfshaven, Charlois and Feijenoord were especially active in this regard. So residents in more than a thousand streets banded together to greenify their streets. Streets were also able to request a community rain barrel for the street – to be used to water the new plants on the street, for example. This was used at least 225 times.



Green-blue school playgrounds

Rotterdam has been working on green-blue school playgrounds for years now. Children can play in these playgrounds' green spaces and the rain water is collected and removed in a playful manner. This approach makes us successful as a city. About 46 green-blue school playgrounds have already been installed in recent years, and plans are being made for an additional 10 school playgrounds. It's certainly no coincidence that Rotterdam was one of 5 ambassador municipalities of the Jantje Beton National Youth Fund in 2023.

Existing elementary schools can receive a subsidy for installing a green-blue school playground up to 2026, with a maximum budget of EUR 80,000 euro per school. Five schools can receive a subsidy every year. These schools are overseen during the planning, implementation and management process.

Elementary schools in various parts of the city received a subsidy in 2023: in IJsselmonde, Hoek van Holland, Park Zestienhoven and Het Lage Land. Working on a solid plan together with students, teachers and parents takes time. That's why school playgrounds were completed in 2023 which had received a subsidy the previous year, such as De Klaver in Carnisse, the Prinses Julianaschool in Oude Noorden and De Barkentijn in Beverwaard.

Some schools have a public school playground managed by the municipality. These can often also use a facelift. We tackled a number of these school playgrounds in 2023, such as at the Kasteel Spangen elementary school, at the Hildegardisschool and the Dempoplein and Schelfplein. We'll spruce up two public school playgrounds per year during the forthcoming years. Naturally always in close consultation with the school and neighborhood.

A one-time subsidy will become available for installing green-blue school playgrounds in newly built schools. This is a supplement to the school's contribution for the school playground. The subsidy program will be determined in the spring. There are ongoing talks for applying for this subsidy with five schools which are planning to build new schools.

But it's not just the municipality which contributes to the green-blue school playgrounds. For example, an extra EUR 11,000 was available for trees for some school playgrounds. A congress held in Rotterdam contributed this as CO2 compensation. We have developed a menu for this together with Rotterdam Partners, where congress organizations can select a project to support. And the Jantje Beton foundation has made EUR 50,000 available because Rotterdam is an ambassador for the green-blue school playground approach.





Green partners

Rotterdam has many green partners which are involved with greening the city, or which encourage and support residents with this. Many initiatives have united in Groen010. We jointly organized two green tables in 2023, to discuss how we can help and support each other. We support initiatives organized by green partners in line with our Action Plan. This year, the Stichting Groenemorgen foundation organized four knowledge meetings, including one about "Rotterdam National Park". We also supported the sunflower cultivation competition and initiatives concerning the boomspiegelfeest (celebration for the area of ground around the tree trunk). The Rotterdam Environmental Center (Rotterdams Milieu Centrum), together with the Cooldown City initiative, organized two tree circuses in the fall.

We have developed green walking tours for residents together with the green partners, welfare institutions and other active organizations in the district; a route along green spaces and the organizations which want to make the neighborhood greener and healthier. De Groene Overschie started up in May and we're working on these routes at various locations throughout the city.

The green partners have a huge amount of energy and we've realized we're working towards the same goals. They are a fixed and recognizable point of contact for residents in many locations throughout the district and are a part of the green district networks. We're exploring whether we can offer them more structural support as a network partner.



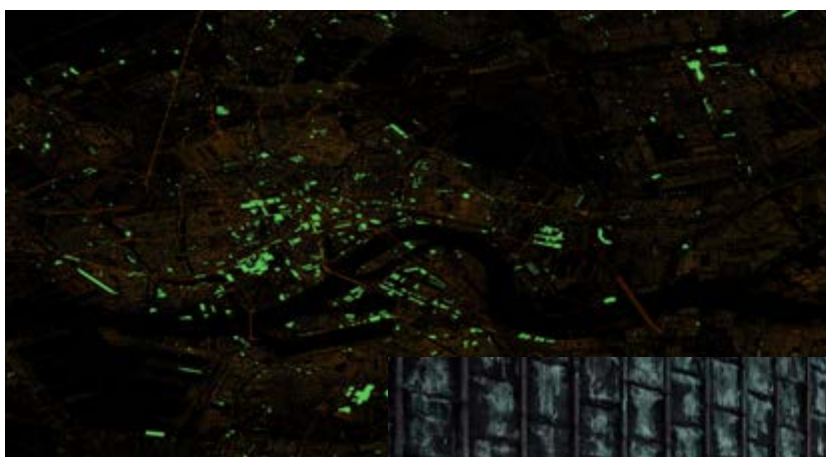
Climate adaptation subsidy

A subsidy is available for climate adaptation, just like in previous years. The subsidy is intended for Rotterdam residents, or for businesses and organizations based in Rotterdam, which want to introduce measures on their roofs or in their gardens to mitigate the consequences of climate change. This may concern adding plants to a tiled garden, creating a green roof, installing water storage or disconnecting rain water drainage from the sewage system and now also heat measures. An additional subsidy is possible if the greenery is home-grown and increases the biodiversity. The new program which took effect in July 2023 states that residents can apply for a subsidy both individually and jointly – for example, through a homeowners' association or a non-profit foundation. There are numerous organizations in the city which organize these types of community activities. The possibility of joint subsidy applications means the greening also allows neighbors to get to know each other better and work on projects together.

