

# Access City Award Rotterdam 2017





City of Rotterdam



**15% of the population  
has to deal with  
a disability  
= ca. 90.000  
Rotterdammers**

**Overlap elderly and people with a  
disability (> 50%)**

**30.000 formally assessed for having a  
disability**

Physically or somatically (47%)

Mentally challenged (17%)

Psychologically challenged (21%)

Psychogeriatrically challenged (14%)

## A. Rotterdam

Rotterdam has roughly 610,000 inhabitants. About 30,000 of them have an indicated disability. Rotterdam is a relatively young city, with a lowly educated population, significant unemployment and many newcomers. The inner city was lost when it was bombed in 1940. Reconstruction resulted in a spacious city centre, wide pavements and the world's first car-free shopping centre. This alone makes the inner-city highly accessible. Rotterdam is also special for the cooperation that exists between parties in the city. Co-creation and lots of scope for entrepreneurship and citizen initiatives mean that Rotterdam is a city made for and by its inhabitants.





**Toolkit for outdoor space amended for accessibility**



**People of Rotterdam have the ongoing opportunity to report irregularities in outdoor space.**



**Hoek van Holland, most accessible beach in the Netherlands**

## **B1. Public Space**

Guidelines for outdoor space were drawn up in 2014 to increase accessibility, and formulated through dialogue between the municipality and stakeholders. They include height differences of not more than 2 cm in walking routes, unevenness not higher than 3 cm, clearance of at least 180 cm and at least 1 disabled parking space out of every 200 within 50 m of the main entrance of public buildings. Inhabitants with a medical indication are eligible for a parking space registered to their vehicle. In 2014, the Standard Road Details were amended for accessibility and the toolkit was modified accordingly. Whenever major configurations occur, experience experts are involved to ensure the design meets the wishes of the disabled. Outdoor space problems can be reported by phone, Internet or an app called Better Outdoors. Under the 'Rapid Repair' scheme, the city rectifies within 24 hours urgent complaints that endanger outdoor space. Since 2007, Rotterdam has had the most accessible beach in the Netherlands, with free beach wheelchairs and beach rollators, disabled toilets and a wheelchair-friendly path to the high-water mark. In 2016, Rotterdam published a vision document for games, sports, exercising and meeting places in which accessibility and an inclusive society play a central role.



## B2. Infrastructure

Rotterdam has a large public transport network. By law, 80% of all public transport stops must be accessible to wheelchair users by 2019. The figure in Rotterdam at year-end 2015 was already 284 out of 325 stops, or 80.7%. Until 2018, almost all public transport stops will be wheelchair-accessible. For the visually impaired there are pillars with an audio function. There are also audio tours of busy places. The numerous freestanding cycle paths ensure accessible pavements. Discarded bicycles are removed to keep pedestrian walkways free. The new central railway station, opened in 2015, is accessible to the disabled. Experienced experts were involved repeatedly in the station's design and construction. All 14 areas of Rotterdam have a volunteer-operated neighbourhood bus usable by everybody aged 55 and over in order to promote senior citizen participation in mainstream society. By 2017, all neighbourhood buses will be wheelchair-accessible. City inhabitants unable to travel by public transport receive On Demand Transport, a taxi system with modified people carriers. Roughly 32,000 people currently have a transport card for this system and 21,000 use it regularly. About 70,000 journeys are driven each month. There are also private initiatives for on-loan mobility scooters.



