Steps towards Slowness

Spatial strategies to promote Walking for Wellbeing in a Post-growth future in the Netherlands

by **Arjanne van der Padt** | 17/06/2025

Urbanism Thesis Report

Colophon

Steps towards Slowness.

Planning and design to promote walking for wellbeing in a post-growth future in the Netherlands

Keywords: Walking, Slowness, Wellbeing, Practice Theory, Embodied research, Spatial planning, the Netherlands

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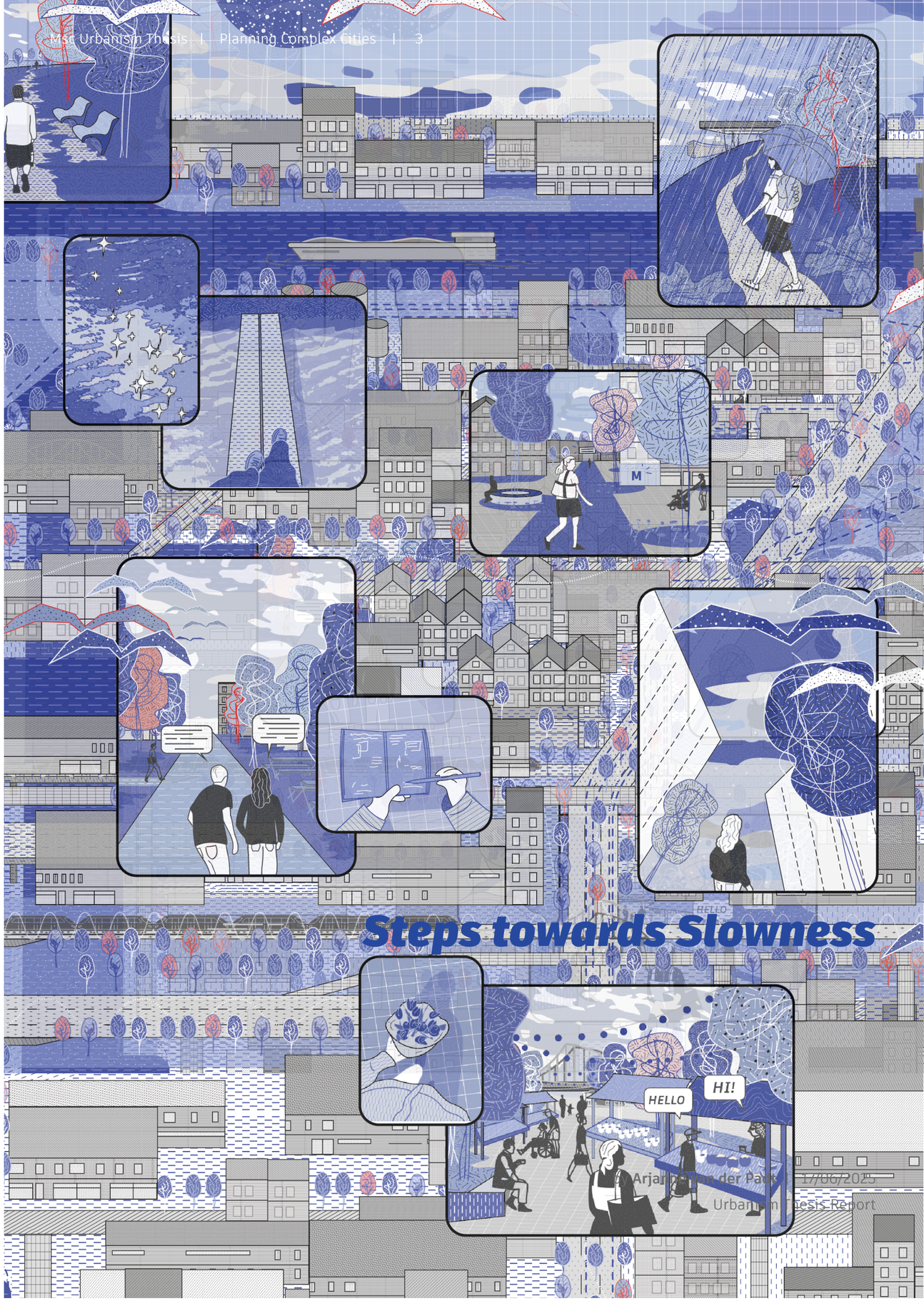