A new subsidy program was introduced in 2023, specifically for housing corporations for facilitating climate adaptation for their housing stock and hence for their tenants. A total of 239 subsidies were applied for in 2023. This resulted in 6,875 square meters of additional green space. In addition, 2,611 square meters of hardened surfaces were disconnected, making sure rainwater no longer ended up in the waste water sewage system. A total of 378 cubic meters of additional water storage was installed.

Green roofs

Green roofs hold on to rain water for longer, thereby keeping the water from immediately flowing into the sewage system during periods of heavy rainfall. Plants also help the roof last longer. We've been encouraging the installation of green roofs for years with the climate adaptation subsidy. Some 28,326 square meters of green roofs (2.83 hectares) were constructed in 2023.



Green roofs 2023







A green-blue school playground for everyone

Willie van de Haterd is Adjunct Director of the Public Literary Elementary School de Barkentijn (Openbare Literaire Basisschool de Barkentijn) in the Beverwaard district. The school received a subsidy for installing a green-blue playground. Everyone – pupils, their parents, teachers, neighbors and BSO Kiddoozz – provided input for the design. Kiddoozz also attended the celebratory opening just after the autumn vacation.

So do the children play differently on the renewed playground?

Willie: "It's still too early to see a difference in this respect, but I'm sure this will happen. The playground is open, but it hasn't been fully completed yet. The planting has just finished, and we also placed two planter boxes with seedlings, two small sheds, two rain barrels and a soccer cage. We also opted to have grass on the playground, but it still needs to grow a bit. Children need space to run, skate or play with a ball, so we still do have a lot of paving stones."

Can the neighborhood children also play on the playground after school?

"Of course," Willie says, "because this was the case prior to the renovation as well. There is little open space in the neighborhood, our school is entirely enclosed between the houses. Now, we do lock the gate at around 5:30 or 6:00 p.m. But the people at Kiddoozz, the after-school child care organization near us, have a key. And social work organization SOL organized sports activities on our playground last summer. We will soon meet with their district coordinator to come up with a plan for organizing fun things for children from the entire district during all vacations."

How did you ensure that the children could give their input on the design?

"We consulted extensively with the pupil council about this. After having discussed the issue with their classmates in groups, the children used stickers to indicate what they would like to see on their new playground. I can confirm that space for playing soccer ended up high on the list. We also discussed the design with parents during the coffee mornings and kept them updated on the progress through the monthly newsletter. We took stock of all the wishes and ideas ourselves and forwarded these to the municipality. We selected the designer, who also contributed some clever ideas. The municipality really listened to us and was also able to clearly explain what was and what wasn't feasible."

Track 2

Green in the districts



A great deal needs to be done in the districts where greening is concerned: more biodiversity and measures for climate adaptation. We can achieve a large amount of greenification with a relatively small amount of money by aligning with other plans for the district which are in the works.

This includes plans for improving streets and squares, sewage system work, traffic circulation improvement work or the creation of streets with 30 km/hour speed limits. We make sure we include plants which are appealing to animals when we plant greenery. So not just grass, but also a variety of trees, shrubs and herbs, so as to improve biodiversity. But we also contribute to climate initiatives by participating with 50 climate adaptation projects. The amount of the financial contributions depends on the project's location; the greater the need, the higher the contribution.

Preparing and implementing the projects in residential areas takes time. One year will often lapse between the formulation of a plan and the moment there is visible greenery outside. A total of 7,600 square meters of additional green space was created and 4.53 hectares was being prepared for implementation between July 2022 and the end of November 2023. Together with the green roofs, the total comes to 8.51 hectares

The new green spaces are dispersed throughout the city. For example, additional greenery was planted for the

sewage system renovation in the Starstraat in IJsselmonde and for the sewage system renovation in Provenierswijk. De Jonker Fransstraat and Nijverheidsstraat are currently being renovated. In addition, implementation plans have been made for Claes de Vrieselaan, Almondestraat and the Mijnkintbuurt complex in Tarwewijk.