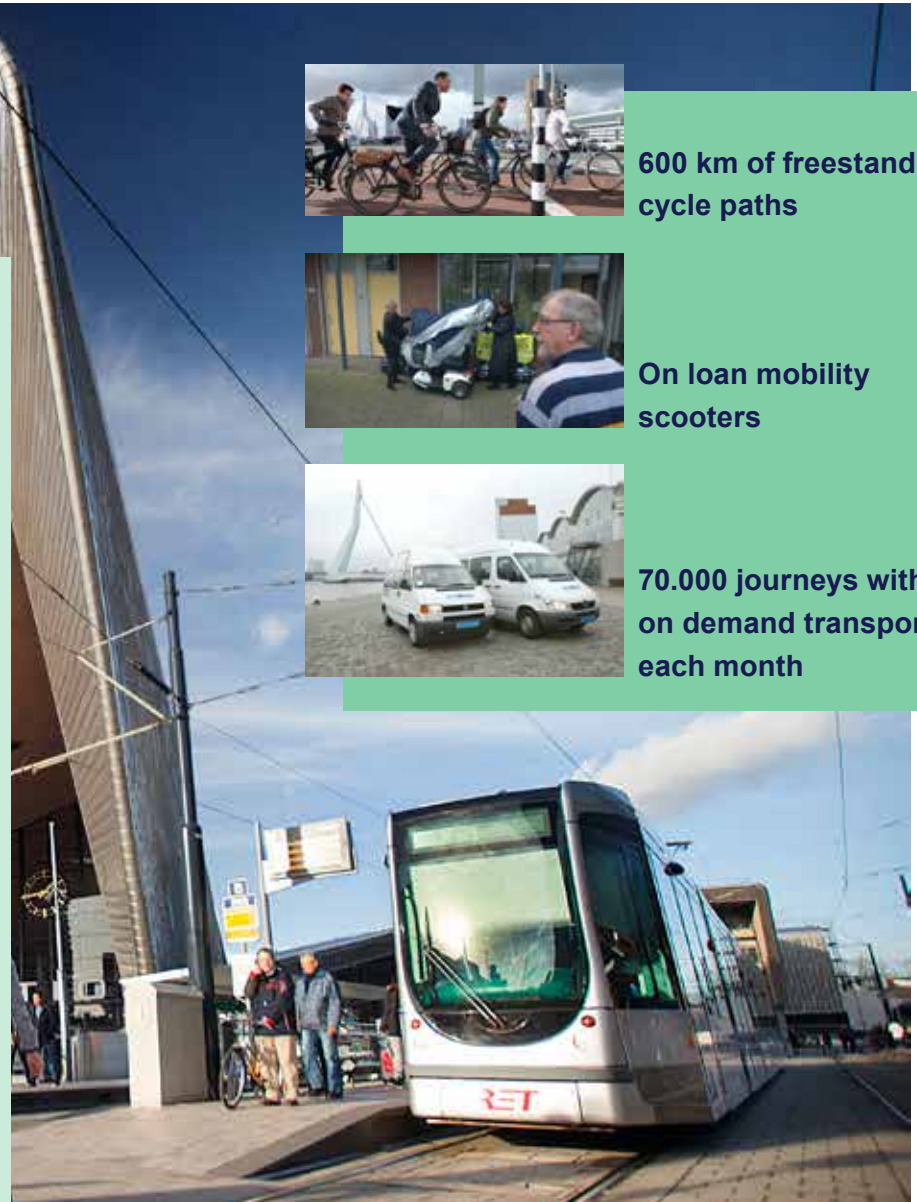
**600 km of freestanding cycle paths**



**On loan mobility scooters**



**70.000 journeys with on demand transport each month**







**Increasingly Rotterdam works with citizen profiles to improve services**



**14 information advice kiosks**



**In 2017 a demand driven website**



**Sport consultant to allow people with disabilities to engage in sports**

### **B3. Information**

As much as possible can be arranged on the website, such as passport applications and other practical municipal affairs. We are producing a new demand-driven website (ready in 2017). The website is being created in close cooperation with the people of Rotterdam. Not all Rotterdam citizens can read, so information is also obtainable by phone or face-to-face in city shops or information/advice kiosks. Since 2015, all Rotterdam districts have had an information/advice kiosk for questions about care and support. This system is being developed onwards to make it even more accessible. Based on citizen profiles, the service provisioning is being adjusted to different types of people with different limitations. For the digitally illiterate (including many senior citizens), hard-copy neighbourhood guides have been published again since 2015 with practical tips (transport and housing) and social tips (activity calendars). Since 2015, the city has been training volunteer key helpers who possess knowledge and expertise of the possibilities for assistance, care and activities. Municipal sports consultants provide information about sports options for people with a disability to allow them to continue engaging in sports any time they want.



