

**ANTWERP**

BELGIUM

sub>  
urban

## More Info

This is a special edition. It brings the essence of 2,5 years of hard work and new insights.

PARTNER CITIES OF SUB>URBAN

Antwerp, Baia Mare, AMB, Brno, Casoria, Düsseldorf, Oslo, Solin, Vienna

[www.urbact.eu/sub.urban](http://www.urbact.eu/sub.urban)  
[@suburbanfringe](https://twitter.com/suburbanfringe)  
SPRING 2018

# REDEVELOPMENT OF THE ANTWERP FRINGE: GENERAL TRANSFORMATION STRATEGY AND PILOT PROJECT LAGEWEG

English summary of the Integrated Action Plan  
in the framework of the URBACT network sub>urban, Reinventing the fringe.



# Redevelopment of the Antwerp Fringe: General Transformation Strategy and Pilot Project Lageweg

English summary of the Integrated Action Plan

## Table of Content

- 1. Initial Situation ..... 3**
- 2. Objectives for the Transformation of the Pilot Site Lageweg ..... 7**
- 3. Action Plan & Transformation Timeline..... 10**
- 4. Management & Governance Structure for the Transformation Process ..... 16**
- 5. General Transformation of the Entire Fringe: Smart Densification..... 19**

# 1. INITIAL SITUATION

After years of successful urban renewal in the inner city (within the boundaries of the ring road), maximum density and capacity levels have been reached. The renewal of the 20<sup>th</sup>-century belt – the Antwerp fringe on the outside of the ring road – must prepare the area for future demographic growth while enhancing its unique qualities. It is also an answer to stop suburbanisation, a typical spatial phenomena of Flanders.

Large parts of this fringe were built after World War II and are now in need of an physical upgrade. The lifespan of buildings and public space is exceeded and moreover climate change forces us to adapt our built existing built environment to new challenges. However, spatial conditions and scales apply in this area to completely different ways of planning than in the inner city. Ownership of most of the land private and therefore very fragmented. New instruments and approaches are needed to implement the urban renewal process.

With the IAP, the city of Antwerp developed an integral spatial vision on how to transform the 20<sup>th</sup>-century belt to accommodate future growth within the 20<sup>th</sup>-century belt. Prognoses of the population show that Antwerp will keep on growing the next decades. The city is in need of new housing but also in need of extra amenities and workplaces. In chapter 5 we describe the general transformation of the fringe. In the box below we describe the characteristics of the whole fringe.



Antwerp Fringe: situation

## The 20<sup>th</sup>-century belt of Antwerp

Size (ha):	5910 [ha]
Nr. of current inhabitants:	282.131
Proximity (distance to centre):	3-8 km

### Location

The fringe of Antwerp covers the south-east area outside the ring road.  
The villages in the north of Antwerp do not belong to the fringe.

### Function, physical conditions and connection

The Antwerp fringe is characterized by a heterogeneous urban patchwork that exists of:

- Historical centres of the former villages cut through by trunk roads.
- Large and small industrial sites with working class houses around as consequence of the industrial revolution.
- Vast areas with single family houses on individual plots, built after World War II due to premiums or loans with state guarantee. Although the houses are in general well maintained, their lifespan is over. They also need to get adapted to new requirements on insulation and ventilation
- Social and private high-rise buildings, also built after World War II. Same as the single family houses they are in need of repair for the same reasons.
- Large parks.
- Larger impenetrable mono-functional areas such as hospitals, campuses and the regional airport.
- Well-equipped with public transport, although all radial oriented to the inner city.
- Well-equipped with amenities.

### Land owner group(-s)

The land owner groups are very diverse: private owners, social housing companies and public ownership.

Typical for the 20<sup>th</sup> century belt in Antwerp is the fragmented ownership.

### Challenges & Potentials

The 20<sup>th</sup>-century belt of Antwerp contains the best of both worlds:

- mixed housing types;
- large green areas;
- vast public space;
- everything nearby.

The challenges for the Antwerp fringe are:

- Population growth is an opportunity to transform existing built-up areas in the 20<sup>th</sup>-century belt into a high-quality urban tissue. The patchwork like pattern of the fringe offers high potentials for redevelopment but the fragmented ownership requires a new



approach;

- Population growth can be a threat for the level of amenities ;
- Population growth puts a pressure on public space;
- Urban renewal contributes to the disappearance of small production and craft companies of the urban fabric;
- The fringe is known for his large parks, but not as a place to live in. If Antwerp wants to grow and attract new inhabitants to the fringe, the fringe has to get known with a positive image.

### Particularity

The 20<sup>th</sup>-century belt of Antwerp contains the best of both worlds.

Meanwhile the city of Antwerp is working on pilot sites, were some of the new instruments and approaches are being tested. Lageweg is our main pilot project going on right now. The focus here lies on a cooperation that exceeds the plot borders and is guided by a process that involves all stakeholders. In chapter 2 we describe the objectives for the transformation of Lageweg. In a second box below we describe the characteristics of Lageweg.



*Aerial view of Lageweg pilot site*

<b>Lageweg</b>	Size (ha): 30 ha Proximity (distance to centre): 4,8 km
----------------	--

**Location**  
Lageweg is an area in the district of Hoboken in the south of the of Antwerp fringe.

- Function, physical conditions and connection**
- Lageweg, a former industrial site, is characterized by a diversity of owners, users and scales. The site has large empty industrial buildings, working businesses, three different schools, two high-rise towers with more than 300 residents, small working-class houses and a locked-in green space
  - Part of the soil in the area is contaminated.
  - Due to a lack of investments the area towards suffers from a negative image in the neighbourhood.
  - There's a lack of social cohesion among the residents of the area and people of the vicinity. Large differences in social-economic characteristics in the neighbourhood could be a cause, but also the lack of public space.
  - There are noise and dust pollution of the industry that is still working. Bailiffs collecting back pays are more and more common. The area is locked in a status quo.

**Land owner group(-s)**  
The bigger plots in Lageweg belong to private business owners and are located along the existing streets.  
Some inaccessible plots belong to families who inherited the piece of land. They need their neighbours in order to develop the land.  
The city of Antwerp owns a very small and inaccessible plot. The Department of Education owns a big plot.  
The small plots along the existing streets are owned by private landlords.

