

Urban Future.

Rotterdam 24



City of
Rotterdam

ROTTERDAM.
MAKE IT
HAPPEN.



A FIRST FLAVOUR

OF UF24 IN ROTTERDAM

Welcome to

Urban Future

Europe's most inspiring event
to make cities sustainable.

Home to a global community
of 50,000+ urban change-makers.

FACTS & VOICES

#UF24
June 5-7, 2024

WE EXPECT:

2,500 Attendees

250 Speakers

180 Mayors & City Representatives

30 Field Trips

20 Side Events

100 Partners



"I felt inspired to change the world."

"I loved it. I will be back!"

"It was a magical and intense week."

THIS YEAR'S THEMES

What Urban Future 2024 will be about.

1. CLIMATE ADAPTATION



2. BUILDING SUSTAINABLE CITIES



3. SOCIAL ASPECTS OF TRANSFORMATION



4. PERSONAL GROWTH



1. CLIMATE ADAPTATION

Cities must prepare for water and heat extremes. But climate adaptation is much more than coping with horrific weather conditions. Critically, for city leaders, extremes put their communication and collaboration skills to the test. Let's learn from those who have already taken the test.

#1 Drought

#2 Storm Water

#3 Heat Waves



#1 Drought

Drinking water is our most precious resource. And yet we use it lavishly in leaking systems and for street cleaning, flushing toilets, swimming pools, and for watering gardens. As a result, Day Zero – the day we’re running out of water – has already become a horrifying reality. In Cape Town, this deadly scenario came too close. We’ll hear from city leaders which decisions almost pushed the city down the drain, and which saved it eventually.



Often, the wrong incentives lead to depleting reservoirs: Why would any utility company in its right mind promote the saving of water when it is ultimately its sales volume that defines company “success”, flushes cash into cities’ budgets and defines management bonuses! Sant Cugat de Vallès, a

suburban municipal pioneer in Catalunya, has turned this logic upside down. Let’s hear their learnings generated during the implementation of greywater reuse and find surprising barriers that must be overcome for people to accept alternative water sources.



Former Mayor of Cape Town, **Patricia Delille**, has led the City through its biggest crisis in recent history.

#2 Storm Water

More and more cities around the globe are experiencing dramatic stormwater situations, leaving behind thousands of shattered lives and crippling infrastructure worth billions. In 2011, within minutes a single cloud burst shut down Copenhagen’s transport, energy,



and communications, costing more than 1 billion Euros. In response to the historic event the City has started an unparalleled collaboration across departments, sectors and – crucially – political units! Copenhagen, Singapore, Melbourne, Rotterdam: To relieve their sewage system, cities are co-using playgrounds, parks, car parking facilities, sport fields and farm land for water retention during flooding emergencies. We hear how municipalities communicate strategically, internally and externally, to make sure politicians opt for, key stakeholders agree on, and citizens get involved in adaptive changes with no or little immediate (monetary) value gains. Be surprised by some of the unintended consequences of such well-meant projects!



Lykke Leonardsen is passionately working for, and as Director of "Resilient and Sustainable City Solutions" at the City of Copenhagen.

#3 Heat Waves

Heat is a silent killer. Summer heat waves of 2022 are linked to 60,000 deaths across Europe, affecting those unable to escape their concrete city prisons. Heat waves dramatically decrease workforce productivity and damage road and rail infrastructure. Modern cities were not built for extreme heat! Which is why pioneers like Athens and Los Angeles have appointed Chief Heat Officers to tackle heat on a strategic planning level. Madrid is building an urban wind garden. Medellín is creating dozens of green corridors across the city, and architects around the world are rediscovering ancient methods to reduce heat in buildings. Key to successful adaptation is making value gains tangible to all, whether it’s reducing air conditioning’s electricity bill, or increasing land value thanks to



reduced car traffic. Let’s hear how cities across the globe are reducing heat risks, and let’s learn from them what works and what not.



Former Chief Heat Officer of Athens, **Eleni Myrivili**, has put the Greek capital on track to dealing with heat waves of 40°C and has since been appointed Global Chief Heat Officer to UN-Habitat.