**3,2 million euros  
invested in  
municipal sports  
accommodations  
to make them  
accessible for  
disabled people**



**Various home  
modifications, domestic  
help and more with the  
municipal social support  
act**



**The first stand for blind  
people at the ABN AMRO  
tennis tournament**

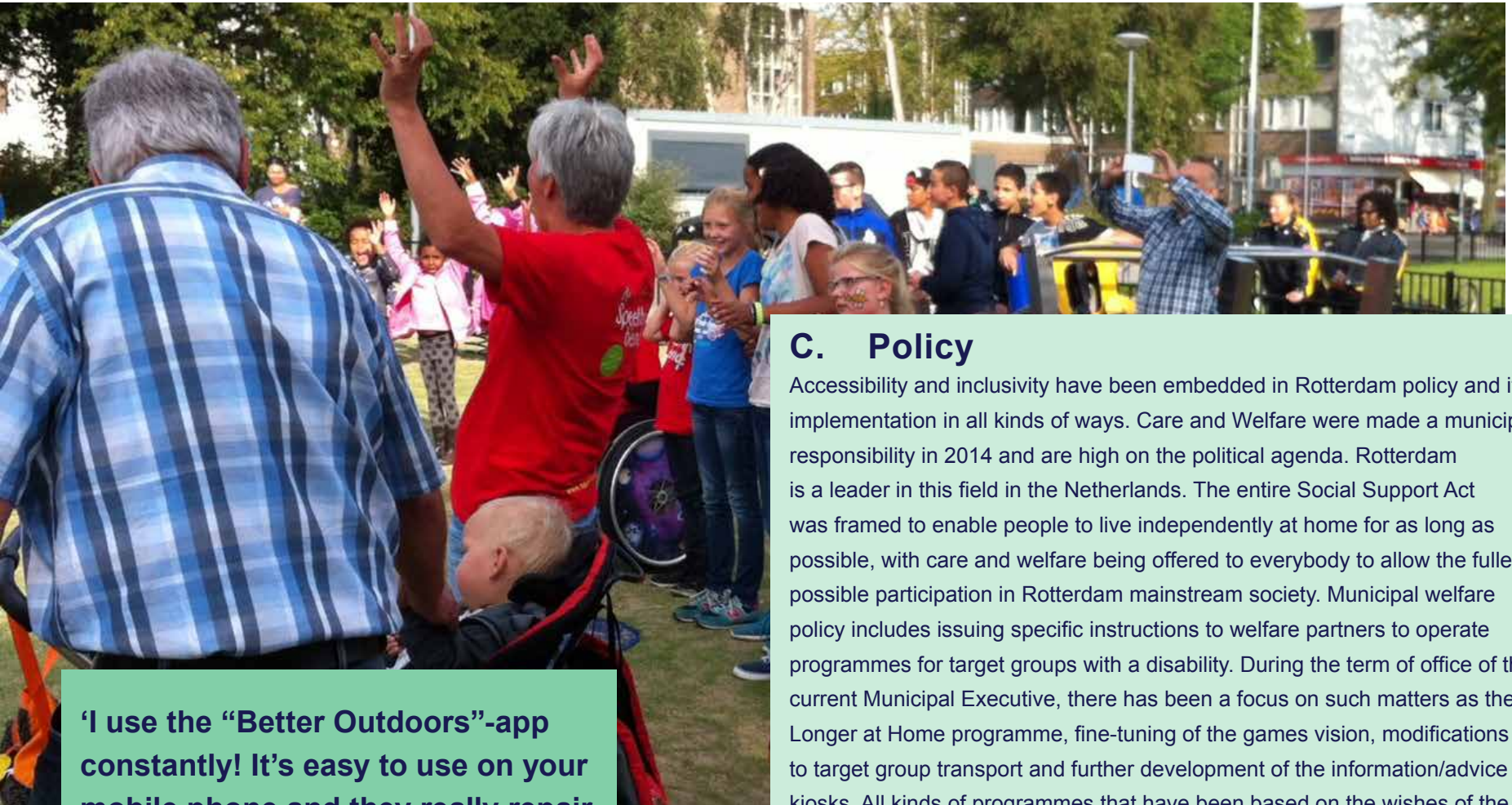
## **B4. Public Facilities**

Dutch municipalities provide care and support under the Social Support Act (SSA). The SSA covers such matters as ways of spending the day, domestic help, home modifications, mobility scooters and doorstep ramps. Since 2016, Rotterdam has had 42 Neighbourhood Centres that are physically accessible to everybody and where activities are organised for everyone and all disabilities to allow everyone to participate in Rotterdam society. Fourteen advisory kiosks and the social teams (first-line care) help people immediately (providing advice, giving an indication under the SSA, etc.) and referrals to more specialised care. Rotterdam is making sports accommodations accessible to disabled people. New sports centres are being constructed in accordance with guidelines determined in consultation with the target group. An amount of €3.2 million has been invested in modification of 20 existing municipal accommodations. For non-municipal accommodations, €500,000 is available for this purpose until 2017. Various parties in Rotterdam offer extra facilities for the disabled, including a tribune for the blind at Feyenoord soccer club, first stand for blind people at the ABN AMRO tennis tournament, an inclusive play area at the Maritime Museum and a mobility scooter route in the Botanical Gardens.





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**'I use the "Better Outdoors"-app constantly! It's easy to use on your mobile phone and they really repair everything very quickly'**  
**- Nel, elderly citizen**

## C. Policy

Accessibility and inclusivity have been embedded in Rotterdam policy and its implementation in all kinds of ways. Care and Welfare were made a municipal responsibility in 2014 and are high on the political agenda. Rotterdam is a leader in this field in the Netherlands. The entire Social Support Act was framed to enable people to live independently at home for as long as possible, with care and welfare being offered to everybody to allow the fullest possible participation in Rotterdam mainstream society. Municipal welfare policy includes issuing specific instructions to welfare partners to operate programmes for target groups with a disability. During the term of office of the current Municipal Executive, there has been a focus on such matters as the Longer at Home programme, fine-tuning of the games vision, modifications to target group transport and further development of the information/advice kiosks. All kinds of programmes that have been based on the wishes of the target groups. Senior citizens with a disability are a specific target group in traffic and transport policy. Through years of effort the city has achieved results, including completion of modified sports accommodations and implementation of accessibility requirements in the Standard Road Construction Details.