The renovation of the Hillesluis playground (2022) included the replacement of almost all paving stones with grass. At the same time, water storage was installed to collect rain water. This will ensure both the grass and plants will receive sufficient water. And it can also be used for the sand/waterplay equipment. Both water storage and greening was therefore achieved with this project. And biodiversity has been increased thanks to the addition of more greenery, varied greenery and, for example, accommodations for different animal species.

Lots of green will be added in 2024. For example, we'll be working in the Agniesebuurt, Oud-Mathenesse and Lusthofkwartier neighborhoods.





The municipal council has also made a decision in principle to invest in green city projects: attractive public spaces and parks where residents and visitors can enjoy recreational activities and meet up. Work at the Rijnhavenpark is in progress and work will start on the Alexanderplein in 2024. Construction work will start on the Hofbogenpark and the Hofplein in 2025. Lots of additional greenery will be added here, often many hectares. We'll include these green spaces in the count once the plans have been completely worked out. The square meters associated with the Hofbogenpark, Prins Alexanderplein and Hofplein are included in the count for this annual report. A co-financing contribution of €4.56 million has been received for the water (storage) and greening activities at some of these city projects through the Delta Fund's temporary Climate Adaptation Impetus Regulation (Impulsregeling Klimaatadaptatie).

We're also working on 50 climate adaptive projects. A climate adaptive project is a project in a residential area, at a location where measures are sorely needed in order to combat the consequences of climate change, increase biodiversity and greenify the surroundings.



We introduce measures related to at least two climate issues when implementing such a project. This can be water storage for rainfall, for example, and the planting of additional greenery, which has an effect on both heat and rainfall. This doesn't just concern technical measures above ground or underground, but also measures which contribute to an appealing, biodiverse and green outdoor space. One example is the construction of the urban water buffer (UWB) AHOY and UWB Museumpark.

