

# Overview of adopted and rejected recommendations

*Maastricht's Burgerberaad*



Gemeente Maastricht

# Preface to the recommendations written by the participants



*Dear reader,*

This document contains the final overview of the adopted and rejected recommendations of Maastricht's burgerberaad. It contains recommendations pertaining to the question: How do we design a city in such a way that everyone feels comfortable? This is in support of the municipality's omgevingsvisie 2040. These recommendations were developed during the period from September 21 to December 14, 2023. The majority of them have received enthusiasm and approval from the burgerberaad.

The activities of Maastricht's burgerberaad concluded with the final session on December 14. We would like to express our appreciation for involving citizens in the vision of the city in such a comprehensive and organized manner.

Thanks to the thoughtful selection process, the burgerberaad has proven to be a good representation of Maastricht's population. Young and old, theoretically, and practically educated, Dutch-speaking and non-Dutch-speaking, and different backgrounds have been well represented, as evident in the seven lively sessions that took place. A word of thanks for the civil servants, interpreters, and EMMA for their excellent care.

With this good representation of the residents of Maastricht, there is significant influence. In our opinion, these recommendations carry more weight than local-level lobbying or individual and commercial interests, input groups, or neighborhood frameworks.

Even people who may not normally be at the forefront of participation processes have been given a voice via this burgerberaad. We remind the municipality of the commitment that these recommendations carry significant weight and should be adopted and formally confirmed by the municipal council unless there are demonstrable and well-founded fundamental financial and/or legal objections.

We further propose that the municipal council provides feedback to the burgerberaad on which recommendations are adopted, which are not, and in the latter case, why not. Furthermore, the municipality indicates the timeframe for implementing recommendations with an indication of the planning. Given the time horizon of the omgevingsvisie, it is self-evident that implementation should preferably be completed by 2040.

To reinforce this feedback, we propose establishing an advisory group that will follow the implementation of the recommendations and occasionally discuss the progress and process. We are open to discuss how this can be organized.

Finally, we note so much enthusiasm among the participants that a follow-up to Maastricht's first burgerberaad is evident. We therefore advocate that the instrument of burgerberaad will receive a permanent place in the connection between citizens and local politics.

***Maastricht's Burgerberaad 2023***



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**ADOPTED**

**RECOMMENDATIONS**

## Recommendation 1. Active participation & transparent communication

### 1. Background

#### *What do we see?*

It is often the case that participation or consultation evenings turn out to be nothing more than information sessions. There is (too) little actual participation. As a result, communication between the municipality and the citizens, as well as its reach, leaves much to be desired. Understanding your target audience and knowing how to reach them is crucial. Active engagement by the municipality on social media could be improved. Additionally, not every resident is aware of the other available channels. Consequently, citizens are not sufficiently involved in the formulation and execution of municipal policies.

### 2. Ambition

#### *What do we want? What would we want the city to look like in 2040?*

#### *Why is that important to us?*

We want the managing directors/municipal council to actively involve residents in formulating policies by the year 2040. Residents desire more opportunities to actively engage in discussions and contribute their thoughts: give citizens a chance (more than currently) to make their voices heard. This can only be achieved if the right information about policies (or intended policies) reaches the (right) residents at the right time through the appropriate channels.

Only in this way can it lead to well-organized and implementable participation in the creation and execution of policies.

Participatory processes should be widely supported. Currently, some people are better informed than others. We want participation opportunities to be utilized not only by a small group but by a broader spectrum of the community.

### 3. Thinking direction of the *burgerberaad*

#### *What do we need for this ambition?*

Participation, in our view, involves actively involving residents in policymaking. We recognize that perhaps not every resident of Maastricht is eager for continuous participation. At the same time, we would like residents to regain (more) trust in local government. Moreover, the municipality should facilitate and encourage citizen initiatives.

Ensure that municipal communication reaches as many residents as possible so that they are informed about current matters and opportunities for input. It is crucial for residents to realize that their participation is meaningful because their input is taken seriously.