**'I have my hand bike and you can really see the changes over the last years. It's much easier to get everywhere'**

**- Vincent, citizen with paraplegia**



**City of Rotterdam**



**The wide council  
advising at city  
Hall**

## **D1. Impact**

The city's policy is evaluated across the entire spectrum using various monitors. These clearly show an increasing level of satisfaction with such matters as the level of amenities and the issues of clean, complete and safe facilities. Similarly, satisfaction with the human environment in Rotterdam has also gone up, with (for example) 61% of the population saying they are satisfied with the safety of pavements, while there has been an increase (from 53% in 2014 to 55% in 2015) in the percentage of people who say they are satisfied with the maintenance of pavements. These figures are totally reflected in the Rotterdam Neighbourhood Profile. Rotterdam is also listening to its inhabitants, with continued use of a large network of experienced experts (by means of schemes called Wide Council and Neighbourhood Rules and in focus groups) to find out how the changes are being experienced. This reveals that people are more satisfied with the outdoor space and certainly notice a positive difference in recent years. The same naturally applies to sports accommodations. Quotes can be found in the annex. We are pressing ahead with improving our public spaces by organising improvements tours to examine improvements and by giving possibilities for people to report issues.





**Vice-mayor De Jonge  
with shoes made at the  
'Herenplaats', atelier for  
people with a disability**



**Blind love for Salsa**



**People of  
Pameijer doing  
a catering job**

## D2. Benefits Beyond

Valuable encounters broaden everybody's day-to-day life. All kinds of parties in Rotterdam facilitate such encounters. They include Blind Love for Salsa and Running Blind. The programming of welfare and the games vision also stimulate meetings between people with and without a disability. There are various organisations where people with a disability perform services and do odd jobs. This has twofold benefits. A person with a disability is able to make a valuable contribution to society and jobs get done. There is also Heerenplaats, an art collective where people with a disability create pieces of art. Pameijer is an organisation that takes care of the catering in various care homes. An important subject throughout the Netherlands is the ageing of the population. Rotterdam is no exception. Physical accessibility is very important to the target group of senior citizens who have to contend with more limitations as they grow older. For people with prams, too, it is important for roads to be properly passable.