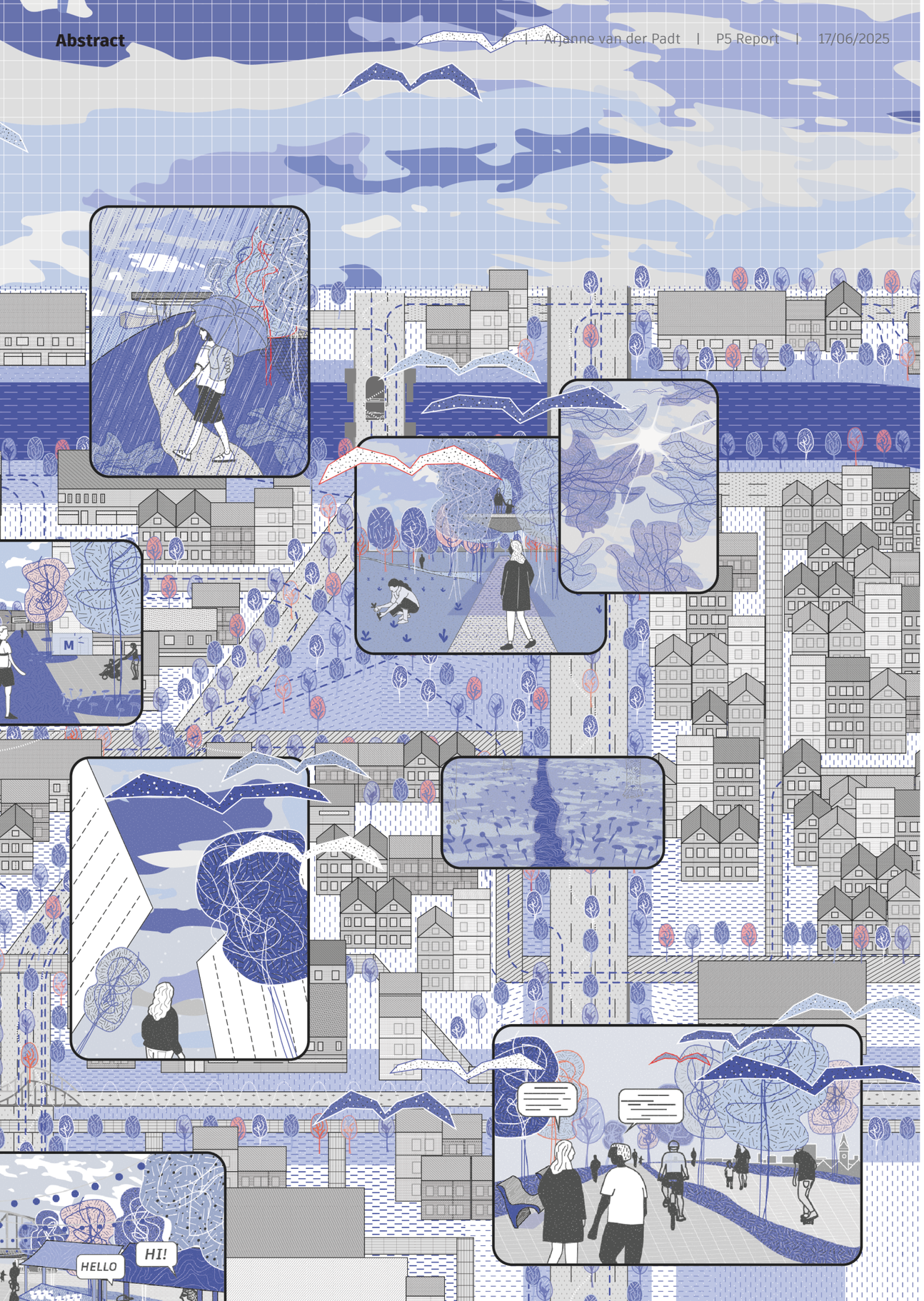

Abstract

Keywords:
Walking, Slowness, Wellbeing, Practice Theory, Embodied research, Spatial planning, the Netherlands

Life in the 21st century moves faster than ever, leading to a society that is increasingly unsustainable for both people and the planet. This thesis proposes a shift toward slowness in the Netherlands by encouraging everyday walking through better spatial planning and design. It explores how planning and design can support both behaviour change and broader social change—by starting with walking.