Participation should be organized at the local level and be accessible to everyone. Input should be treated seriously and considered in decision-making. If something cannot be implemented, clear communication should explain why. The municipality must ensure that the participation in these processes remains diverse in terms of participants, ensuring a widely supported mandate. Lastly, providing feedback to participants is also essential.

## Recommendation 2. Connected communities

### 1. Background

#### *What do we see?*

- Loneliness across all age groups
- Limited community activities
- Challenges: associations face limited financial resources, lack of space, and a shortage of volunteers
- We observe less engagement from both the municipality and the community itself towards organizations such as Trajekt, community centers, etc.

### 2. Ambition

#### *What do we want? What would we want the city to look like in 2040?*

#### *Why is that important to us?*

We aim to establish multifunctional community centers tailored to each neighborhood, catering to both the young and old. These centers will offer a diverse range of amenities, such as a library, study areas, coffeehouses, etc., specifically designed for the needs of the community.

The community center is intended to serve as a home where people meet to develop their talents and share their emotions.

#### *Why?*

To connect people in neighborhoods and thereby prevent future healthcare costs, stress, and loneliness.

### 3. Thinking direction of the burgerberaad

#### *What do we need for this ambition?*

#### 1. Financial security

- Subsidy assurance from the municipality for a minimum of 3 years, with an annual submission of cost reports. This guarantee eliminates the need for community centers to pursue profit motives
- Long-term lease agreements

#### 2. Tailored approach

- Social workers who understand the neighborhood dynamics through long-term engagement with the community
- A well-matched connection between volunteers and their assigned tasks
- Active communication by the community center with the neighborhood through social media, local publications, schools, and other community associations

#### 3. Increased volunteer engagement

- Community centers with central locations and good accessibility
- Attracting more volunteers through better recognition, including a small stipend, training opportunities, and a sense of belonging to the community

## Recommendation 3. More recreational facilities for young people

### 1. Background

#### *What do we see?*

There is an abundance of recreational sports, but in the current situation, there is insufficient indoor space for young people. In many large cities, numerous youth projects collaborate with neighborhood networks, but this is not the case in Maastricht.

### 2. Ambition

#### *What do we want? What would we want the city to look like in 2040?*

#### *Why is that important to us?*

A living room for young people in neighborhoods, serving as a safe, affordable space for extracurricular recreational activities.

Benefits include the promotion of greater social cohesion among young people.

#### *Why?*

- Young people have limited recreational facilities outside of sports
- Not everyone has a pleasant home situation, so a community center can provide a good distraction
- More living rooms for young people with recreational activities help prevent loitering and potential criminal activities

### 3. Thinking direction of the *burgerberaad*

#### *What do we need for this ambition?*

- Involve Trajekt more in community centers and in informing young people (for example in schools)
- Establish fixed opening days and times for community centers specifically for young people
- Engage more young people in neighborhood networks and in shaping the offerings, regularly evaluating the programs
- Ensure that the offerings are financially accessible to all young people
- Improve supervision and management oversight of community centers
- Don't wait until 2040, as that would skip an entire generation!

## **Recommendation 4. Improving social well-being through the creation and/or revitalization of meeting places**

### **1. Background**

#### *What do we see?*

Research clearly indicates that meeting places contribute to mutual familiarity and a sense of home for visitors.

People have a need for interactions with both young and old.

There is a need for meeting places scattered throughout the city, especially in the suburbs. Example of place of decay, is shopping center De Heeg (Roserije).