**Main local stakeholders**  
The stakeholders of the project are very different: a project developer, the boards of the schools, families who inherited a piece of land, entrepreneurs of industries that are moving away as well as entrepreneurs who are staying and enlarging their businesses.

**Challenges & Potentials**  
The aim of Lageweg pilot project is the conversion of a hybrid area into an integrated development with a positive effect on the surrounding neighbourhood. The city of Antwerp wants to create a mixed urban area including the industrial activities and enable the transition of the present businesses to a circular economy as this is one of the global objectives for the 20th century belt of Antwerp.  
The challenge of limited public ownership and fragmented and very different private ownership, has motivated the experiment with a new development model. Instead of pushing towards a masterplan, the process invests in the building of a coalition between stakeholders. The city does not weigh on the project by its ownership, but by negotiating dialogue and cooperation.

**Particularity**  
The Lageweg Pilot promotes a novel process development process that combines creative

techniques with an open ended and integrative negotiating framework.

## 2. OBJECTIVES FOR THE TRANSFORMATION OF THE PILOT SITE LAGEWEG

The Lageweg pilot project is a learning process, both for the city and for the owners concerned. It demonstrates that sometimes tradition should make way for innovative thinking. The city of Antwerp experiments with new methods to improve collaboration between private and public stakeholders in order to achieve the best possible quality through a fair process. If these new methods are successful in Lageweg and other pilot projects, they will serve as models for the redevelopment of the whole fringe... (and beyond).



*Stakeholders at a design table*



The objectives for the pilot project Lageweg are related to 3 of the 5 sub>urban topics.

## **1. TRANSFORMING PLANNING: ENGAGE YOUR STAKEHOLDERS**

*The development of the site is at a deadlock. Traditional urban development measures, both from public and private initiative, appear inadequate. The city wants to establish a breakthrough by establishing a new negotiation and participation process.*

To generate a breakthrough in the situation, we are depending on the initiative and will of different private landowners. So we want to initiate and speed up this transformation process by facilitating and making connections between different stakeholders of the neighbourhood.

We have organised activities, such as mind-opening dialogues and kick-off discussions to explore collective ambitions for the area, co-creative design tables involving an interactive scale model in order to build collective trust, guided walks with all stakeholders which are handed a brochure showing possible future scenarios or adaptable spatial and financial calculation models to test the feasibility of several options. We took the time to get to know the stakeholders and to integrate their plans and opportunities in the project. By pursuing these processes (spatial, financial, programmatic, decontamination) simultaneously instead of successively, they can influence one another. This enables us to create more links between the various functions on the ground, the inhabitants and users of the project and the area.

Thanks to these tools, most of the land owners were gradually convinced of the benefits of collaborating, which brought them to sign a declaration of engagement and join efforts for the layout of the financial model. The advantages that a land bank offers for a multi-plot development became clear. The success of the initiative was that it allows to work across property boundaries and to make an effective plan for the entire area, for a step-by-step and feasible development.

## **2. TRANSFORMING PRIVATE SPACE: A GOVERNMENT WITHOUT OWNERSHIP. HOW TO CREATE PUBLIC ADDED VALUE IN CO-CREATION?**

*With no solid public land ownership, the city needs another leverage to guarantee a return in public added value through the development of the site. The project aims to establish a unique negotiation position and a toolbox for the city, in order to guarantee quality development and public return, through private initiative.*

The Lageweg pilot project is a learning process, both for the city and for the owners concerned. It was not always easy to preserve a general overview or to get everyone to face the same direction. During the process, the alderman for spatial planning of the city of Antwerp was able to talk to the stakeholders and learned that, despite the projects tremendous complexity, people are willing to go forward together. A financial model backed up the idea that a multi-plot development is the smart thing to do. This really proves that we can achieve a lot more with a common goal and a constructive collaboration than with a linear or hierarchical planning process where the end result and the process have been determined from the start.

In the case of the Lageweg, the city of Antwerp is offering the owners the possibility to take control, by helping them to organize themselves. The pilot project is in that sense a quest for a way in



which the authorities and citizens can work together on the future of the city. We are convinced that this will lead to a more sustainable form of urban renewal. We are approaching the project in an experimental, supportive and at the same time pragmatic manner, without losing sight of our most important objectives for the site. In addition, we also wish to take steps in the learning process of the ‘renewal of urban renewal’.

### **3. TRANSFORMING FOR INTENSIFIED USE: KEEP WHAT YOU HAVE.**

*With productive activities under pressure in urbanized areas, the project elaborates spatial and procedural strategies to strengthen the mix of urban industrial activities.*

The Lageweg project area is home to productive companies. Because these industrial activities have come under pressure in urban areas, we wish to research how these companies can remain active on the site or even expand in the future. Additionally, we would like to investigate how the companies can reinforce their local embedding by establishing relations with the schools, by training and employing workers from the area, or by sharing spaces with local associations.

Our ambition goes even further: we wish to involve the existing and future industry and facilities in a new, circular logic where various waste and resource flows and logistical means are tuned to one another. The circular logic will act as a benchmark throughout the development, from preparation to occupation. Neither do we wish to consider the decontamination process as a linear one, with clearly defined waste flows, but as a circular system in which the raw materials are used and reused as efficiently as possible.

The reinforcement of the economy within the city offers a lot of advantages. A lively city is being created, avoiding unnecessary commuting, and changing to a more sustainable and ‘circular’ organization of the city.

### 3. ACTION PLAN & TRANSFORMATION TIMELINE

In 2013 Antwerp started research on her fringe by a living lab. By researching and experimenting, the urge of a new way of approach or new instruments became clear. To achieve the objectives mentioned in chapter 5 to transform our fringe, we formulated about 20 actions. Some actions are already elaborated, for other actions feasibility is being researched. The impact of an action after implementing and elaboration can lead towards new actions. In the cards (see below) the possible impact of an action is assigned but not yet mentioned as a separate action.

The actions are subdivided in 5 groups (=5 types of actions):

- **Towards new instruments** | Urban transformation requires a new approach and a different set of instruments than in urban expansion.
- **Towards a change in the organisation** | Transitioning from project management based on land ownership towards negotiation and dialogue with stakeholders, requires new skills for the department of urban planning and its employees.
- **Towards a new way of governance** | Urban transformation requires a different approach and a new way of governance than urban expansion.
- **Towards a developer 2.0** | Landowners, stakeholders and developers have to get convinced of advantages of multi-plot development and a collective approach of renovation. The government has an important role to stimulate the new ways of 'building'.
- **Towards informed citizens that supports the renewal** | The present and the future citizens are very important stakeholders in the renewal of the fringe. The city needs to know their needs, inform and stimulate them.