Using practice theory, walking-based research, and case studies in Heerde and Zwolle, the project rethinks walking in the Netherlands—not just as transport or leisure, but as something deeply personal and part of daily routines. This broader view challenges current strategies that rely mostly on infrastructure, individual nudges, or one-size-fits-all solutions.

The thesis introduces a new way of planning for walking, with clear aims, new methods, and practical tools. It focuses on three goals: 1) encourage walking, 2) sustain walking habits, and 3) create time and space for walking. Methods include walking-based research, using personas and daily routines in design, and imagining better future scenarios. A pattern language is developed, linking eye-level walking experiences and larger-scaled spatial, social and policy interventions.

The project proposes a phased strategy, explored in Heerde and Zwolle: starting with small changes encouraging rethinking daily spaces and habits, creating a foundation of localized, quality spaces and practices supporting walking, restricting fast practices, and finally supporting long-term walking practices, with flexibility, diverse experiences and ever evolving meanings of walking.

All in all, walking is shown to be more than just a slow experience, as promoting it reflects values of Slowness like quality and local connection. This prompts policy-makers, designers and citizens alike to reflect on the values shaping our everyday lives and spaces, recognising how small changes in day-to-day life, such as walking, can contribute to broader societal shifts. Walking thus emerges as a practice, method and a framework for envisioning desirable, sustainable futures rooted in wellbeing.

Positionality Statement

This thesis in urbanism sits at the intersection of science, design, and practice—where facts meet values and visions of the future. While science aims for objectivity, I acknowledge my own subjectivity shaped this work. From my views on what a more desirable future might look like, to my own experiences of walking, my perspective influenced both the questions I asked and the way I interpreted them.

As an able-bodied woman, I hold privileges that shape how I engage with walking. I have the physical ability, time, and freedom to walk comfortably in most situations. At the same time, I have faced challenges, such as safety at night or walking with back pain. While not central in this project, these daily experiences did shape my understanding of walking's complexities.

While I made an effort to listen to others—walking with them, asking questions, and drawing on lived experiences and literature, I also recognize that I can never fully "walk in someone else's shoes." This thesis is therefore an ongoing attempt to work with care, awareness, and humility, acknowledging both the limits and responsibilities that come with my position as a researcher and practitioner.

Glossary: words of walking.

Walking (English): "using extensions of the body which make contact against a reasonably solid substrate, against which you can push yourself forward" (O'Mara, 2019, p. 31)

Lopen (Dutch): 1) to move by legs (to walk), usually to get from location to destination 2) progression over time, duration

Lopen (Flemish): Running

Stappen (Flemish): walking, 'wandelen', same as Dutch 'lopen'

Wandelen (Dutch): to walk leisurely, stroll or hike for pleasure.

Pedestrians (English): people moving on foot in public spaces, including those using aids like canes, crutches, walkers, wheelchairs, scooters, children on scooters, people with strollers.

Wandering (English): moving without a fixed destination; roaming.

Hiking (English): walking long distances, especially in nature or rural areas, often for exercise or recreation.

Stroll (English): a slow, leisurely walk.

Ambulation (English): the act of walking or moving from place to place.

Rambling (English): walking for pleasure without a definite route; also, long and aimless talking or writing.

Tramping (English): walking heavily or for long distances, often with rough or strenuous effort, similar to hiking.

Promenading (English): walking in a public place for social display or leisure.

Ommetje (Dutch): a short, leisurely walk or stroll, 'a walk around the block'

Kuieren (Dutch/Flemish): to walk, amble or saunter slowly and leisurely.

Struinen (Dutch): to roam or wander freely, often exploring.

Slenteren (Dutch): to stroll lazily or slow-ly, for example without purpose or through shopping streets

Walk it off (English): to recover from discomfort or negative feelings by walking.

A walk in the park (English): something easy or effortless.

Walk the talk (English): to act according to one's stated beliefs or promises.

Walk a mile in my shoes (English): to understand someone else's experiences by imagining being in their situation.

Don't try to run before you can walk (English): don't attempt something difficult before mastering the basics.

Jezelf voorbij lopen (Dutch): to overextend oneself, to push beyond one's limits.