### **2. Ambition**

#### *What do we want? What would we want the city to look like in 2040?*

#### *Why is that important to us?*

- Reduce deterioration
- Make existing strategic (green) spaces in neighborhoods attractive for free interactions between young and old (considering the presence of amenities such as cafes, for example, the Mamacafé on the Groene Loper)
- Equip green spaces with play and sports facilities, such as climbing structures, fitness equipment, a petanque court, benches, basketball hoops (for example, the Vrijheidspark), and picnic tables
- Organized activities by volunteers, such as boot camps and King's Day celebrations, to bring more life to the neighborhood and spaces

### **3. Thinking direction of the burgerberaad**

#### *What do we need for this ambition?*

- Identify improvement areas/derelict spaces in each neighborhood regarding livability through surveys or neighborhood klankbordgroepen
- Assess what the municipality, in collaboration with neighborhoods, can do to enhance these places in terms of green spaces, social aspects, infrastructure, etc.
- Explore which neighborhood centers can be interconnected, allowing not every neighborhood to have its own facilities but rather establishing interconnected meeting points (e.g., through walking or cycling paths, signage, etc.)
- Examine the financial means the municipality can provide for these initiatives
- Investigate whether, on those central (strategic) sites, the municipality can encourage the establishment of dining establishments, possibly through licensing policies, including mobile or permanent ones
- Promote volunteer policies: attract and retain volunteers for various activities



## Recommendation 5. Designing new parks

### 1. Background

#### *What do we see?*

We aim to have a city in 2040 that is healthier, more beautiful, and more sustainable, with ample space for people to meet in a safe environment. Upon reviewing the map of the municipality of Maastricht, it becomes evident that there is an imbalance in the distribution of large green spaces (parks) throughout the city. Particularly in the east of Maastricht, one or more larger parks are lacking.

### 2. Ambition

#### *What do we want? What would we want the city to look like in 2040?*

#### *Why is that important to us?*

A large park within neighborhoods is crucial, as research indicates that nature/greenery contributes to a healthier population, fosters more social interactions, provides mental and physical relaxation, and reduces heat stress. It enhances the city's attractiveness, beauty, and greenery while contributing to the improvement of biodiversity. We advocate for safe parks with sufficient openness and protection for insects, animals, and plants.

In this park, we envision 'playful' water features (such as a fountain), facilities for catering, and spaces for sports/games and/or playgrounds. The park should primarily be accessible for use without overly restrictive regulations.

Our preferred location is in the east of Maastricht to achieve a more equitable distribution of nature/greenery/parks.

### 3. Thinking direction of the burgerberaad

#### *What do we need for this ambition?*

- Adequate ground surface.
- Greenery with abundant grass that can thrive in shaded areas. Many tall trees with large canopies to allow visibility underneath (for safety). Sufficient openness in the canopy density to ensure ample light under the trees, with a focus on biodiversity while considering safety and openness principles.
- A small-scale catering facility with an outdoor terrace.
- A designated sports/play area within the park boundaries.
- Installation of a robust playground with attractive play equipment and benches.
- Implementation of a water feature or fountain.
- Designate regular users and local residents as overseers for any issues. Ensure robust enforcement against those causing disturbances.

## Recommendation 6. Appealing public transportation

### 1. Background

#### *What do we see?*

We observe that visitors come to the city center by car and also park there. Additionally, Maastricht residents prefer taking the car to the center over using the bus, and it's challenging to find good bus connections between neighborhoods.

### 2. Ambition

#### *What do we want? What would we want the city to look like in 2040?*

#### *Why is that important to us?*

A cohesive connection between parking outside the city center and public transportation to the city.

We aim for the majority of transportation within Maastricht to be done through public transportation, cycling, or walking rather than by car.

Enhancing accessibility to the city center for Maastricht residents.