Each action is represented at a card with next parameters:

- Short description of the action;
- Type of action (see above);
- Objective of the action related to the policy for the fringe;
- Impact of the action when implementing;
- Stakeholders;
- Financial resources;
- Timescale;
- Who's responsible to start the preparation and/or implementation;
- Pitfalls



Below we describe 1 action from each of the 5 groups of actions.

<b>DESCRIPTION OF THE ACTION</b>	<b>Levy on big urban developments</b>   Growth of the population and densification of the urban tissue gives developers financial benefits and the city costs on the creation of extra amenities (in times of less resources). By the levy, the city ask for a return to be able to maintain the level of amenities.
<b>TYPE OF ACTION</b>	Towards new instruments
<b>OBJECTIVE</b>	Maintain the level of amenities.
<b>IMPACT</b>	
<b>STAKEHOLDERS</b>	GAC (city department of finances) SW-Ruimte (city department of urban planning) SW-Vergunningen (city department of building permits)
<b>FINANCIAL RESOURCES</b>	2 FTE
<b>TIMING</b>	Elaborated since 2016.
<b>RESPONSIBLE</b>	GAC
<b>PITFALLS</b>	The cost of the urban levy probably will be relayed on the buyer/user. Prices of housing will raise or quality get lower.

<b>DESCRIPTION OF THE ACTION</b>	<b>Course in negotiating</b>
<b>TYPE OF ACTION</b>	Towards a change in organisation
<b>OBJECTIVE</b>	Hybrid building blocks offer a high potential of redevelopment if a multi-plot development is applied. The government has an important role as facilitator to obtain this. The implementation of this new role as civil servant asks for new skills.
<b>IMPACT</b>	
<b>STAKEHOLDERS</b>	SW-Ruimte PM (personal management)
<b>FINANCIAL RESOURCES</b>	
<b>TIMING</b>	Q3 –Q4 2017
<b>RESPONSIBLE</b>	SW-Ruimte
<b>PITFALLS</b>	The course is theoretical, the best way is learning by doing.



<b>DESCRIPTION OF THE ACTION</b>	<b>Collaboration with neighbouring municipalities to stop sub-urbanisation</b>
<b>TYPE OF ACTION</b>	Towards a new way of governance
<b>OBJECTIVE</b>	The fringe doesn't stop at the administrative border. To stop sub-urbanisation, a common vision between the Antwerp and its surrounding municipalities is necessary. Based on the proximity of public transport and basic amenities, areas for future development are distinguished on a map as well as areas where suburbanisation has to stop.
<b>IMPACT</b>	
<b>STAKEHOLDERS</b>	SW-Ruimte
	The municipalities : Aartselaar, Boechout, Borsbeek, Edegem, Hemiksem, Hove, Kontich, Lint, Mortsel, Niel, Schelle, Wijnegem, Wommelgem  Flemish Government: department of spatial planning
<b>FINANCIAL RESOURCES</b>	1,5 FTE – subsidized by the Flemish Government
<b>TIMING</b>	2015-2018
<b>RESPONSIBLE</b>	SW-Ruimte
<b>PITFALLS</b>	If the subsidy isn't extended, the collaboration will probably ends.  Lack of instruments on Flemish level to reimburse owners of buildable land which isn't located in a suitable place for development.

<b>DESCRIPTION OF THE ACTION</b>	<b>Pilot project Lageweg</b>
<b>TYPE OF ACTION</b>	Towards a developer 2.0
<b>OBJECTIVE</b>	Hybrid building blocks offer a high potential of redevelopment when a multi-plot development is applied. Stakeholders and developers have to get convinced of this new way of real estate development. The government has to get used to a new role as facilitator and has to experiment with new strategies and instruments. Pilot projects offer an valuable way to try out new strategies and methods in order to transform them into standard methods and new instruments in the future.
<b>IMPACT</b>	Zoning plan  Development of new instruments
<b>STAKEHOLDERS</b>	SW-Ruimte
	Landowners  Flemish Government Architect  Some departments of the Flemish Governement
<b>FINANCIAL RESOURCES</b>	
<b>TIMING</b>	2015-2019
<b>RESPONSIBLE</b>	SW-Ruimte
<b>PITFALLS</b>	



<b>DESCRIPTION OF THE ACTION</b>	<b>Investigation (survey to 8.000 inhabitants) to the existing image of the fringe and the attitude of the present inhabitants towards a more sustainable city.</b>
<b>TYPE OF ACTION</b>	Towards informed citizens that supports the renewal and propagate a positive image of the fringe
<b>OBJECTIVE</b>	The fringe is known for his large parks, but not as a place to live in. If Antwerp wants to grow and attract new inhabitants to the fringe, the fringe has to get known with a positive image.
<b>IMPACT</b>	Campaign on the positive image of the fringe.
<b>STAKEHOLDERS</b>	SW-Ruimte  OS-Marketingstrategie (department for urban business and city marketing)
<b>FINANCIAL RESOURCES</b>	2.298 euro
<b>TIMING</b>	Q1 - 2018
<b>RESPONSIBLE</b>	SW-Ruimte
<b>PITFALLS</b>	Low response at the survey.

