

Summary of the Vision for the Centre of Utrecht in 2040



This is the summary of the Vision for the Centre of Utrecht in 2040 document. In this Vision document, we describe what we want the City Centre of the future to look like.

The entire draft Vision is available here (in Dutch): [inspraakversie Omgevingsvisie Binnenstad 2040](#) (pdf, 15.4 MB).

Vision of the City Centre in 2040

In 2040, residents, business owners and visitors still feel at home in Utrecht's City Centre. They enjoy its beauty and relaxing atmosphere. The abundance of greenery in the City Centre lets them see how the city has built resilience in the face of the changing climate. The great variety of homes, workplaces, restaurants and cafes, shops and cultural and educational facilities attracts people of all ages with diverse backgrounds and varied interests.

The City Centre is primarily the domain of pedestrians and bicycle riders and the layout of the city reflects this. There is a lively heart to the Centre, with a mix of shops, restaurants and cultural facilities. The City Centre is attractive and accessible to all Utrecht residents as well as to the visitors who are curious about the City's unique qualities, its residents and its excellent amenities.

The vision of the future for the City Centre is described on pages 7-9 of the draft Vision for the Centre of Utrecht 2040.

Core Qualities of the City Centre and 26 Aims

Everyone has an opinion about the Utrecht City Centre and everyone experiences it in their own way. Yet the same images keep coming back, images that show the qualities of the City Centre. These qualities are shared by most people and have evolved over the centuries of history.

4 Qualities

These 4 qualities form the basis on which the Vision is built.

Beauty

When you think of the beauty of the City Centre, your mind turns immediately to the Dom and the unique wharves lining the canals. But it could also turn to the City's modern heritage, such as the new bubble roof over Station Square. Or you could think about other parts of the material heritage of the city, such as the canals, alleys, squares, courtyards and blocks of buildings, or even the archaeologically rich underground. And then there is the valuable intangible heritage of the City Centre, such as church communities, the knowledge and traditions of the university, social society activities (including the student societies), the carillon and the sounds of the bells. This also includes the celebration of holidays such as King's Day and St. Maarten.

Variety

The City Centre has both quiet and lively places. It is old and it is modern. It feels cozy, but it really is the centre of a big city. The small area of the City Centre holds a large mix of functions, such as living, shopping, working, studying and going out. The variety of the Utrecht City Centre can also be seen in the different kinds of people who live, work, shop and visit the city: seniors and young people, students, workers and homeless people, wealthy and the less so, residents and visitors, people from other parts of Utrecht and those from beyond its boundaries. On the other hand, there are also Utrecht residents who hardly ever come to the City Centre. You can also see variety in how the City Centre is used - the same place can be quiet in the morning and busily festive in the evening.

Resilience

The City Centre and its residents have been adapting to changing circumstances for centuries. The canals and wharves lining them were adaptations reacting to the changed water level of the Kromme Rijn River. Historical buildings are also constantly being adapted to the times, as we can see with the renovation of the old post office on the Neude. The City Centre is constantly developing, reacting to the growth and shrinkage of the population, changes in society, knowledge about health and the changing climate.

Relaxation

Utrecht's City Centre has a relaxed atmosphere. The area is easy to navigate and is built at a human scale. For the most part it appears calm and the streets are generally safe. There is a lot of cycling and walking, even in the evening after dark. And even though the variety of people and usages can sometimes cause tension, the relaxed atmosphere makes the City Centre an attractive place. It is the heart of Utrecht and functions as the living room of the City and the Region.

26 Aims

The qualities give a direction for the future development of the City Centre. We have identified 26 aims for that development, within the 4 qualities.

Quality: Beauty

Preserve, enlarge and enjoy the beauty of the City Centre and make it liveable.

AIM 1: OPEN ICONIC BUILDINGS TO THE PUBLIC

What will you see in 2040?

- There are more characteristic iconic buildings that you can go into every day.
- You can see and experience history using new techniques.
- The wharves are technically sound and used more as an extension of the streets.

AIM 2: OPEN ALLEYS AND COURTYARDS

What will you see in 2040?

- Alleys and courtyards have been renovated, greened and are open more often.
- There is an alley between the Achter Clarenburg and the Rijnkade.
- The areas around the Strosteeg and Paardenveld parking garages have been redeveloped and they fit into the historical pattern of streets and alleys again.
- The Leidse Rijn has been restored and reconnected with the outer canal.

AIM 3: USE EXISTING QUALITIES IN NEW BUILDINGS

What will you see in 2040?

- Top quality buildings have been added, inspired by the characteristics of their place.
- Neighbouring buildings are not being merged together.