### 3. Thinking direction of the *burgerberaad*

#### *What do we need for this ambition?*

- Parking tickets for Park and Ride (P&R) as proof for free public transportation. Learn from successful P&R examples in cities such as Amsterdam, Utrecht, and Oxford
- Improve and optimize bus routes for residents of Maastricht
- Provide free travel for low-income individuals
- Increase the number of P&R locations for visitors and make them more attractive, while making Q-parks less appealing. Q-parks can be enhanced for residents through license plate registration

## Recommendation 7. Bicycle and pedestrian safety and accessibility

### 1. Background

#### *What do we see?*

On many occasions, it is unsafe for cyclists and pedestrians in the city:

- Streets and bike paths are not adequately designed for current and future bicycle and pedestrian traffic
- There is a lack of specific markings indicating bicycle and pedestrian zones

### 2. Ambition

#### *What do we want? What would we want the city to look like in 2040?*

#### *Why is that important to us?*

- Where possible, create separate streets and bike paths, especially in the suburbs. These should be 1) wider and 2) indicated more clearly by signage
- Widen and expand walking and cycling routes to, from, and within the city center
- Make it attractive to cycle or walk
- Improve signage for bicycle and pedestrian routes

#### *Why?*

To address dangerous situations! To make the city more accessible for everyone! And to contribute to increased physical activity and better air quality.

### 3. Thinking direction of the *burgerberaad*

#### *What do we need for this ambition?*

Make an inventory of the main bottlenecks and improvement points through consultation with organizations such as the Fietsersbond (Cyclists' Union) and residents.

Possible solutions include:

- Implementing bicycle streets
- Physically widening existing paths
- Creating more paths for cyclists and pedestrians
- Increasing the number of (monitored) bicycle parking facilities
- Improving signage for bicycle and pedestrian routes

Identified bottlenecks and improvement points will be addressed within five years.

## Recommendation 8. Car-light city center

### 1. Background

#### *What do we see?*

- There are too many cars in the city center of Maastricht
- This leads to problems related to access, traffic flow, the environment, health, livability, parking, and safety
- Research also indicates that a car-free city, contrary to common assumptions, has a positive effect on the local economy.

### 2. Ambition

#### *What do we want? What would we want the city to look like in 2040?*

#### *Why is that important to us?*

Considering the above, we propose a car-light city center (including Wyck). Naturally, the policy would provide for necessary exemptions, such as for city center residents, businesses in the downtown area, emergency services, people with disabilities, etc.

### 3. Thinking direction of the *burgerberaad*

#### *What do we need for this ambition?*

- The municipality is working on a comprehensive approach to emission-free transport, a car-free city center, high-quality public transportation, and cycling and pedestrian infrastructure
- Many visitors to Maastricht can park at easily accessible Park and Ride (P&R) locations outside the city, particularly those near high-quality public transportation
- Clear signage and communication for visitors directing them to preferred parking locations are crucial. Entry to the city center is facilitated through a license plate registration system
- The municipality will eliminate a significant number of parking spaces in the city center
- In the realm of parking, the overall interest of the city should take precedence over individual, commercial, and partial interests. The *burgerberaad* represents the city as a whole

## Recommendation 9. Bringing together older and younger generations

### 1. Background

#### *What do we see?*

Loneliness amongst older and younger generations.

Continuously increasing pressure on (home)care. This trend is expected to persist in the coming years.

### 2. Ambition

#### *What do we want? What would we want the city to look like in 2040?*

#### *Why is that important to us?*

Develop new shared living arrangements that bring together young people and the elderly. In these living arrangements, young individuals provide assistance in care. This approach addresses loneliness among both young and elderly residents while easing the burden on care services.

To make this living arrangement attractive for young people, we propose:

- Offering affordable housing in the city of Maastricht
- Creating a warm social environment and providing an accessible introduction to the city
- Providing opportunities for young individuals to contribute to society

For inspiration, refer to the example of the Gerlachusflat (care home) in Maastricht.

### 3. Thinking direction of the *burgerberaad*

#### *What do we need for this ambition?*

Evaluate possibilities for implementing these types of living arrangements in Maastricht. Involve organizations such as Humanitas, Levanto, and Geinen Dank in the process.

Additionally, explore whether the municipality can provide financial support to facilitate the establishment of these living arrangements.