## 4. MANAGEMENT & GOVERNANCE STRUCTURE FOR THE TRANSFORMATION PROCESS

### IAP: SETTING THE AGENDA FOR THE RENEWAL OF STRATEGICAL STRUCTURE PLAN ANTWERP

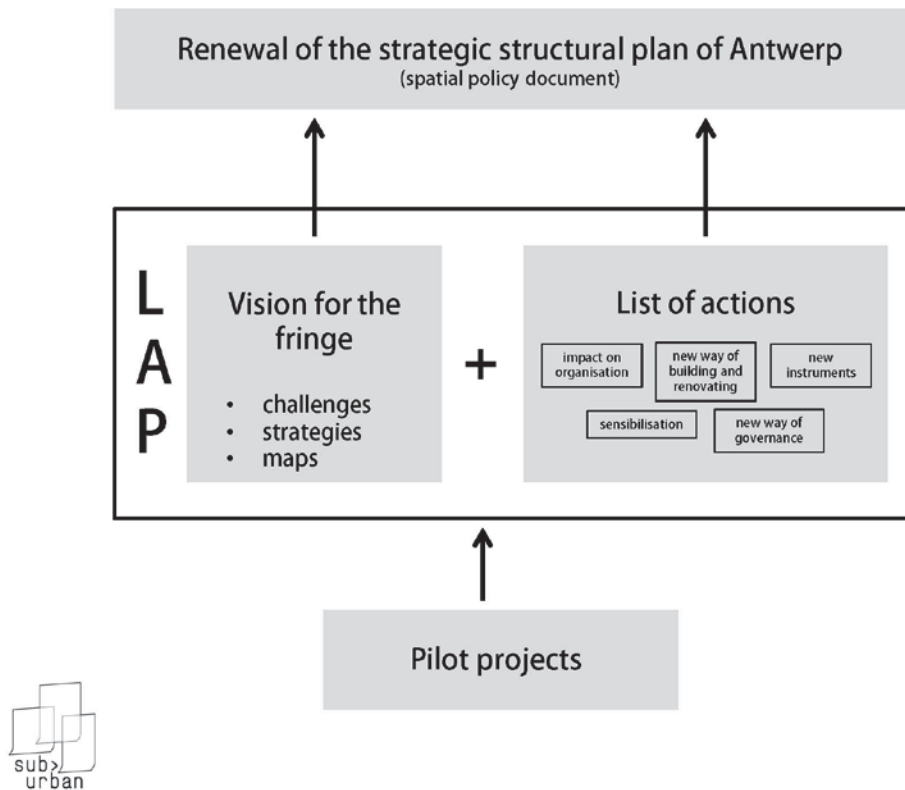
The guiding framework for spatial planning in Flanders is Strategic Structure Planning. It integrates economic, social, ecological and spatial strategies in a continued planning cycle. The present Strategic Structural Plan was approved in 2006 and it serves as the long term perspective for urban policy. The department of Urban Planning is currently preparing the update to this planning instrument.

The focus of such a planning document is obviously 'a sign of the times', addressing with more emphasis the then current urban topics. The present plan therefore has a clear focus on the inner city. The proposed vision – Renovatio Urbis – has created a tangible change in the quality of the built space and in the liveliness of the neighbourhoods of the historic city and the 19<sup>th</sup>-century urban expansion. In the meantime there has been a growing awareness for the strategic importance of the 20<sup>th</sup>-century belt – which coincides with urban/suburban areas outside of the ringway. The IAP aligns various initiatives of research, experiment and design on this fringe area of Antwerp, and consolidates them into an important integrated input for the renewal of the Strategic Structure Plan. The formal approval process of the updated plan will take place in the next local legislature 2018-2024.

The bridge towards the next legislature is guaranteed by an inspirational document that describes the direction of the Strategic Structural Plan along by 3 main ambitions:

- Vibrant Living City
- Smart Network City
- Robust Landscape

The IAP will be mainly part of the first theme 'vibrant living city', however the IAP also effects other themes. Within the 3 ambitions, different topics related to the changing society are researched. In city-debates topics were discussed with public and private stakeholders. Very often the focus is put on the fringe during these debates, as this is the area where challenges have to be solved. The group of people who were invited to these city debate, are member of our URBACT Local Group: civil servants of other departments, civil society, inhabitants and representatives of politicians.



Once the formal approval process of the updated Strategic Structural Plan has taken off, it follows an official procedure which includes consulting institutionalised stakeholders (departments of the Flemish Government), as well as public participation.

The Department of Urban Planning faces a very important year as there will be elections for the city council by the end of 2018. It will be very crucial to put the general transformation process for the fringe and some of the actions on the agenda of the agreement of the new city council as they will rule for the six upcoming years.

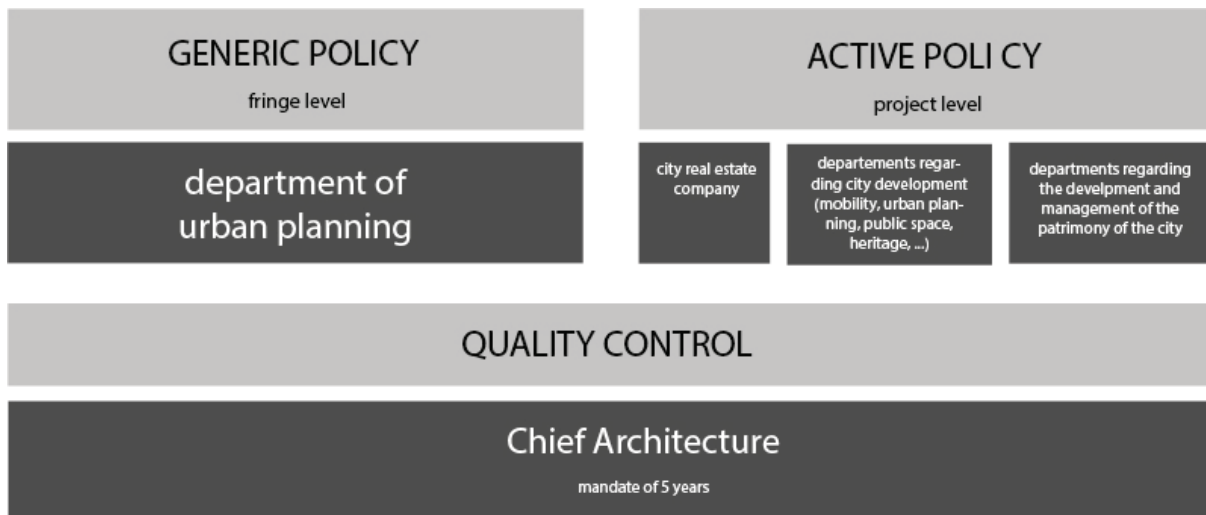
### IAP AS PART OF A TWO LEVEL POLICY

The management and governance structure to implement the transformation strategy is based on 2 levels: a generic level and an active level.

**The generic policy level** includes the overall objectives and strategies for the fringe and the actions which are applicable on the whole fringe. One of the main instruments developed by the Department of Urban Planning is new zoning plans.