Extra green in public spaces



Green projects

-  In preparation
-  (almost) completed



Squares

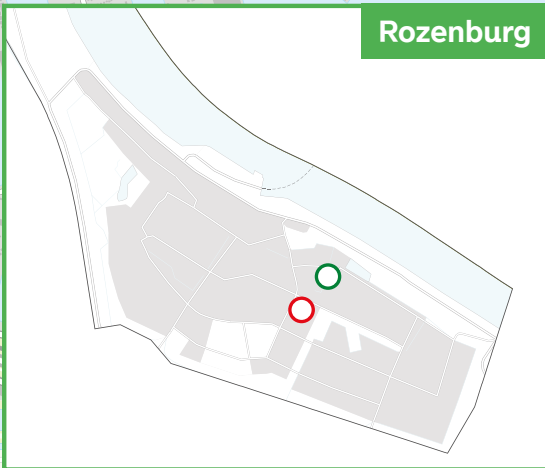
-  In preparation
-  (almost) completed

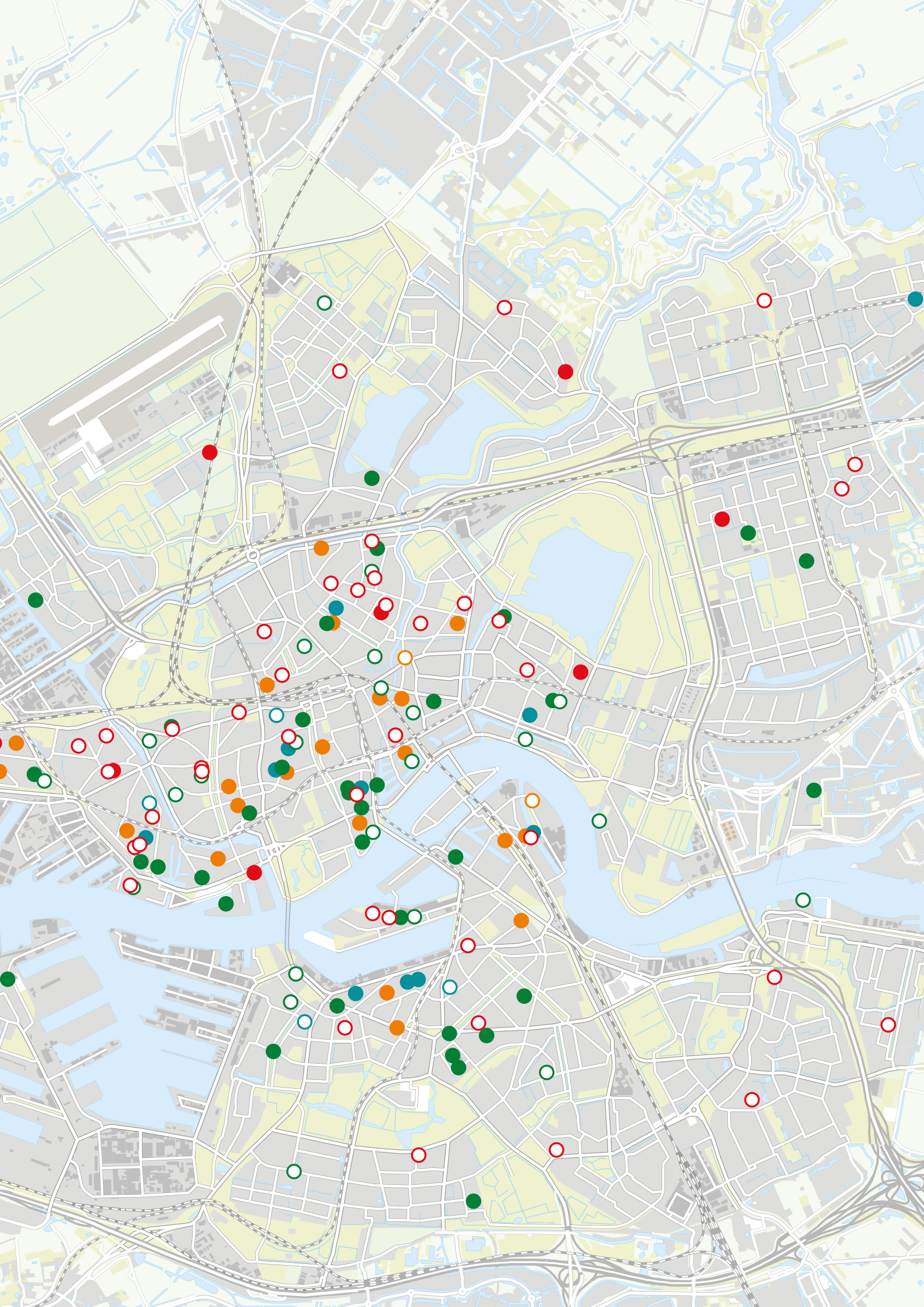
50 climate adaptive projects

-  In preparation
-  (almost) completed

Green-blue school playgrounds

-  In preparation
-  (almost) completed









Rotterdamse Munt City Garden

Ingrid Ackermans designed the new layout of the sidewalk on the west side of the Rosestraat. She is a landscape architect and urban planner, and until the end of last year she was the initiator and driving force behind the Rotterdamse Munt City Garden on the Rosestraat.

How did you, as a non-government official, get the task to come up with this design?

Ingrid explains: "Some time ago, I had contacted the municipality to see whether the city garden could play a role in the greening of the district. That's because the city garden is also frequented by many people in the district who also tend to the front gardens of houses and the like. I often provided input for their plans.

At Rotterdamse Munt, we also provide training to become a landscaper, and there are apprenticeships and job experience traineeships, so there's a lot of knowledge. Residents always found it a little frustrating that it often took a long time before a greening plan was actually implemented in the district. I then found out that the municipality doesn't always have sufficient in-house design capacity, so I offered my services

Did you involve the residents in this plan?

"We organized two open days to find out what the people might want," Ingrid continues. "I spoke with people who live right on the Rosestraat and with visitors to the Rotterdamse Munt, who come from the greater South (Zuid) area. The residents in the immediate vicinity are very enthusiastic that something beautiful,

positive and green will be happening. At the moment, it's a very wide, long, gray-paved sidewalk. Package delivery vans continuously drive over it, even though many children also play there. This gives people an unsafe feeling. "We will soon combat this with additional greenery and we hope to promote more 'socially-minded' behavior by the delivery drivers."

How many square meters of additional greenery will be added?

"The design currently calls for an elongated plant bed, with shrubs, perennial plants and flowering plants. Some additional trees will also be planted at the Roseknoop intersection. All of the planting will provide food for birds and insects. It's over 4,000 square meters, which is 2% of the entire city's total goal of 20 additional hectares. It won't be wide, but it will be long. There will be more than enough sidewalk left for walking and playing. The design is now being reviewed by the municipality, because something like this must always be coordinated with various disciplines. Once that has wrapped up, I expect that the implementation will be able to start in the second half of 2024.

Track 3

Tackling 15 city squares



We're renovating 15 squares in neighborhoods and districts with new and better greenery and are also introducing additional measures to combat flooding, if so required. This is how we're making these spaces nicer to spend time and play in.

We're renovating 15 squares in neighborhoods and districts with new and better greenery and are also introducing additional measures to combat flooding, if so required. This is how we're making these spaces nicer to spend time and play in. The squares we're renovating are situated, wherever possible, in areas where the need is the greatest. We link into maintenance projects which are in the pipeline, or which are entering the preparatory phase, where possible. Our assignment is to turn five of the 15 squares into "climate squares". This means we introduce additional water storage measures for these squares. We're also collaborating with the National Rotterdam South Program (Nationaal

Programma Rotterdam Zuid) for the renovation of some city squares in Rotterdam South.