## Recommendation 10. All residential neighborhoods green and nature-inclusive

### 1. Background

#### *What do we see?*

Greenery and nature are under pressure, even in residential neighborhoods. A visible decrease in biodiversity is evident. Green spaces are also crucial for livability, rainwater retention, and the health of our citizens.

### 2. Ambition

#### *What do we want? What would we want the city to look like in 2040?*

#### *Why is that important to us?*

Strengthening greenery and nature in every residential neighborhood of Maastricht by 2040 based on a detailed nature and green vision and a policy for nature-inclusive construction.

#### *Why?*

Currently, greenery and nature are not adequately considered or prioritized in (re)developments in residential areas, hindering the enhancement of biodiversity at all levels (individual homes, neighborhoods, city, and region).

### 3. Thinking direction of the burgerberaad

#### *What do we need for this ambition?*

Maastricht develops a comprehensive vision for the entire municipality, setting goals for nature and greenery focused on enhancing biodiversity, climate adaptation (including heat stress and water management), and livability. The vision aims to create neighborhood-specific plans, collaboratively with residents, to green residential areas. These plans adhere to the generic norm of at least 15% green/nature coverage of the public space surface, ensuring it does not compromise living spaces. Residents are actively encouraged to achieve this norm on their own properties through education and subsidies.

The quality, type, and maintenance of greenery are aligned with the nature and green goals of the vision and local physical possibilities. New construction is based on guidelines for nature-inclusive building set by the municipality. The budget for greenery and nature needs to be adequate to achieve these goals.

## Recommendation 11. Small-scale cultural events for everyone

### 1. Background

#### *What do we see?*

In other countries, cities have connections with cultural institutions from various nations. Maastricht is the cultural center of Limburg and the border region.

Many cultural activities in Maastricht are (too) commercially oriented.

What we observe is that a significant portion of the residents is not actively involved in cultural life, partly due to financial constraints. We also notice that the city's cultural resources (such as Van Eyck, Drama School, Music School) are not being fully utilized.

### 2. Ambition

#### *What do we want? What would we want the city to look like in 2040?*

#### *Why is that important to us?*

We believe that culture can contribute to enhancing the beauty of Maastricht, to its social fabric, and to strengthening and expanding the city's identity as a cultural center.

We want to start with small-scale events to provide a platform for local artists to showcase their work to a broader audience.

In the past, we had the Rode Loper. Currently, culture is often seen as elitist, but we believe that it can improve the quality of life. We propose making culture more accessible and less expensive, allowing everyone to explore a diverse cultural palette. This approach aims to promote participation and access to cultural life across all age groups, fostering connections between different social groups and laying the foundation for a long-term vision of Maastricht as a city of culture—a great place to live and stay.

### 3. Thinking direction of the *burgerberaad*

#### *What do we need for this ambition?*

- Support the establishment of a network for artists in the region (euromass -ex artists from the music academy, authors, dance groups, etc.)
- Collaborate with them to create small events that are free of charge, ensuring broad access to a diverse range of cultural activities for the general population
- For small-scale events, eliminate the reporting requirement and associated costs starting from 2024
- Promote participation in cultural events through a dedicated network website and the promotion of events on the municipality's website
- Host events in areas in Maastricht that are underutilized, such as community centers

## Recommendation 12. Affordable social housing in Maastricht

### 1. Background

*What do we see?*

- Vacant land that could be suitable for housing development (e.g., in Limmel)
- Insufficient social housing or housing that is too expensive
- Poverty
- Difficulty for young people, beginners, singles, etc., to find an affordable home

### 2. Ambition

*What do we want? What would we want the city to look like in 2040?*

*Why is that important to us?*

- Increase the number of affordable social homes
- Improve monitoring of housing occupancy to prevent abuse, such as one couple having two homes but only utilizing one
- Explore alternative housing options to address the housing problem, such as multigenerational housing (e.g., kangaroo homes)
- Make it financially attractive to live together, encouraging the release of available homes