**The active policy level** enables direct interventions – framed by the generic policy – where they are needed. The pilot project *LageWeg* is such an example. The active policy level will be carried out in accordance with other departments of Urban Development (mobility, environment...), the management of urban patrimony and the city real estate development agency (AG VESPA)

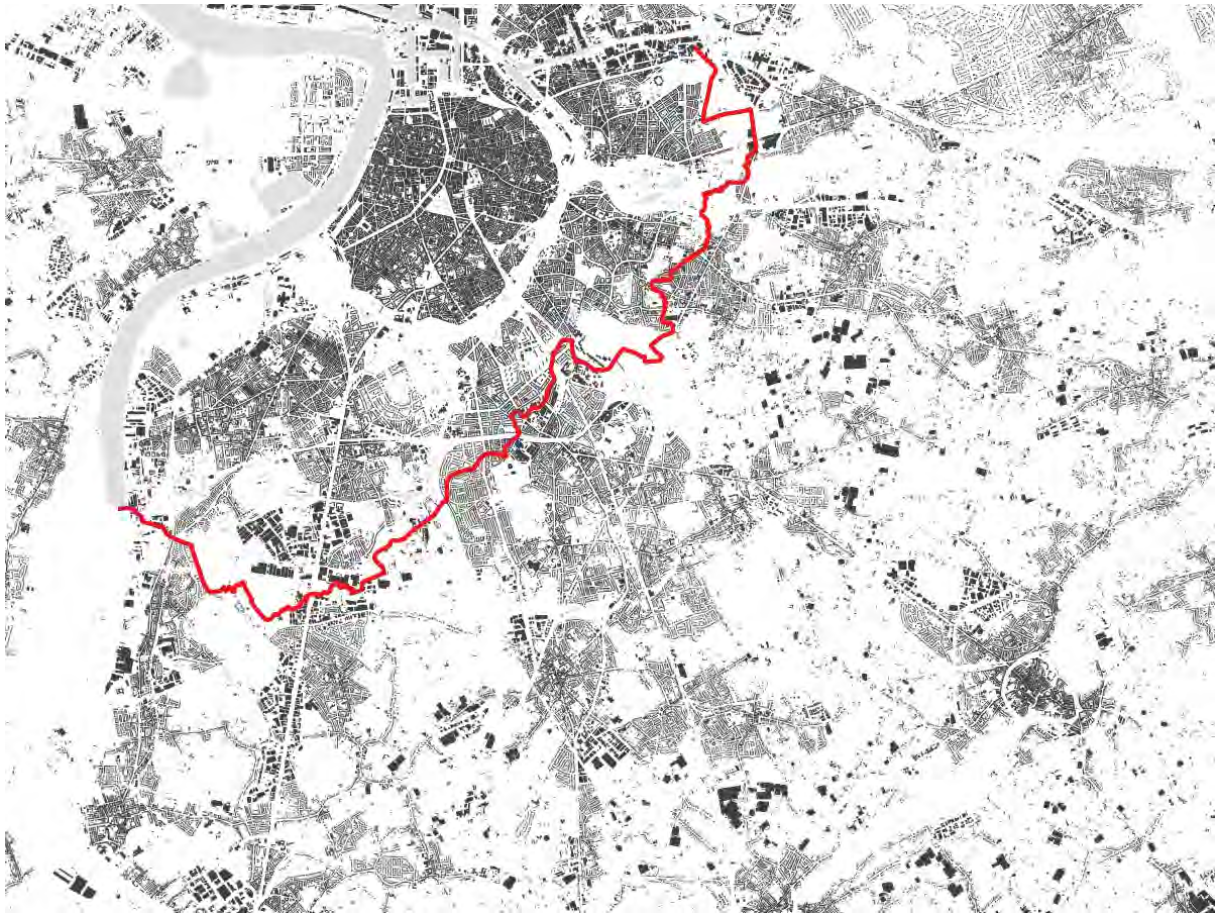
**Oversight of quality** is guaranteed by the independent mandate of the City Chief Architect.





## 5. GENERAL TRANSFORMATION OF THE ENTIRE FRINGE: SMART DENSIFICATION

*For the city of Antwerp, the Integrated Action plan is mainly a policy document. In this chapter we describe our general objectives for the renewal of the 20<sup>th</sup> century belt. Simultaneously we pick for each objective an action which has to give an answer to the challenge. Some of our objectives are already tested in the field by the pilot project Lageweg, like as we described in chapter 2.*



*Administrative border (south-east) vs built environment.*

The map shows the south-eastern city limit over existing built structure. It clearly demonstrates the relativity of administrative boundaries in relation to urban dynamics. It also evokes the necessity of a twofold strategy towards development of the fringe.

The first strategy tackles the border-crossing dynamics by bringing different adjacent municipalities around the table to develop a joint vision on focussing densification, and constraining further suburban expansion and to safeguard valuable green-blue structures and agricultural land.

The second strategy mainly addresses the challenges of the fringe within city boundaries. Its objectives coincide with the first strategy as in maximizing possibilities to develop attractive, sustainable urban environments that can compete with low density, car dependant suburban

development. But the potential of this part of the fringe is higher because its high density of a diverse set of amenities and its high potential for sustainable transport with a grid like structure of public transportation and within comfortable reach bicycle traffic.