We completed a new design of the Akeleiplein and Slotboomplein in 2023. We also started working on the Ericaplein and Driehoeksplein. The last square is a climate square.

Work will commence on the Persoonsdam, Mijnsherenplein and the square in Zwartewaalstraat in 2024. These will all be climate squares. We'll also start preparing plans for, to name but a few, the Ambachtsplein, Assendelftplein and Bospolderplein.







The renovated Akeleiplein

Rob van der Meulen lives together with his wife in the Zijdewindestraat and they look out over the Akeleiplein.

More green

Rob van der Meulen says: "The square has become a lot bigger. There are new planter boxes with plants and trees, which are shaped like a columbine, the flower. Now, I think that not a lot of people will immediately know what a columbine looks like. And, of course, you only see the flowers from above. But I'm so glad that you no longer only see stone. In the spring of 2019, we and other residents were asked to provide input. At the time, we indicated that we wanted more greenery, because the entire square was paved. We didn't hear much else from the municipality for a while.

The planter boxes are filled with a type of dune grass, with here and there a flower. The weather conditions were far from ideal for green plants last summer, so we'll have to wait and see what happens during the spring season. The trees are smaller than on the drawing, but they are nice and green in any case. And they will continue growing in the coming years. The municipality does do a good maintenance job, though: pruning, weeding, street sweeping, and the like. A lot of the front gardens did disappear due to the street being raised, but there's already a new initiative underway, so they'll be back

soon. There are now only three flowerbeds left along the facades; we need to come up with something to keep playing children out of them."

A place for everyone

"I think there are now slightly fewer play areas for children," says Rob van der Meulen, "but there are more possibilities for everyone to spend time on the square. It's nice and green around the play areas, with real grass and a section of artificial turf. There are new benches and swiveling chairs. I think that's a fun, playful idea, and people are making good use of them! There are always lots of moms sitting on them while the children play all around them.

The sunken containers haven't arrived yet, although they were in the plan. I sometimes find it difficult to get into contact with the municipality about such issues. This was a problem for me during the construction, too. There were fences around the new playground equipment for a long time, and I was unable to find out when they would be removed. But overall I'm satisfied with the new square.

When we have visitors, our guests are always pleasantly surprised. In the past, it was all stone and now it's nice and green, they say! So maybe we don't even notice it anymore..."



Track 4

Green routes along the water

We're working on improving four important green routes throughout the city and leading out of the city.

These routes will be used as walking and cycling routes, but also for sports activities. And, of course, they can represent an important connection for animals too. Mobility is also an important issue here. The mobility department will present traffic circulation measures in 2024 which will be used to create low-traffic zones in a number of neighborhoods during the forthcoming years, thereby improving road safety and accessibility. Some of these measures will be implemented for the green routes along the waterfronts of the Rotte river and the Heemraadsingel canal, in order to further increase the appeal and quality of these routes.

Four green-blue connections were selected to be worked on during this municipal council term:

1. The Rotte landscape park, in the direction of Rottemeren lake

The approach for the Rotte landscape park (Landschapspark De Rotte) is intended to improve the appeal of the Rotte river and the associated recreation options. We're doing this by increasing the vibrancy and recognition of the Rotte, making the river more accessible and constructing attractive green quays, squares and parks. We're also working on improving biodiversity. This won't just concern physical projects, but is also about creating liveliness along the Rotte river – i.e. ensuring there are things to enjoy there. Work has already started at several locations in the inner city. This includes the construction of a staircase with seating at the Grotekerkplein and the renovation of the Crooswijksebocht.

We started preparing a plan for the Rottekade quay, between the Noorderbrug bridge and the De Meent shopping street, in 2023. Several projects in this area are currently in the preparatory phase.

We're looking into whether it's feasible to tackle De Poort van Noord (the crossing of the Rotte river and the A20 freeway and the railway viaduct), the Ommoordse Veld city park and the Steigersgracht canal.

2. Heemraadssingel/Van Aerssenlaan; from the Coolhaven to Vroesenpark

There is a green route which runs from the Park at the Euromast, all the way to the Vroesenpark city park, and then leads out of the city. The Heemraadssingel, which is part of this route, is already rather green. When planning major maintenance of the greenery and the paths surrounding the canal, we simultaneously make use of biodiversity and recreation opportunities. Implementation is expected to start at the end of 2024.

The Van Aerssenlaan needs to be renovated in order to turn it into a street with a 30 km/hour speed limit. This is the rockiest part of the route, with narrow cycling and walking paths on the Blijdorp side. Greening and improving the routes for slow traffic are therefore important tasks here. This is also stated in a motion adopted by the municipal council. We'll renovate the entire lane at once, in combination with replacing the sewage system. We started making plans this year.