2. BUILDING SUSTAINABLE CITIES

“Regeneration”, “decarbonisation”, a “just transition”: big changes are needed to transform the way we build our cities. But who is this “we”, - planners, residents, architects, investors, ... - whose expertise counts and who is eventually calling the shots? From reusing building materials and learning how to close loops in the construction sector, to cleverly re-using and re-allocating city space: From the drawing pad to the lived urban reality, let’s unpack who needs to do what and, critically, let’s learn how to do it: How to create a sustainable, liveable, and healthy built environment.

#1 Circularity

#2 Placemaking

#3 Density & Proximity



#1 Circularity



From changing design principles and choosing the 'best' materials, to enabling workers and financing what should eventually create more value than the current "take-make-dispose" system: the transition towards circularity is not exactly easy. So, how can we mainstream building circular and shine a light on the many

human factors in this transition towards decarbonisation – from workers to communities, from reducing inequality to creating quality jobs and working conditions? Be it Brussels, Paris, Oslo, or Amsterdam, let's hear from those who, sometimes against the odds, are making it happen, and learn how to replicate and scale their efforts.



An environmental engineer and expert on regenerative design, **Jessica Watts** works on transitioning to a circular built environment, with Arup and in collaboration with organisations such as the Ellen MacArthur Foundation.

#2 Placemaking

If we focus on the human factor, naturally our vision must go beyond the sole building. How do we create spaces that actually meet the needs of their neighbourhoods while also contributing to ambitious climate targets? From rooftops to playgrounds, from facades to the spaces between buildings, from pocket parks to urban

farming: creative use of space and placemaking are centered on the needs, visions and desires of the people who use them.

Let's marry climate resilience, culture, and community engagement to regenerate neighbourhoods and hear from their lovechilids about examples of how it's done.



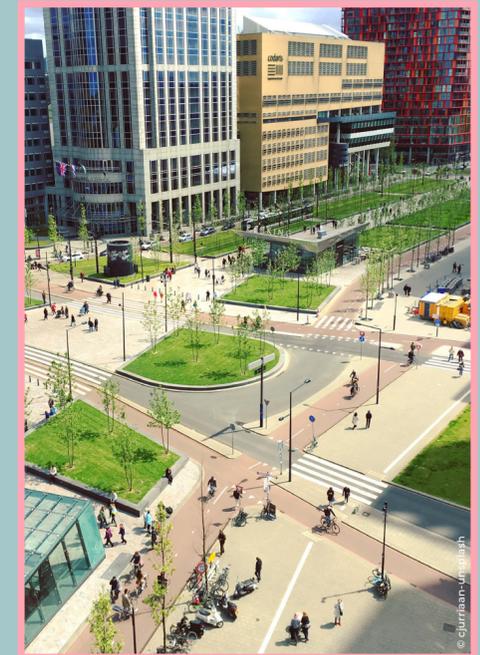
From biobased houseboat communities to regenerative retail concepts: titled as "crazy sustainable experiment bunny" by the New York Times, **Pepijn Duijvestein** creates solutions for climate challenges together with communities and businesses.

#3 Density & Proximity

All the talk around 15-minute cities essentially focuses on one issue: how we allocate space in cities. Think mobility: What modes of transport do we prioritise with the design and infrastructure decisions we make? Who do we have in mind as a model citizen? Think greenery: It is essential for managed land to feature high levels of biodiversity. But are we distributing green space in an equal way across our cities? Think housing: What's to be done about urban sprawl, how can high-rise buildings be integrated into the cityscape, and which new housing models can be established?

we'll give a stage to those radically redistributing and reinventing space for the greater good!

From existing to newly developed neighbourhoods, from urban planners to innovators to activists:



Former Chief Architect of the city of Barcelona **Xavier Matilla Ayala** has directed many urban transformations with the aim of achieving a healthier, friendlier, and fairer city – including the world-renowned Barcelona Superblocks.

3. SOCIAL ASPECTS OF TRANSFORMATION

To secure the welfare of future generations and to adapt to a changing climate, we need to transform our cities and urban lives; we need to live sustainably. To understand how “social” and “green” can go together, we’ll learn how to rally enough people behind “green”, and how to talk to those who won’t. Because if the transformation benefits the few, the many will kill it.