Uitlopen (Dutch): 1) to exceed the allotted time 2) after exertion, to take time for cooling down or finishing a walk.

Te hard van stapel lopen (Dutch): to rush into something, to try to change too much too quickly.

Flâneur (French/English/Dutch): a person who strolls or saunters leisurely through urban spaces, observing and experiencing the city life with a detached curiosity. Historically linked to 19th-century Parisian culture and urban modernity.

Andare a zonzo (Italian): to wander aimlessly or stroll without a specific destination, often leisurely or casually

Détournement (French/English): a method of subverting and repurposing urban spaces and experiences through walking, used by the Situationist movement to challenge dominant social and cultural norms.

Transurbance (English): a form of critical walking developed by the collective Stalker, involving walks through overlooked or leftover urban spaces called 'urban voids'.

Dérive (French): an unplanned, aimless, playful urban wandering by foot, used by the Situationists to explore and experience the city's hidden social and emotional layers.

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Figure 1 hiking in France (Albert van de Padt, 2006, retrieved from: personal communication)

Prologue

This thesis started with my own interest in walking. Actually, not walking, it is 'hiking' that I have always loved doing. Meaning, walking in impressive (not Dutch) landscapes. This started from a young age, as each summer, my family and I would go hiking, preferably in the mountains. Hiking was a recreational, adventurous activity, of little meaning in my day-to-day life, where getting around by bike was the unquestioned norm.

When I moved from Apeldoorn, where I grew up, to Delft to start my studies in 2018, this did not change. I still enjoyed my hiking holidays abroad, with maybe the occasional day hike in the Netherlands. Even though in Delft, the locations I venture to daily, seem close, 'walkable' distances, from my home. Uni is for example only 800m form my home, and before this project I had walked this route maybe three times. However, it always seems more efficient to take my bike, especially in busy daily life. My walking in delft was, like many others, at its peak during COVID, when I discovered podcasts, and me and my roommates went on our 'mental health walks', both in the shape of an 'ommetje' (around the block) and 'LAWA' (the student abbreviation for 'lange wandering', a long walk). These daily activities are depicted in a soft map to the right.

This changed during my semester abroad in Graz (Austria), in 2021 (Figure 1.3). Not only were the mountains close to where I lived and reachable with public transport that hiking became a part of my daily life, I also walked more in the city. Exploring the new city I lived by foot was great, and walking to the city centre or a friend's house was the logical choice, especially as that was how everyone else got around too. There were nice parks close to where I lived, and even a hill in the city centre, which proved a great lookout opportunity. My walks in Graz were fun and social, and helped relax and clear my head when the intenseness of the exchange semester became a bit much. However, old habits die hard, and I still biked the 700m from my home to the TU Graz, similar to the 800m cycle to the faculty in Delft. However, biking did not feel as smooth and safe (helmets mandatory, of course) as it does in Delft, and therefore, it was less attractive.

When I moved to Melbourne (Australia) for another exchange semester last year (2023), this impacted the meaning of walking in my life once more, as Figure 1.4 shows. I did not even think twice about exploring this new city on foot, while also getting my hands on a bike as soon as I could. However, a new environment, spatial and social, also makes you built new habits. While I cycled the 1,5 km to university, one of my roommates always walked. And when we went for groceries or a coffee, it was implied that we would be walking. During the 7 months I lived in Melbourne, I walked to where I wanted to be more and more, as it was fun, often social, allowed me to enjoy my surroundings and it was less of an undertaking than biking. These choices were of course related to the neighbourhood where I lived, Fitzroy, which is one of Australia's most walkable suburbs, as the area is for example mixed-use, has a small grid and there are lots of parks close by (Walk score, 2025). However, Melbourne is a big city. Some of my daily distances felt too far to walk to, such as the Southbank location of the university, to which I cycled, or my job in South Yarra.