3. The Rondje Bruggen running trail along the Nieuwe Maas river, between the Erasmus Bridge and Willemsbrug

The Rondje Bruggen is a popular running trail along the northern and southern banks of the Maas river which crosses three iconic bridges: the Erasmus Bridge (Erasmusbrug), (Willemsbrug) and Koninginnebrug. There's a great deal of potential for developing the area into a river park. A great place to go to relax, walk, exercise or meet people – all with a lovely view of the river.

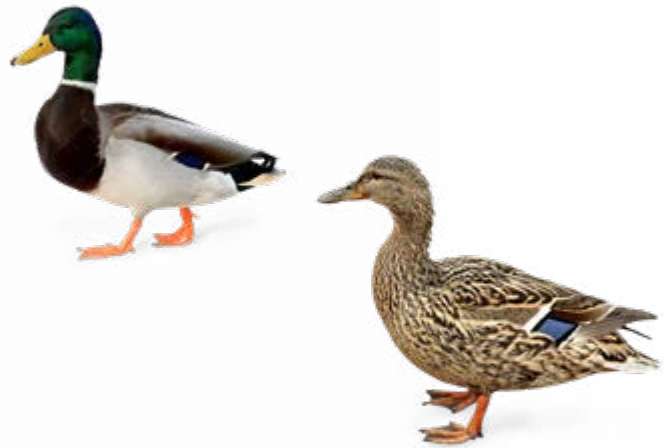
We'll be working on the development of the Rondje Bruggen in 2024. We'll talk to stakeholders in order to properly familiarize ourselves with the area and find out about its future needs. We'll make our choices based on this input. This concerns a large area, so not everything can be done at the same time. We'll determine which ambitions and which sub-projects we'll be working on during the forthcoming period.

4. The Steilrand , between the Rotte and the Schie river

The Steilrand is an area between the Schie and Rotte rivers which is still unknown to many Rotterdam residents. This 13.5 km long strip could become an attractive cycling, walking and recreational area and ecological route. We'll install decking, among other things, at the Bergse Voorplas lake in 2024, allowing for optimal enjoyment of the water. In addition, a discovery route and nature playground for children will be constructed along the Steilrand and four bootcamp sites will also be created. The entrances to the Steilrand at Zestienhoven Park will be improved, so as to facilitate a better connection from the districts. The Steilrand will also have bee-friendly green spaces.







A nice and appealing route

Sometimes, it's quite difficult to find the Rotte, the river after which our city is named, in the heart of Rotterdam. Let alone that it's splendid walking and biking along its banks and quays. Project manager Mathieu van Waterschoot and designer Liess Faber from the municipality of Rotterdam are making a plan to make a part of the Linker Rottekade quay and the Lombardkade quay greener and more appealing.

"Why are we doing this? The Rotte is the source of our city," says Liess. "A nice piece of nature that can be developed into an appealing recreational route leading out of the city for many Rotterdam residents."

Mathieu adds: "During the post-war reconstruction, the inner city was built with its back to the Rotte. A logical and appealing route along the water is lacking in the center. The municipality wants to change this and has already started tackling several locations, such as the sitting stairs by the Grote Kerkplein and the newly designed Crooswijksebocht."

Now it's the turn of the Linker Rottekade, a quay about 500 meters in length between the Noordplein and the Goudsesingel. "We will

make it more appealing, with plenty of room for bikers and pedestrians," says Mathieu.

"And we'll do it with lots of greenery," Liess adds. "In total, at least an additional 1,500 square meters. It is currently mostly stone, with parking spaces that block access to the water.

Those will be removed and cars will be guests rather than residents. And the parking lot opposite the Action store, on the Lombardkade, will become a little park. A jetty will also be constructed there where residents can launch their boat into the water."

Mathieu and Liess are currently working on the preliminary design, which they will discuss with the neighborhood. The final design will be ready before the summer of 2024, and the expectation is that it will be implemented in 2025.

A photograph of a park with a pond, trees, and people walking. The scene is lush and green, with a large tree in the center and a path leading through the park. Two people are walking on the path in the foreground, and a bench is visible near the pond. The sky is overcast.

Track 5

improvement of existing parks



This improvement program aims to boost the greenery and trees in parks, enabling them to become healthy again, thereby improving the park as a whole.

This improvement program aims to boost the greenery and trees in parks, enabling them to become healthy again, thereby improving the park as a whole. We'll replace green sections and plots with forest plants or trees, where necessary. We'll thereby be looking into how we can strengthen these elements so they can optimally contribute to the park's future viability and ecological value. We'll do this by realizing more variation wherever there's a monoculture of many of the same trees. This will allow us to prevent diseases and infestations like ash dieback. And we'll ensure planted sections with lots of stakes are less vulnerable to storms.