AIM 4: CREATE SPACE

What will you see in 2040?

- More space for pedestrians makes it easier to walk and enjoy the beauty of the City Centre.
- People with disabilities can move freely because there are fewer obstacles in the way.
- Terraces and temporary points of sale are well integrated into the environment.
- Advertising on the facades fits with the environment.

AIM 5: MAKE PUBLIC SPACE INVITING

What will you see in 2040?

- Squares, streets and green places have an atmosphere that fits with the character of where they are.
- Public space is furnished with sustainable materials. Special places get extra attention.

AIM 6: BE EASILY ACCESSIBLE AND HAVE LESS STREET PARKING

What will you see in 2040?

- There are fewer cars on the streets, moving or parked. You park more often outside the City Centre or in the existing garages within the Centre.
- More residents and visitors come to the City Centre using emission-free (shared) cars, (shared) bicycles, public transport and on foot.
- There are enough entry and exit points for taxis and coaches. There are no permanent parking spaces for taxis and coaches in the City Centre or on the outer canal.
- On residential streets, car parking spaces have made way for bicycle racks, green spaces and dwellings.
- There are more bicycle parking spaces, both in racks on the street and in (neighbourhood) bicycle parking facilities.
- You can park your bicycle briefly on the street in busy places.

AIM 7: CUSTOMIZE SUPPLY

What will you see in 2040?

- Boats are used more for supply delivery and waste collection.
- You see more light zero-emission vehicles, such as electric cargo bikes and trolleys, being used to deliver supplies and collect waste.

- If you walk through the City Centre, you are bothered less by delivery vehicles. There are enough places for loading and unloading and more is transported on the water.
- There are no loose garbage bags or other waste seen on the street.

Quality: Variety

Maintain and increase variety in the City Centre.

AIM 8: PUT EACH FUNCTION IN THE RIGHT PLACE

What will you see in 2040?

- There are still a wide range of functions to be found in the City Centre, from living to enjoying culture, from shopping to working and from going to church to eating out.
- Functions fit the atmosphere of their place.
- As streets change, residents, business owners and the city work together on a plan for the area.
- The municipality is active in the real estate market to ensure that functions land in the right place.

AIM 9: OFFER A VARIETY OF HOUSING

What will you see in 2040?

- There is housing available for diverse households and target groups.
- The number of affordable rentals and owner-occupied homes has increased.
- There are a limited number of properties used for holiday rentals.
- Homes are not split or converted into single room dwellings if it affects quality of life.
- More people live above shops.
- It is noticeable that there is more diversity among the residents in the inner city: you see more seniors, children, handicapped people and people with diverse backgrounds.

AIM 10: MAINTAIN SOCIAL FACILITIES AND A HEALTHY LIVING ENVIRONMENT

What will you see in 2040?

- In the City Centre, you find all the facilities needed to live and work comfortably: healthy urban living.
- There are more play areas in the City Centre.
- There is an out-of-hours medical centre at Station Square.

- You can use the toilet in publicly accessible buildings, as has been agreed with owners and tenants.

AIM 11: SHOP AND WORK, EXPERIENCE AND MEET

What will you see in 2040?

- In the core shopping area, there are not only shops. There is also art and culture as well as employment and residences above the shops.
- In retail premises, there are a variety of other functions in addition to retail, such as culture, hospitality and workplaces.

AIM 12: PLACE HOSPITALITY WHERE IT FITS

What will you see in 2040?

- The availability of restaurants, bars, clubs, cafes and hotels is more varied and spread more through the whole city.
- Hospitality business owners feel involved in their locality and their business concept contributes to the experience of the place.
- There is a vibrant nightlife on the Jaarbeursplein.

AIM 13: MAKE DIVERSE WORKPLACES AVAILABLE

What will you see in 2040?

- There is a wide variety of workplaces in the city centre. Wherever you can sit at a table, work can be done, and this is increasingly outside.
- Cellars along the wharves are more often home to creators of culture and crafts.
- Art and cultural activities can be found in buildings or in the public space, especially in places that connect streets and neighbourhoods with each other.

AIM 14: FIT EVENTS TO THE LOCATION

What will you see in 2040?

- High-profile and innovative events have been added to the calendar. These also attract Utrechters who do not come to the City Centre as often.
- Events are accessible to everyone. There are only closed events in the City Centre if there are safety considerations or if the events are in keeping with the appearance of a location or of the City.
- There is a larger variety of events and they are spread across the city.
- Events fit their location better.

AIM 15: BALANCE VIBRANCY AND TRANQUILITY

What will you see in 2040?

- There is less public nuisance. Every year, the municipality, residents, business owners and organizations from the City Centre update the nuisance prevention plan. They carry out the plan together and monitor the results.