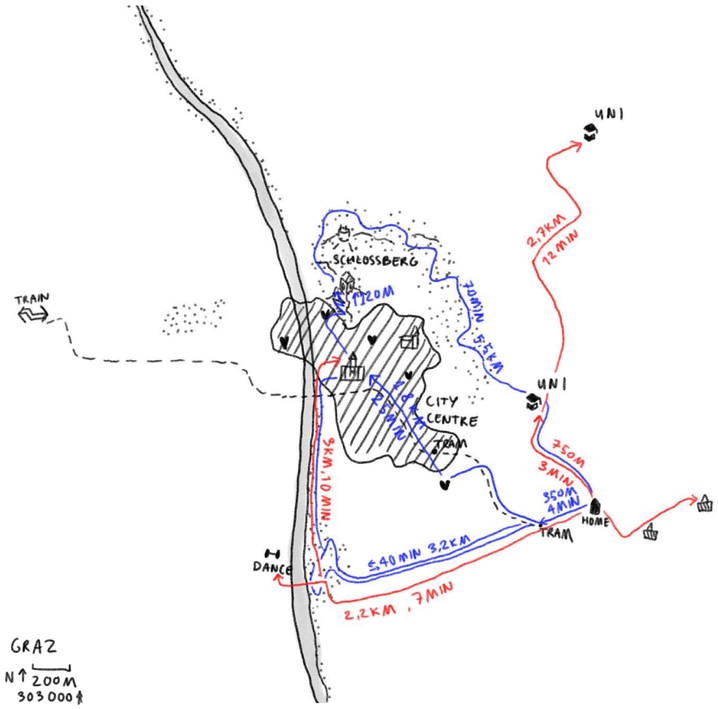


Figure 2 Soft map of my daily Activity Space in Graz

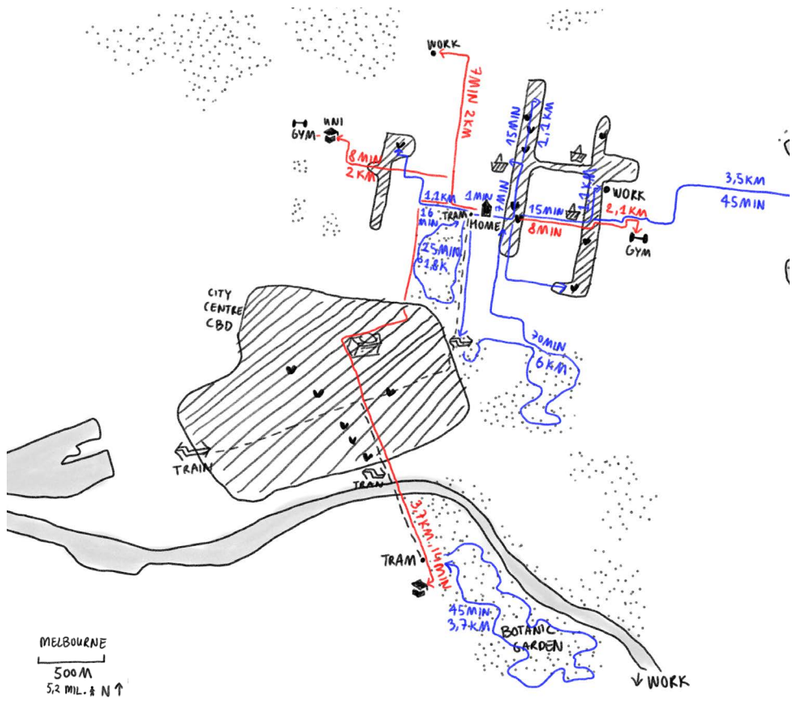


Figure 3 Soft map of my daily Activity Space in Melbourne

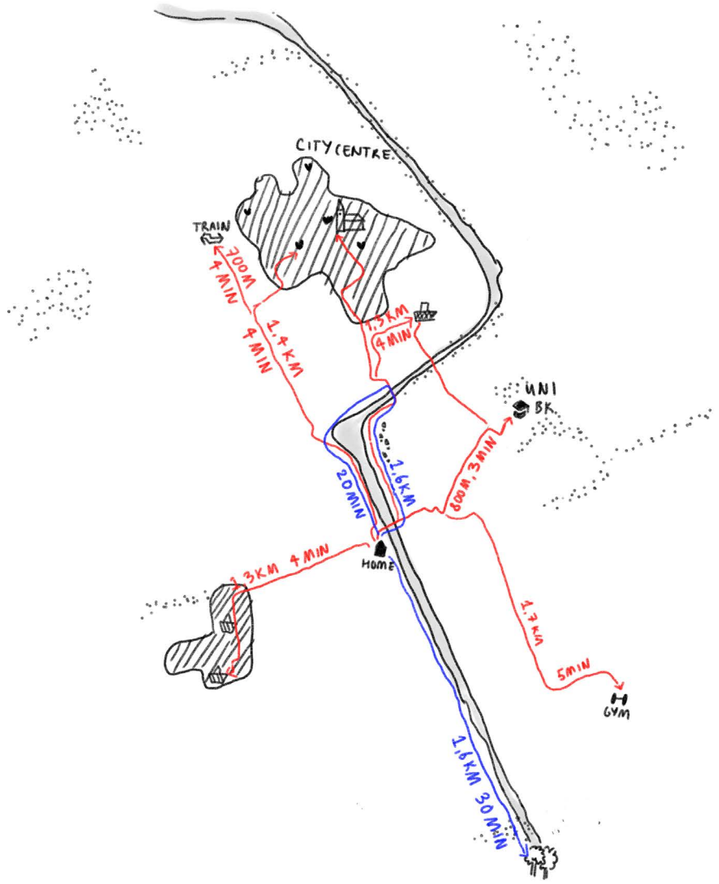


Figure 4 Soft map of my daily Activity Space in Delft (by Author)

Reflecting on these different walking habits in various contexts, I questioned why I rarely walk in my daily life in Delft, even though I have experienced how it can be enjoyable in many ways. Is it because very little people in my surroundings walk, as everyone cycles? Or does walking feel like an inefficient use of my time, which seems like a contradiction, as a walk might actually provide relaxation in busy times? Or do I not like where I can walk, as my surroundings do not offer impressive mountains? Or is the presumably bad, weather to blame?

These are the questions that kicked off this project about walking, slowing down and spatial planning, in the Netherlands.

1. Problematization.

1.1. Emergence of fast paced life

1.2. Urgency

1.3. Problem statement

1.4. Research Aim?

CHAPTER SUMMARY.

Life in the twenty-first century moves at a quicker pace than it ever has. The acceleration of our society spans from transportation and production, to communication and changes in fashion, overall quickening the relative rapidity or density of our experiences, perceptions, meanings and activities (Garhammer, 2002; Gleick, 1999; Levine & Norenzayan, 1999; Rosa, 2003, 2013).

It manifests in our everyday lives, as the time we spent on one activity contracts, as we consumer faster and faster, visible in the phenomena of fast food and fast fashion. We hurry and multi-task, all to save time.

Moreover, fast paced life manifests in our spaces, designed to quickly transport us from function to function, which are separated in space in the name of efficiency.