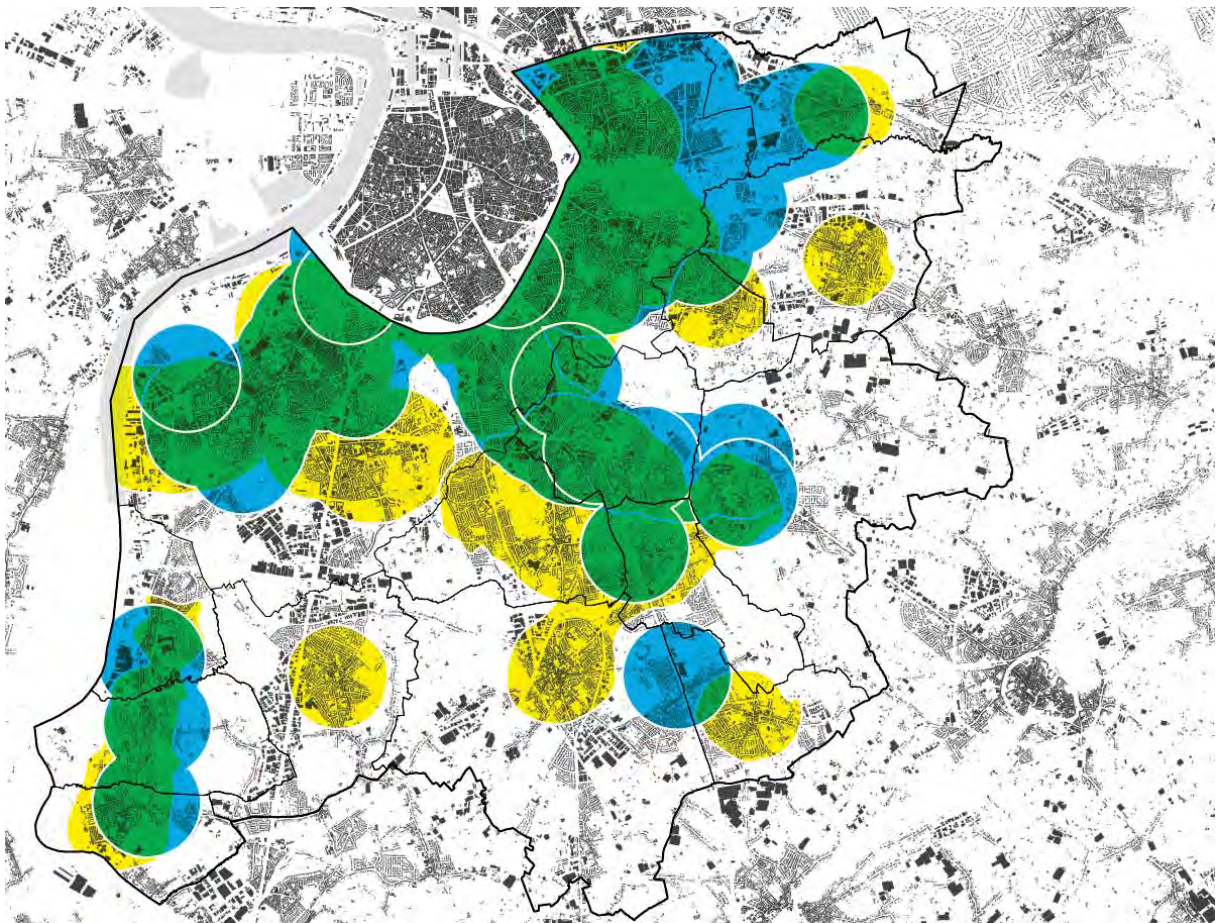
Antwerp faces a gradually growth of the population. **The growing population is an opportunity to transform the existing built-up areas in the 20<sup>th</sup>-century belt** in a qualitative and sustainable way. However, the growth is rather slow. Therefore the city of Antwerp want to be selective in the growth of the urban fabric. A map for the 20<sup>th</sup> century belt is in development and indicates where and how growth and transformation is likely.



## 1. REGIONAL URBAN COLLABORATION.

With support of the Flemish regional government, fourteen municipalities of the southern region of Antwerp have joined in a strategical collaboration: Aartselaar, Boechout, Borsbeek, Edegem, Hemiksem, Hove, Kontich, Lint, Mortsel, Niel, Schelle, Wijnegem, Wommelgem. The main focus of the joint development strategy is a differentiated densification policy.

The policy is based on two basic criteria: proximity to basic amenities, and proximity to public transport: train, tram and priority-bus lines (not shown in map since still in research). As a standard reference for proximity a 10 minute walk or 5 minute bike ride was set: approximately 1km.



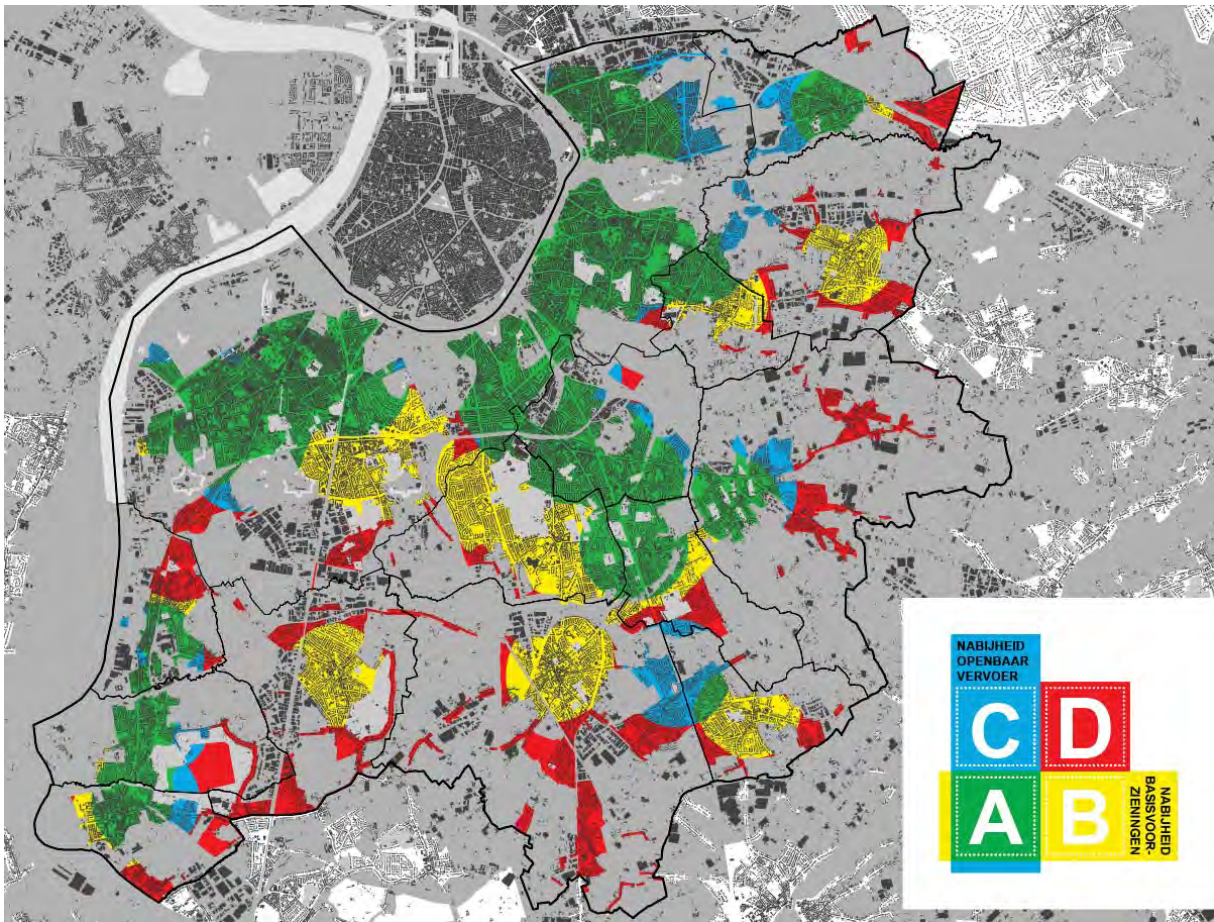
*Overlay of proximity criteria: basic amenities (yellow), public transport (blue), green (both).*