**‘I walk with a walker-rollator and eventhough the sidewalks are big enough, sometimes people plant their bike or terras on it. But the municipal guards do enforce the rules when they can’**

**- Susan, citizen with rheumatism**

## **E1. Sustainability**

Besides various initiatives, Rotterdam includes accessibility requirements (both physically and socially) in all kinds of ways in policy plans, contracts with subcontractors and performance agreements. In welfare contracts, we agree clear arrangements about the target groups to be reached and there is half-yearly reporting on this subject. In performance arrangements agreed with housing corporations, we ask for attention to be directed towards people with a disability, both in a physical sense through the construction of wheelchair-accessible homes and in a social sense through cooperation with the neighbourhood team and by the corporation identifying issues for discussing, e.g. in the event of social isolation or psychological limitations and their implications. The Wide Council provides advice on request and on its own initiative and we always remain in dialogue with the target groups.



'A lot is dependant on peoples behaviour. If people place their bikes in the middle of the sidewalk, wether people take notice of one another, people cleaning the snow in front of their door and retailers placing advertising boards in the middel of the street. That is something we can all work on'  
- Hans, elderly citizen



## E2. Future

A large proportion of the aforementioned measures are part of Rotterdam's ongoing policy. Several important interventions initiated in recent years have either been completed or will be completed soon (matters such as public transport and sports accommodations). During this Municipal Executive's term of office (2014-2018), there will be extra attention for these matters, for example through the Longer at Home scheme, the Traffic and Transport programme and the onward development of care and support in the city. This stems partly from the devolution to municipalities of duties under the Social Support Act and how Rotterdam must respond to this situation. Partly through the input of various focus groups, autonomy and self-sufficiency are important concepts and accessibility is a fundamental part thereof. The extra focus will definitely be kept in place during this term of office of the Municipal Executive (up to and including 2018) and subsequently the different parts will be given a permanent place in Rotterdam. An organisation called 010 Accessible will keep a watch on building and street furnishing plans. Many structural improvements have already been made to policy rules, and it is important to ensure they are implemented smoothly in the coming two years.



## F1. Cocreation

This is one of the most important condition in Rotterdam for establishing effective policy and implementing it properly: the people who are affected by policy must be involved in it. Rotterdam has structural ways of involving different target groups. The Wide Council is an independent body that advises on plans in the social domain. 010 Accessible, as part of the Wide Council, advises on accessibility with the help of volunteering experience experts whenever there are reconfiguration plans for outdoor space and construction plans for homes and buildings. For policy-making purposes, focus group interviews are conducted and in Rotterdam we are increasingly using profiles in order to understand the target group thoroughly. Neighbourhoods in Rotterdam have the 'Neighbourhood Rules' scheme in which residents determine together with the municipality and the police what needs to be done in the outdoor space. This includes examination of the outdoor space, with the participation of people with a disability; 010 Accessible has an advisory role. Since 2015, separate senior citizen outdoor space examinations have been organised. A booklet called Accessible Outdoor space is widely circulated, enabling people without a disability to see things from the perspective of people with a disability.

**'The way Transport on Demand is being constructed is all about the people who it concerns. We're questioned on our experience, demands and wishes. We matter, you can feel that in everything'**  
**- Leah, mother of a client of Transport on Demand**







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**'The outdoor space  
is from and for  
everyone'**

**- Arja, member of  
Wide Council**

## **F2. Awareness**

Accessibility is a responsibility of the entire city and all its inhabitants. The part for which the municipality is responsible - outdoor space - has already been largely laid down in rules. Nevertheless, the people of the city have an increasing say when it comes to their own surroundings. For that reason, we published a brochure called 'Accessible Outdoor Space' for the population of Rotterdam. Five no-nonsense Rotterdam citizens with a disability tell their stories in the booklet. Not because they are pitiful, but because they want to get out and about to do things. In the G4 context, various stakeholders are taking part on behalf of Rotterdam. As a municipality we also maintain close contacts with Alzheimer Netherlands so as to share experiences with dementia and with Platform 31, a knowledge platform that shares information about housing and care.





## G. Why Rotterdam?

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