This year was primarily focused on the necessary preliminary work. Work has now started in the Blauwe Reiger park in Rozenburg.

We'll start with Molenpark and Argonautenpark in 2024, which also play a role in the bee landscape. The work will follow the rhythm of the seasons, so instead of renovating the park all at once, we'll constantly be working on sprucing up parts of it.





Creating appealing parks

Keeping parks appealing for residents, while simultaneously ensuring we select plant and animal species which can truly thrive in this environment. This is the task that employees of the municipality will be tackling in seven Rotterdam parks.

Dennis Habers is an administrator at the municipality. He's making plans for Argonautenpark (Argonaut Park) in 110 Morgen and Molenpark (Windmill Park) in Hilleegersberg. Dennis: "If you look at the forest trees in Argonautenpark, for example, you notice that the trees there are of one species and of the same age. The trees are competing with each other for light, which has caused them to grow tall and thin. After planting, not much more was done with them, while in planting beds, you can much better control variations in species, structure and age of the vegetation. An herb layer is missing here, along with a layer with shrubs. And it is exactly these that are important for biodiversity. So we'll add those. But, of course, we won't do that everywhere because in the summer, park visitors like to sit beneath the trees in the shade.

We are using the Systems Engineering's method for this improvement. In doing so, we're examining which environmental factors play a role. This is how we want to achieve variation and texture in the lawns. With differences in height, which will allow rain water to remain a little longer in lower-lying areas. But also with different types of grassy areas. How the residents use the park is also important. We will keep the grass short in areas where people play sports and exercise and where they walk their dogs. Quieter corners can then be good spots for growing herbs. This will allow us to make the parks appealing for local residents while at the same time improving the biodiversity."

Biodiversity and nurturing green spaces

We want to maintain and increase biodiversity. We'll do this by adding additional greenery which is valuable to biodiversity while working on our projects.

So not just grass, but also a variety of trees, shrubs and herbs. And greenery with various characteristics which are important to various animal species. We're also working on the objective of installing 40 hectares of bee landscape. We will, of course, continue to nurture and improve the green spaces we already have. Because greenery needs to be able to grow.

Ecological prerequisites (food, security, connection, accommodations) are the ideal circumstances for flora and fauna to settle, preserve and expand.

Source: The Biodiversity Framework (Biodiversiteitskader)



We started constructing the bee landscape in 2023. We opted for a pragmatic approach so we could quickly get to work. For example, we created bee-friendly routes with flower bulbs ("flower bulb green spaces") in the grass. We've also decreased the number of times the grass is mowed as much as possible, from 10 to 20 times per year to two or three times. This allowed us to convert the first 13.8 hectares of existing grass vegetation to a bee landscape. The Burgemeester Oudlaan is a nice example of this, where a (movable) information board has also been placed.



In the meantime, we've been working on a strategic approach for maintaining, improving and strengthening the ecological structure for the wild population. The strategic approach means we'll carefully select the locations we convert.

We'll start with designing the bee landscape on the north side of Rotterdam; from the Van der Duijn van Maasdamweg (Zestienhoven), via the Molenpark and the Terbregge neighborhood along the Rotte river to the Ommoordse Veld city park. We're expecting to be able to

create approximately 10 hectares here. We already started preparing the 2024 hectares back in 2023. For example, we've already planted an extensive biological flower bulb green area in Zestienhoven, which should be able to serve as food for the bees in the spring of 2024.

We'll further explore the southern bank in 2024.

The bee landscape runs from the zone along the A16 freeway in IJsselmonde, via the Zuiderpark (South Park) and Oud-Charlois neighborhood to the Maas Tunnel entrance.



Sharida wants happy bees



Bees in Reyeroord have a true bee castle! Resident Sharida Bhageloe created this in Het Park van Morgen (The Park of Tomorrow). "Because happy bees in Rotterdam is something I can get behind."

"Nature and the bees aren't doing so well, and I wanted to do something about it," says Sharida. "I started to do some research. What do wild bees need? How do they actually live? Lots of people install a bee hotel, but only 30% of all bees really need this. The rest live underground, where they sleep, take shelter and nest. That's when I came upon a bee castle or nest mound: a mound about 90 centimeters high in the middle of a plant bed. It's made of sand surrounded by stones, for sturdiness. This enabled me to offer the bees a safe spot in Het Park van Morgen."

Sharida pitched her idea to the municipality over two years ago. "I started this with some of my neighbors at the end of 2021, and it was

ready in the spring of 2022.