This basic qualification of development opportunity gains its strength from its simplicity. It defines basically 4 types of areas:

- **A** (green): areas with sufficient proximity to both basic amenities and public transportation. There are the obvious first choices for further growth or densification.
- **B** (yellow) and **C** (blue): areas that meet only one of both criteria. Further growth or densification in these areas is conditional. Further development is only possible when investment is guaranteed on the lacking criterion. For instance: yellow zones indicate sufficient density of basic amenities; further development of them would only be permitted if/when a better public transportation service is provided.



- **D** (red): is probably the most important category, since these are the area where further growth or development should be prohibited. It's a very important policy since it is very powerful in restricting further low density, suburban development.



*Zoning for residential densification in four categories.*



## 2. STRATEGIES FOR GROWTH AND RENEWAL

It is clear from the regional perspective that the urban fringe within the Antwerp municipal limits, is largely covered with both public transport and basic amenities. But the twentieth-century belt appears to be on the threshold of a new urban reality which transcends the levels of basic coverage of public transport and local services, and constitutes potentially a true urban quality. To further explore and develop this potential, a threefold strategy is formulated starting from a three perspectives:

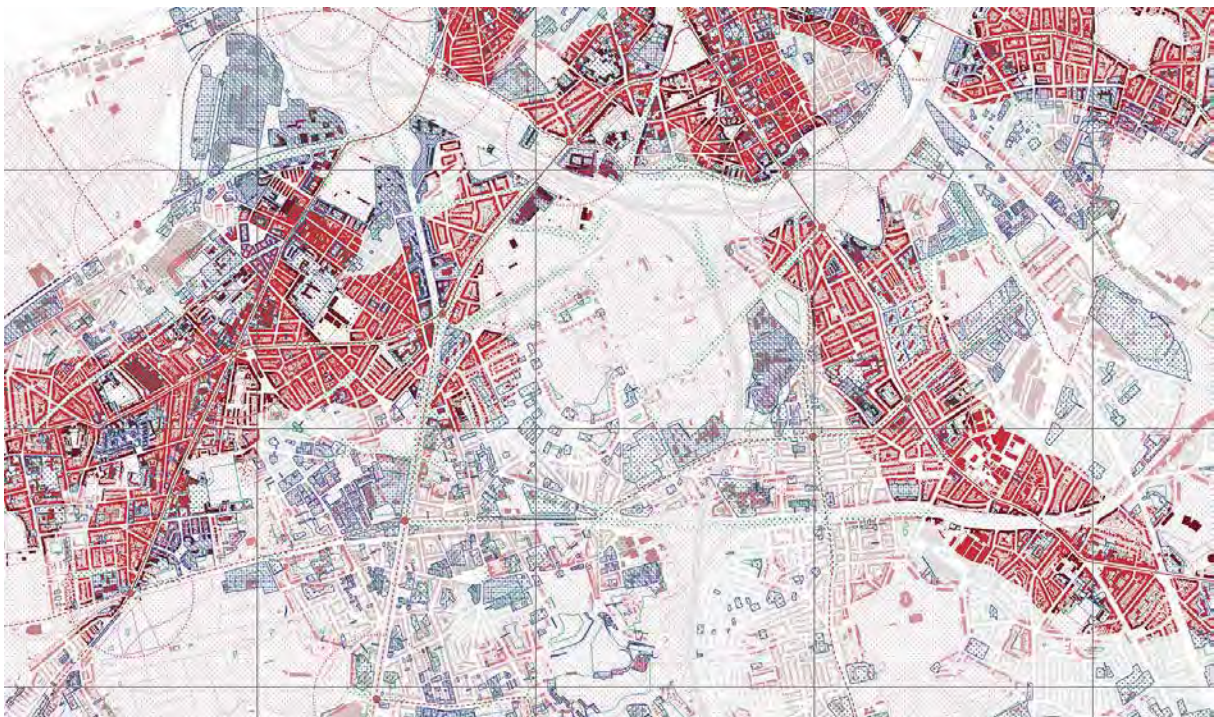
- The housing market
- The urban tissue
- The larger spatial unit

### A SECOND START

*“The twentieth-century belt is a space that is historically occupied because people left the city. Today, however, there is a group here that would like to live in the city centre but cannot always do this due to the lack of space. How can we make this space, which now has suburban occupation, available to a group with urban aspirations.”*

*Dehaene, Michiel and Borret, Kristiaan.*

Not only is the fringe subject of these urban aspirations, it has grown beyond suburban occupation both in form and in use. In a sense it has already grown to be more urban. This evolution happened very incrementally, typical for urban development in a highly fragmented ownership, and without a clear framework for desired structure. Now we arrived at a critical point, where this dynamic needs a strong vision in order to resolve emerging pressures, and to maximize its potential as an attractive complement to the inner city.



Zoom of 'potentials map'.

## HOUSING MARKET UNDER PRESSURE

Urban population continues to grow but its composition undergoes an even incremental shift, which is evidenced by tendencies in the housing market. We see an increase in the number of mostly small to very small apartments, and an overall decline in the availability of row houses. It puts pressure on the housing market in terms of affordability of family housing and of balance of household types and with that the socio-economic base of the city. This evolution towards a less varied housing supply is particularly problematic for the twentieth-century, we see its diversity as one of its strengths.