### 3. Thinking direction of the burgerberaad

*What do we need for this ambition?*

- The municipality acquires available land, whether newly available or existing, to construct social/affordable housing (as seen in the example of Vienna)
- Match the appropriate project with the right piece of land, considering not only the profit model
- Improve collaboration with housing associations to assist people in finding suitable affordable housing



## Recommendation 13. Safe traffic around central station

### 1. Background

#### *What do we see?*

- Poor and (socially) unsafe connection between the front and back of the station for cyclists, pedestrians, and people with disabilities
- Every day, 6,000 cyclists cross the street at the Duitse Poort in an unsafe manner, including many young people
- The station is poorly accessible for people with disabilities via the footbridge

### 2. Ambition

#### *What do we want? What would we want the city to look like in 2040?*

#### *Why is that important to us?*

Attractive station area as a connecting link in the city:

- Good accessibility for all target groups (ages, disabilities, limitations)
- (Socially) safe: traffic, crossing points, ease of cycling

### 3. Thinking direction of the *burgerberaad*

#### *What do we need for this ambition?*

- Update the report 'Over het spoor' regarding a safe crossing
- Based on this, create a suitable action plan in collaboration with residents and users

## Recommendation 14. Employment opportunities for starters for economic growth

### 1. Background

#### *What do we see?*

After completing their studies, both theoretically and practically educated individuals, students often leave Maastricht quickly. This is not always their first choice, as many would prefer to stay in Maastricht longer. We observe that the job market does not align with the provided education at all levels. For instance, in sectors such as tourism, economics, and healthcare. Addressing this issue is crucial for countering aging trends. Maastricht has one of the lowest labor participation rates in the Netherlands, which can be attributed to the high number of seniors and students (CBS, 2022).

### 2. Ambition

#### *What do we want? What would we want the city to look like in 2040?*

#### *Why is that important to us?*

We aim for a healthy distribution among age groups in the city. Additionally, we want a prosperous city, expecting economic growth in the coming years. This will happen if more starters choose to stay in Maastricht due to job opportunities.

There should be increased employment opportunities based on the studies offered in Maastricht.

Collaboration between Maastricht and the Euregio (Liège, Aachen, etc.) is encouraged for employment opportunities.

### 3. Thinking direction of the *burgerberaad*

#### *What do we need for this ambition?*

- Mapping employment opportunities for starters per sector (matching the number of graduates with job opportunities)
- Encouraging start-ups to foster a healthy market for new businesses
- Municipality efforts to attract more companies to establish themselves in Maastricht that align with the studies offered in the city
- Promoting collaborations between educational institutions and businesses (VET, HBO, University), for example, akin to the partnership between Wageningen University and Unilever

## Recommendation 15. Afterparty

### 1. Background

*What do we see?*

The *burgerberaad* concludes here, and we won't be seeing each other again afterward.

### 2. Ambition

*What do we want? What would we want the city to look like in 2040?*

*Why is that important to us?*

That the municipal council informs the *burgerberaad* about the process after the council meeting.

*Why?*

So that, as a *burgerberaad*, we know what will happen with the recommendations.

### 3. Thinking direction of the *burgerberaad*

*What do we need for this ambition?*

A meeting for everyone from the *burgerberaad* to hear the outcomes and to have a meeting with the municipal council



**REJECTED**

**RECOMMENDATIONS**

## Environmental zone Maastricht

### 1. Background

#### *What do we see?*

The municipal council has decided not to implement an environmental zone in the city center of Maastricht.

At the same time, research from the RIVM (National Institute for Public Health and the Environment) shows that air quality standards in Maastricht are being exceeded.

### 2. Ambition

#### *What do we want? What would we want the city to look like in 2040?*

#### *Why is that important to us?*

Clean air in the city.

### 3. Thinking direction of the *burgerberaad*

#### *What do we need for this ambition?*

A reconsideration of the decision not to implement an environmental zone.

# burgerberaad.



Gemeente Maastricht