#1 Transforming Together

#2 Inclusive Cities

#3 New Governance



#1 Transforming Together

Changing for a better world is hard work and we will need combined human power to achieve ambitious goals and deal with respective consequences. But how come we often hear that people don't feel part of the transformation, like they couldn't even make a change? Luckily, there are cities supporting their local talent, like Reykjavik's participatory budgets or Leuven's overall successful culture of collaboration. We will look at how to make transformation a vision for all and how to enable citizens to actively shape and steer it. We hear why some neighbourhoods collaborate with city admin, while others won't; how to deal with people who consider reducing their carbon footprint a luxury problem, how to assist those for whom this holds true, and



what to do with tiny but loud minorities obstructing any change. With leaders calling for urgent action to prevent climate meltdown, we desperately need to support those who want to act, we will learn how to use the power of communication, and understand what kind of (in) action is killing our efforts.



Karin Haselböck's work at Ashoka Europe helps creating a world where everyone is empowered to live a good life and emphasises the need of collaboration between all sectors to successfully improve our cities.

#2 Inclusive Cities

What's it like to live in a city planned for everyone but you? How does it feel to see your rents double because your area has been green-gentrified? What if everyone is in praise of cycling but you've never learned or dared to ride a bike? If the needs of society's "weakest" would be considered, most of our cities would look very differently. Which is why we'll be looking at how the structurally excluded are getting back 'in'. In Vienna, gender mainstreaming is part and

parcel of city planning since 2000, while in Vancouver the homeless are leaving the streets thanks to unconditional cash transfer - saving the city money. Amsterdam has dramatically increased access for people with disabilities and Stuttgart is boosting inclusion of refugees and migrants. Worldwide cities are inviting children to co-create streets and neighbourhoods. So, let's get inspired and hear which solutions work surprisingly well and will turn your city into a happier and healthier home.



As a gender consultant at Urban Inclusion, **Safaa Charafi** works towards more inclusive, fairer, safer, and more prosperous cities.

#3 New Governance

Despite having set ambitious climate, sustainability and energy targets, no European capital city or large metropolitan area has yet fully achieved the UN Sustainable Development Goals, and EU level progress has stalled since 2020. Clearly, achieving cities' ambitious targets requires a better understanding of how to achieve them. Take the energy transition: it requires both strong top-down leadership and broad public acceptance – a typical governance dilemma. Sooner or later all cities will have figured out: they need to create a different culture of leadership and governance altogether! Rotterdam works with participative citizenship, making decisions with citizens instead of about them. Helsingborg is living proof that disrupting internal structures and turning to a trust-based governance can really

boost transformation. And there is more! Let's explore the much-needed change in governance, learn about new (and diverse) forms of leadership for cities and how to use sustainability as a framework for leadership and consensus-building around shared goals.



Director of DRIFT **Derk Loorbach** is a key expert on the transition management approach as a new form of governance for sustainable development.

4. PERSONAL GROWTH

This track focuses on the personal experience of those who drive change, on how to make change happen – and how not to. We will share highly inspirational stories, provide workshops on personal skills for change-making and offer in-depth engagement to help build resilience and grow as leaders.

#1 Leadership

#2 Skills for CityChangers

#3 Managing Passion



#1 Leadership

Whether we see a lack of it, or admire someone for showing it, we never get tired of talking about leadership. But what exactly is it – and can it be trained? Let's find out!

Leadership means taking the first step, instead of hoping for

someone to take it for you. But true, sustainable leadership is only acquired over time; it may well mean to step back and enable others. So, let's meet some of the most exciting urban shapers around and decide for yourself what makes them great leaders to learn from.



Mayor of Leuven, **Mohamed Ridouani**, is turning Leuven into one of the most caring, green and prosperous cities in Europe.

#2 Skills for CityChangers



“What should be done” to make cities better places to live in is quite clear, whereas implementation is where most struggle. Taking this next step requires very different skills than does problem definition and project planning. When

getting it done, things easily become messy, and you will quickly find yourself ill-prepared, personally, and professionally. Let's learn crucial 'soft skills' to get this hard work done and make the transition rewarding and fun to be part of.



With her contagious energy, Chief Marketing Officer of 1KOMMA5°, **Sophia Rödiger**, is turning a slow and unappealing energy transition into a light-footed event for all.

#3 Managing Passion

Yes, the best way to grow is failure. But there are some lessons you don't want to learn. You may not even see them coming! Burn-out rates among change-makers are alarmingly high. Which is why resilience – the ability to withstand shocks and come out stronger – should be at the core of whatever we do.