## SPACIOUS PUBLIC DOMAIN UNDER PRESSURE

Even though it is still characterized by a more open and green public domain, it is gradually evolving to an ever denser and higher built. Increased private car ownership has gradually overtaken the design of public space both to accommodate speed and safety, and to provide space for parked vehicles. It has led to a paradox: the street appears open and wide, but is fully packed. Free on-street-parking has simply exceeded its pragmatic use (a parking spot in the street is no longer guaranteed), and the lack of basic comfort and space for walking, playing and meeting has undermined the street as an attractive residential environment.





### **LARGER SPATIAL UNITS UNDER PRESSURE**

As real estate development increased in the fringe, it pushes away the typical mix of very diverse urban activities and building forms. Typically larger special units such as productive spaces and warehouses, similar to their inner city counter parts, qualify for redevelopment. Commercial real estate prefers in these cases housing and offices for obvious financial motives. Not only in view of preserving programmatic mix within the city (productive activities are an integral part of the urban network), but also to safeguard a larger scale for typically bigger public and commercial amenities necessary to support the growing population.



*Copyright: Frederik Vandyck/quinten Dewinter*

## DEVELOPMENT STRATEGIES FOR THE RENEWAL

### *STIMULATING AN ALTERNATIVE, MORE COLLECTIVE HOUSING DEVELOPMENT*

A key part in the development of an attractive and affordable housing market, is the family house. Traditionally the row house typology matched both the requirements of the middle class family, and the sufficient urban density. Today we can conclude that it doesn't any more. A declining availability puts pressure on affordability, and to meet a growing a population within the existing urbanized tissue new developments require more stacked housing types.

To fully address this problematic, we need to understand the many other dimensions to the single family house involves than just residential solution. Private home ownership is historically and deeply embedded in Flemish politics and culture. It is one of the key elements to the current distributed settlement structure. It also resulted in a set of institutional and governmental conditions: a house not just a home, it's also a long term savings plan, a fiscal construction and a banking product. It's important to address these dimensions when intervening in this market. Currently the housing development does not seem to meet the needs of middle class family: the row house is too expensive and the apartment, as a commercial real estate product, does not comply with the (typological and financial) needs.

Stimulating an alternative housing development could address both dimensions. International experiences in collective building – where a group of families develops (therefore finances and pre-finances) a housing project – combine the advantages of private commissioning (a more direct involvement and an earlier financial commitment) with the scale advantages of a stacked construction which can be invested in either affordability or higher quality (architecture, sustainability...). Promoting this more collective housing development would constitute in a valuable addition to existing models such row houses and commercial apartment development.



*Zanderroth Architekten*



## ***PROMOTING THE STREET AS A STRONG URBANISTIC FRAMEWORK FOR GROWTH AND RENEWAL***

The redevelopment of the street is a key strategy to creating an attractive living environment for current and future residents, and to establish margin of growth within the existing fabric. Research in the liveliness of urban neighbourhoods clarified the importance of public space as the immediate extension of the private home. This goes beyond the statistical and geographical coverage of public parks and recreational spaces. It involves spaces for everyday informal public life: walking about, play, conversation... This necessity stands in sharp contrast with the incrementally established dominance of traffic function in the design of public space. Redesigning the street is twofold:

- Reorganisation of on-street-parking:
  - o To create more comfort for residents (guaranteeing a parking space)
  - o To make room for other uses and ambitions
  - o By implementing a parking- on-private-terrain-policy
  - o By providing collective parking facilities
  - o By stimulating car sharing services
  - o By promoting traffic alternatives
- Emphasizing non-traffic qualities of public space:
  - o Space for green and water
  - o Space for play and meeting
  - o Space for quiet and slowness

By identifying this potential of the street as an attractive living environment, the growth potential becomes clear. Public space in the 20<sup>th</sup>-century urban tissue is classically very spacious. We identified a few street-types as a specific morphology (width and height), and a matching mobility profile:



- Residential streets:
  - o Width 12-24m
  - o Existing building height: 2-3 floors
  - o Potential building height: 4-5 floors
  - o Local traffic only, no public transport
  - o Public space as a direct extension of the private home: (playing, meeting, walking about...)



- Lanes:
  - o Width 18-36m
  - o Existing building height: 3-4 floors
  - o Potential building height: 5-6 floors
  - o Distributive traffic (car, bicycle), possibly local public transport (bus)
  - o Public space as extension of residential and commercial activities (shops, bars...)



- Axes:
  - o Width 30-60m
  - o Existing building height: 4-6 floors
  - o Potential building height: 8-10 floors
  - o Ongoing traffic for car, bicycle and tram
  - o Public space as access to and expansion of commercial and public amenities

The main element of this strategy is the alignment of both concepts – redesign of public space as attractive living environment and the expansion potential in building height related to street profile. By linking both concepts to each other we create a versatile urban renewal strategy.



*Street typologies define conditional densification potential.*



**CONVERTING PUBLIC AND COMMERCIAL AMENITIES AS STRATEGIC PROJECTS BY INCLUDING AN UPGRADE OF SURROUNDING PUBLIC SPACE AND THE CONSTRUCTION OF A NEW HOUSING TYPOLOGY**

In line with population growth the city needs to guarantee expansion of its supportive base of public and commercial amenities. In this strategy we focus on medium and large buildings such as schools, sporting infrastructure or supermarkets. Due to their scale, they present the opportunity to go beyond the base ambition, by linking them to both previous strategies.



*Inventory of potential lots for strategic projects.*

The concept of ‘micro centralities’ as developed in Lab XX, inscribes the position of these functions in the sequence of everyday routines. Commercial or public amenities rarely are unique destinations in current mobility scenarios, but rather as stops in a sequence of movements: dropping the kids at school on the way to work, and stopping for groceries on the way home. In a sustainable mobility we need to equip these stops as multimodal hubs that allow if necessary to comfortably switch from one means of transportation to another. A ‘mobi-point’ is a concept that combines car sharing infrastructure, public transport, locker facilities for personal belongings and for delivery services, bike sharing, charging stations for electric vehicles...

By combining the construction of new amenities to such a service point, they become strategic projects that can leverage change in its immediate surroundings. Including collective parking facilities (which can be part of a time-sharing strategy), allows to directly alleviate street design in adjacent public space by reducing even more the amount of on-street-parking, making room for green and water, for play and meeting, for slowness and some quiet. Finally these developments can take on an exemplary role by including the building of new and alternative housing which addresses an unserved audience (family apartments).



*Turning a public amenities project into a 'micro-centrality'.*