Quality: Resilience

Show resilience by making the City Centre sustainable and climate-proof.

AIM 16: ENLARGE THE ENTIRE SINGELPARK

What will you see in 2040?

- You can walk through the greenery along the outer canal around the City Centre.
- The City Centre is greener and more and more birds and insects are coming to the new plants.
- The water quality is better, there are more fish in the water and plants along the shore are more varied.
- The wharves and the trees along them are in excellent condition thanks to the special care given to both trees and heritage.
- Surprising courtyard gardens have been added that you can walk through or sit in for a while during the day.

AIM 17: USE RENEWABLE ENERGY

What will you see in 2040?

- The City Centre is increasingly being disconnected from natural gas lines.
- There is a good chance that houses in the City Centre are being heated sustainably with high-temperature district heating.
- There are more solar panels and solar roof tiles on the roofs, often also combined with green roofs.
- Buildings are immediately made sustainable when they are refurbished.
- Many more buildings are insulated in the City Centre. Monumental buildings are also more energy efficient.

AIM 18: MAKE PUBLIC SPACE CLIMATE RESILIENT

What will you see in 2040?

- When it's hot, you can cool off in green spots, in the shade of trees and along the waterfront.
- The disposal of rainwater and dirty waste water are separated.

- Rainwater is directed to green places so that it can seep into the soil.

AIM 19: CONTROL THE UNDERGROUND

What will you see in 2040?

- The subsurface is taken into account when working on streets, and vice versa. As a result, the streets are broken open less often. Adjustments in the field of energy transition and climate adaptation go hand in hand with making it more attractive to live in.
- There are clear agreements for everything that needs to take place in the subsurface.

Quality: Relaxation

Keep the atmosphere relaxed and welcoming by putting residence first.

AIM 20: ENSURE A SAFE CITY CENTRE

What will you see in 2040?

- A safe City Centre is still a top priority. There is regular consultation between the municipality, business owners and residents about safety and nuisance.
- The City Centre is safer and residents, visitors and business owners also feel safe more often.

AIM 21: PUT THE PEDESTRIAN FIRST

What will you see in 2040?

- There are more routes within and to and from the City Centre.
- The walking routes are comfortable, without obstacles, and easily accessible for everyone.
- There are benches in more places along walking routes.
- Traffic lights are green more often or longer for pedestrians.

AIM 22: MAKE RESIDENCE CENTRAL

What will you see in 2040?

- There are many more public places where you can sit comfortably. Each place has its own atmosphere.
- There are more places where children and adults can play.

AIM 23: SLOW DOWN THE CENTRAL AXIS

What will you see in 2040?

- Bicycle traffic is spread over different routes through and around the City Centre.
- The central axis is once again a liveable street and an attractive part of the City Centre. The central axis is the route from Smakkelaarsveld to Lucasbolwerk.
- You can easily get to the City Centre by public transport (tram, electric bus, metro or new innovations).

AIM 24: CONNECT TO THE SURROUNDINGS

What will you see in 2040?

- There is also a lot to do on the west side of the Centre, in the Beurskwartier and around the Jaarbeursplein.
- The historic side of the Centre and the Jaarbeurs side are strongly linked.
- There are new pedestrian bridges over the canal and over the train tracks.
- It is not far from the City Centre to the Merwedekanaalzone via the new bicycle and pedestrian tunnel between Nicolaas Beetsstraat and Jeremias de Deckerstraat.
- Green routes run along the waters of the Leidse Rijn, the Kromme Rijn and the Vecht where you can walk in and out of the City Centre.
- The City Centre is well connected to all the neighbourhoods around it. It used to seem quite far, but nowadays you walk without noticing the distance from the City Centre to Lombok or to the Amsterdamsestraatweg.

AIM 25: REGULATE THE USE OF WATERWAYS

What will you see in 2040?

- Mostly emission-free boats travel on the central and outer canals.
- You see more and more swimmers, canoes and rubber dinghies in and on the water in the City Centre.
- Supply delivery and waste collection are increasingly done via the waterways.
- The water of the City Centre is connected to the Leidse Rijn, so you can make new boat trips around the City.
- The municipality makes sure that it does not get too crowded in the canals.
- Banks and quays are protected from too many or too high waves, for example, through excluding certain boats.

AIM 26: WELCOME VISITORS

What will you see in 2040?

- There is still no mass tourism in Utrecht, but there are more visitors who are curious about the city and who immerse themselves in daily city life.
- A limited number of special hotels have been added, not in wharf cellars.
- Visitors not only come to the large cultural institutions but also to the smaller-scale events with art and culture in special places.