Lastly, the high speed of live manifests in our societal values. We deem faster to be better, to be progress, to be more profit. The newest phone is for example always faster, and the old model was disregarded as it was becoming too slow.

There is an urgency to change our ways of life, as this fast pace of life proves to be unsustainable, as it is unhealthy, exceeds planetary boundaries and sustains injustices.

Figure 5

Pace of life (based on: Garhammer, 2002; Gleick, 1999; Knox, 2005;Levine & Norenzayan, 1999; Mayer & Knox, 2009; Rosa, 2003, 2013; Sullivan & Gershuny, 2017)

1.1. Emergence of fast paced life

Fast paced life is interlinked with many systems, values and habits that are evident almost everywhere around the globe, seen as the “normal” ways-of-doing. These include, but are not limited to, principles of capitalism and processes of optimalization, specialization, intensification, globalization, commodification, mechanization, automatization and digitalization. These are all lead by the idea that faster means better, the newest phone or car is for example always the fastest. Faster means progress, faster means more profit.

These systems, values and habits, have developed throughout human history, as the image on the right displays.

Especially the industrial revolution contributed to the speed of life increasing, as it closely tied with the rise of capitalism and technological innovations. These advancements allowed for more speed in transportation and production, whilst the profit-driven system urged production, transportation, sales to optimize further, and consumption to never stagnate (Garhammer, 2002; Mayer & Knox, 2009; Rosa, 2003). The lead to the commodification of time, transforming it into something that needs to be spent as efficiently as possible. These principles of time-use guided all activities, and not only intensified the newly introduced 8 hour work days, but our free time along with it (Rosa, 2003, 2013; Sullivan & Gershuny, 2017).