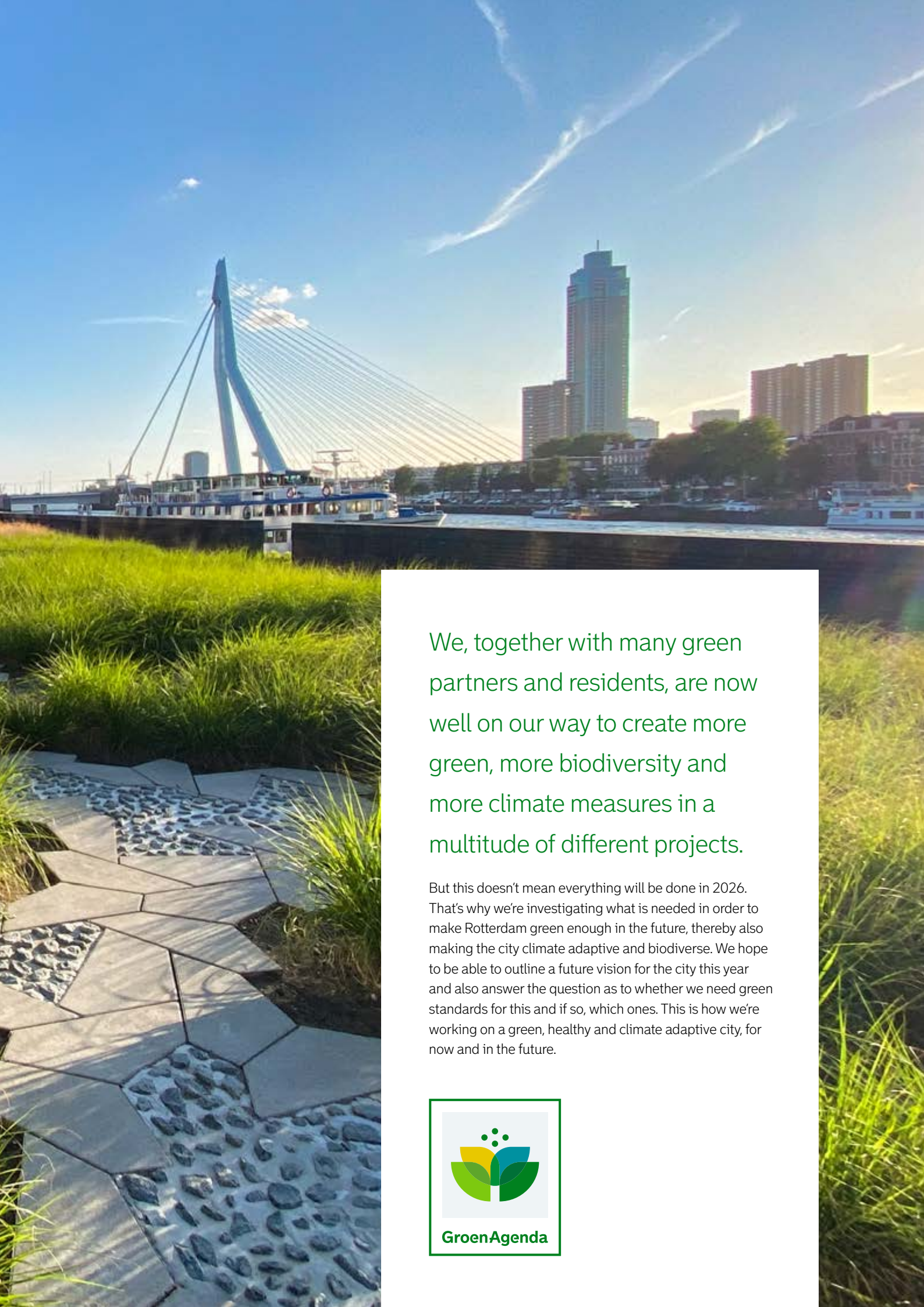
The mound is also located in the middle of an ecologically managed plant bed, so that there are blooming and native flowers and plants in the vicinity on which the bees can feed.

Now, after a year, the mound is fully populated by bees and other insects."

That's also something that residents themselves can do to promote biodiversity. Sharida. "They can learn how to greenify their own environment in an ecologically responsible manner. The municipality's website has a lot of information about this. And if we can provide the bees with a nest mound in more locations, in combination with ecologically managed greenery, then the bees in the city will fare much better."



**In
conclusion**



We, together with many green partners and residents, are now well on our way to create more green, more biodiversity and more climate measures in a multitude of different projects.

But this doesn't mean everything will be done in 2026. That's why we're investigating what is needed in order to make Rotterdam green enough in the future, thereby also making the city climate adaptive and biodiverse. We hope to be able to outline a future vision for the city this year and also answer the question as to whether we need green standards for this and if so, which ones. This is how we're working on a green, healthy and climate adaptive city, for now and in the future.



Colophon.

2023 Annual Report

Rotterdam Goes Green; the 2023-2026 Green Agenda

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