

FACT SHEET

Overseas Duty Visit Panel on Development

Spatial planning and urban renewal in Amsterdam

Table 1 – Basic information on Amsterdam

Basic facts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Amsterdam is the capital of the Netherlands, and is located at the southern part of the North Holland Province. The city is better known for its historic port and the canals. • The city was founded in the late 12th century as a small fishing village, and has grown to become the largest city in the Netherlands, with an area of 166 km² and a population of 745 000 inhabitants. • Like other Dutch municipalities, the municipality of Amsterdam is governed by a mayor, aldermen and a municipal council. • During the 1960s, Amsterdam was faced with some difficult decisions. As economic activities in the historical city centre grew, more space was needed. One option was to extend the economic activities from the inner city into the so-called 19th-century quarters, where both housing and living conditions were relatively undesirable. This option of adopting the concept of concentric development was eventually discarded and Amsterdam opted for the model of 'clustered deconcentration' of economic activities. New economic development zones were planned along the western and southern sections of Amsterdam's ring roads and later also along the eastern line of the metro train. This development model has prevailed, although new developments reflect the demand for a better mix of economic activities and other functions, such as housing and public amenities.
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Table 2 – Spatial planning in Amsterdam

Responsible authority	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Amsterdam Physical Planning Department.
Legislation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> National Planning Act and National Environmental Managing Act.
Major policy paper	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Amsterdam Structure Plan 2003-2010 sets out the main thrust of the policy that the Amsterdam government plans to pursue with respect to the city's spatial and physical development. The land use and zoning plans of the city districts must comply with the requirements set out in the Structure Plan.
Spatial planning policy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Amsterdam maintains tight control of spatial development and implements a leasehold system (i.e. the city land is not sold, but leased to the private sector), which results in the Amsterdam government owning about 80% of the city land. (About 20% of the city land was sold in the early 20th century.) The Amsterdam government states that the implementation of the leasehold system can effectively prevent land speculation and generate revenues for financing infrastructure projects. As the Amsterdam government is empowered to amend the zoning plans, Amsterdam occupies a strong position in the spatial planning process. In some cases, the Amsterdam government may purchase the private city land from its owners, or develop those land parcels in collaboration with the owners. The Amsterdam government takes the initiative for the programming and planning of spatial development. The land use and zoning plan is given substance and formulated by means of a series of joint decisions reached by the government with commercial parties, developers, architects and local citizens.

Table 3 – Urban renewal in Amsterdam

Responsible authorities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ministry of Housing, Spatial Planning and the Environment, Amsterdam Physical Planning Department and Amsterdam Development Corporation.
Legislation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Urban Renewal Act.
Urban renewal policy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> In 1997, the Ministry of Housing, Spatial Planning and the Environment formulated the Revitalizing Policy for Major Cities, which marked the beginning of a new integrated approach to urban renewal with an intent to provide cities with a new impulse. To shape the physical aspect of revitalizing cities, a new national urban renewal policy was launched in January 2000. This policy addresses the urgency for reshaping inner cities, former industrial sites/harbours and post-war neighbourhoods. Under this policy, the national government provides the cities with financial support for urban renewal, which is known as the Investment Budget for Urban Renewal. By formulating the Long Term Development Programme, the so-called G4 (four biggest cities: Amsterdam, Rotterdam, Hague and Utrecht) and G26 (26 medium cities) have started the process of revitalizing their urban centres. In Amsterdam, the Amsterdam Physical Planning Department and the Amsterdam Development Corporation work in cooperation with businesses, the district councils and representatives from other relevant parties to prepare the urban renewal programme of the city.

Table 4 – Possible sites for the visit

IJburg (spatial planning)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> IJburg is an archipelago where 18 000 dwellings are being built for more than 45 000 inhabitants. IJburg has been planned as a self-contained district with its own shops, offices and schools. This development project will be completed by 2015.
Zuidas (spatial planning)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The approval of the Zuidas Masterplan in 1998 marked the start of the long-term development of a mixed-use area of high-quality offices (especially for international headquarters), public amenities and cultural facilities. The international headquarters of ABN AMRO Bank and ING Group bank/insurers have already established themselves there, along with nationally and internationally oriented law firms.
ArenA Boulevard in Amsterdam Zuidoost (spatial planning)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Together with the historic city centre and the Zuidas district, ArenA Boulevard in south-east Amsterdam is one of three districts designated as so-called "city cores". These cores define the city's image as an international cultural, economic and tourist centre. The ArenA Boulevard is currently undergoing major development work. The Amsterdam ArenA stadium (home of the Ajax Football Club), the Pathé ArenA multiplex cinema, the Heineken Music Hall, the Pepsi Stage, and a range of mega-stores, shopping centres, cafés and restaurants are built to attract tourists and local residents.
Cycle routes (spatial planning)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> About 75% of the Amsterdam inhabitants own one or more bicycles. Cycling is considered as a sustainable mode of transport because it is healthy, environmentally friendly and cheap. It takes up little space and the costs of constructing, managing and maintaining cycle facilities are relatively low. The Amsterdam government encourages cycling through providing high-grade cycle paths and good parking facilities. At present, there are more than 10 cycle routes in Amsterdam.
Nieuw West (urban renewal)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Nieuw West, also known as the western garden suburbs, is the first major residential area to be built after the Second World War. It is the location for one of the biggest urban renewal operations ever carried out in the Netherlands. The renovation operation in Nieuw West is an integrated project aimed at improvement in three areas: social, economic and spatial.

Table 4 – Possible sites for the visit (cont'd)

Amsterdam-Noord (urban renewal)
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• There are many construction projects undertaken for redeveloping the former Shell complex in Amsterdam-Noord in the northern part of the city. More than 2 200 dwellings and 140 000 sq m of office premises, a technology centre and the Netherlands Film Museum are being built.

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