Offering the right atmosphere for leaders and experts to not only openly share very personal learnings, but also the failures they have experienced is one key element of what makes this track so special. Let's learn how to manage our passion and the passion of those we care for the most.



After quitting her corporate job leading a team of 500, **Elena Doms** founded Earth Plus to clean soils from pollution, to capture CO₂ & create circular economy through nature-based solutions.

GO EXPLORE!

Reality Check “Field Trip”

The third day of Urban Future is traditionally dedicated to exploring the city in various ways.

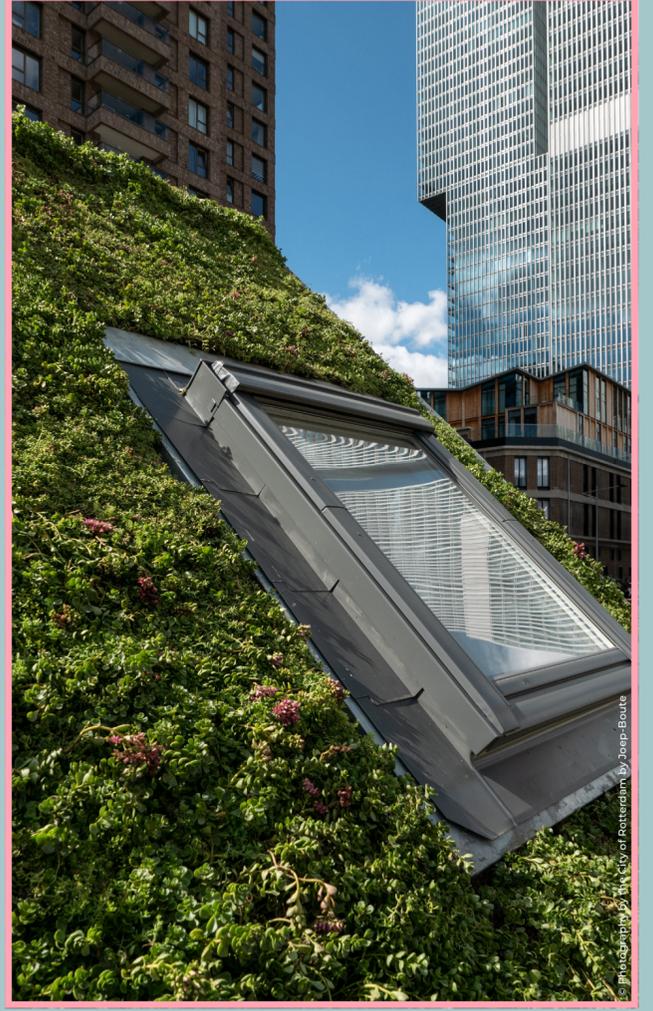
To fully understand what the sustainable projects of our host city are all about, attendees are invited to see, feel and experience them first-hand, in exclusive, small groups with great guides.

Sustainable architecture, relaxing green spaces and innovative mobility or housing projects await your discovery. Be sure to pack your comfortable shoes!

Do you fancy ...

- ... a group bike ride on the city’s circular bike lanes
- ... exciting Dutch architecture
- ... exploring Rotterdams Green Rooftops?

We got you covered!



MAKING MEMORIES AND CONNECTIONS

Where CityChangers meet.

Much of what participants take away from Urban Future happens between sessions, during breaks or after the conference day.

Promise: you will get to know like-minded changemakers from all over the world. This is not only something we can guarantee, but it is also one of the best parts about Urban Future!

Be aware. Normal networking is not what we are talking about. We love to offer our guests a special, relaxed or fun environment to socialise.

How about ...

- ... speakers' welcome night at City Hall
- ... a morning swim at one of Rotterdam's hidden beaches
- ... vegetarian rescue dinner at an open street?



ROTTERDAM, WHAT'S YOUR VIBE?

Help us reveal it!

Every Urban Future is a chance for the host city not only to show off its sustainable projects, but also to give international guests a glimpse of its unique urban heartbeat.

We are determined to uncover yours, Rotterdam. Help us by sharing stories, people, potential partners or hidden gems.

Just get in touch with us:
hello@urban-future.org



BETTER TOGETHER

Among the first International & Dutch Partners are:



Urban Future looks forward to teaming up with the most exciting networks and organisations that strive to change our cities for the better. **Intrigued? We can't wait to hear from you!**

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SEE YOU IN ROTTERDAM!

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