Inventions in the field of telecommunication, digitalization and transport of modern society accelerated the speed of life in a similar way, providing more possibilities of optimalization and intensification of processes. Increased speed in communication and transport nullified distance which further increased globalization as well, leading to homogenization, as the connectedness

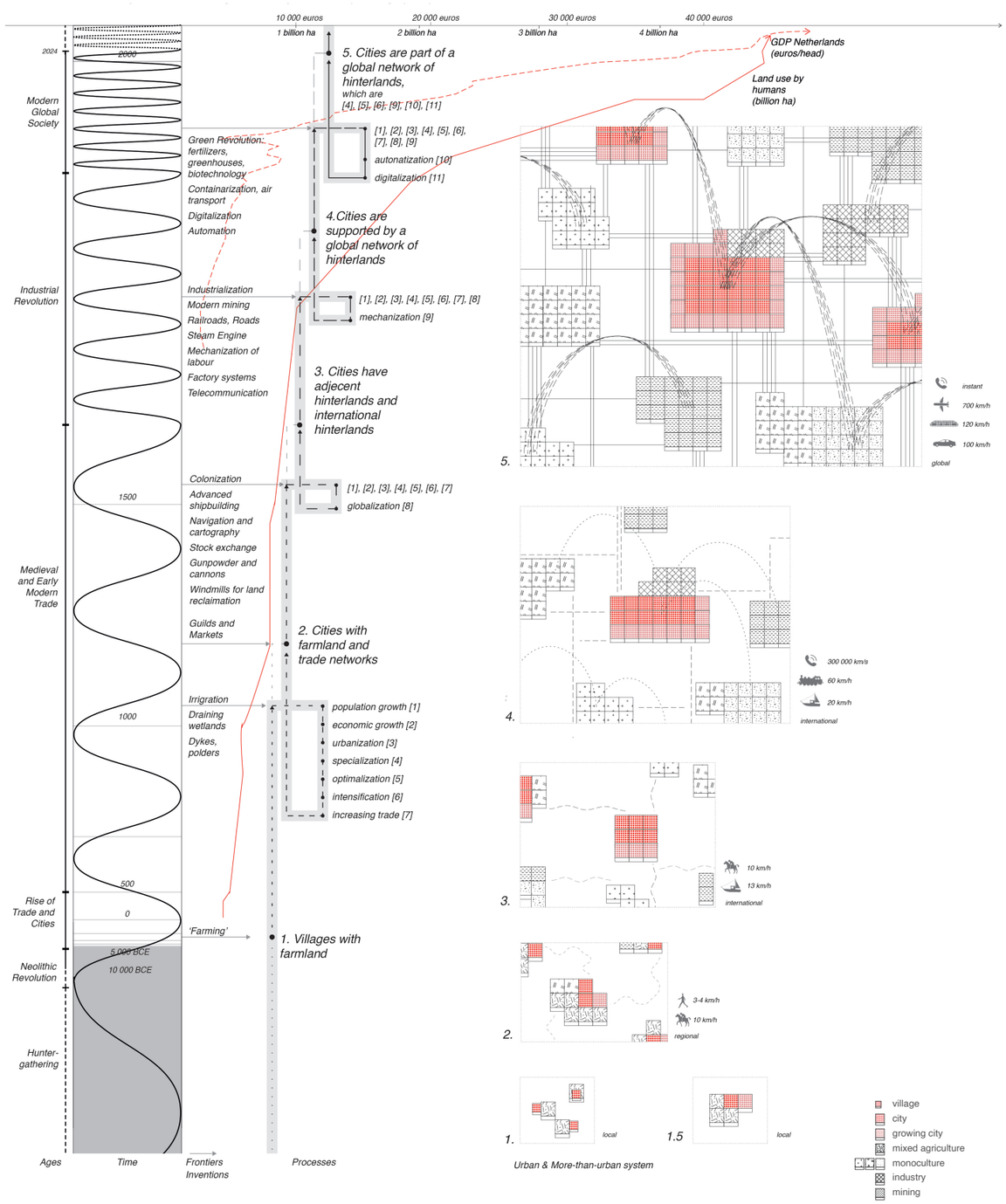


Figure 6
Emergence of fast paced life (based on: Garhammer, 2002, Gleick, 1999; Knox, 2005;Levine & Norenzayan, 1999; Mayer & Knox, 2009; Rosa, 2003, 2013; Sullivan & Gershuny, 2017)

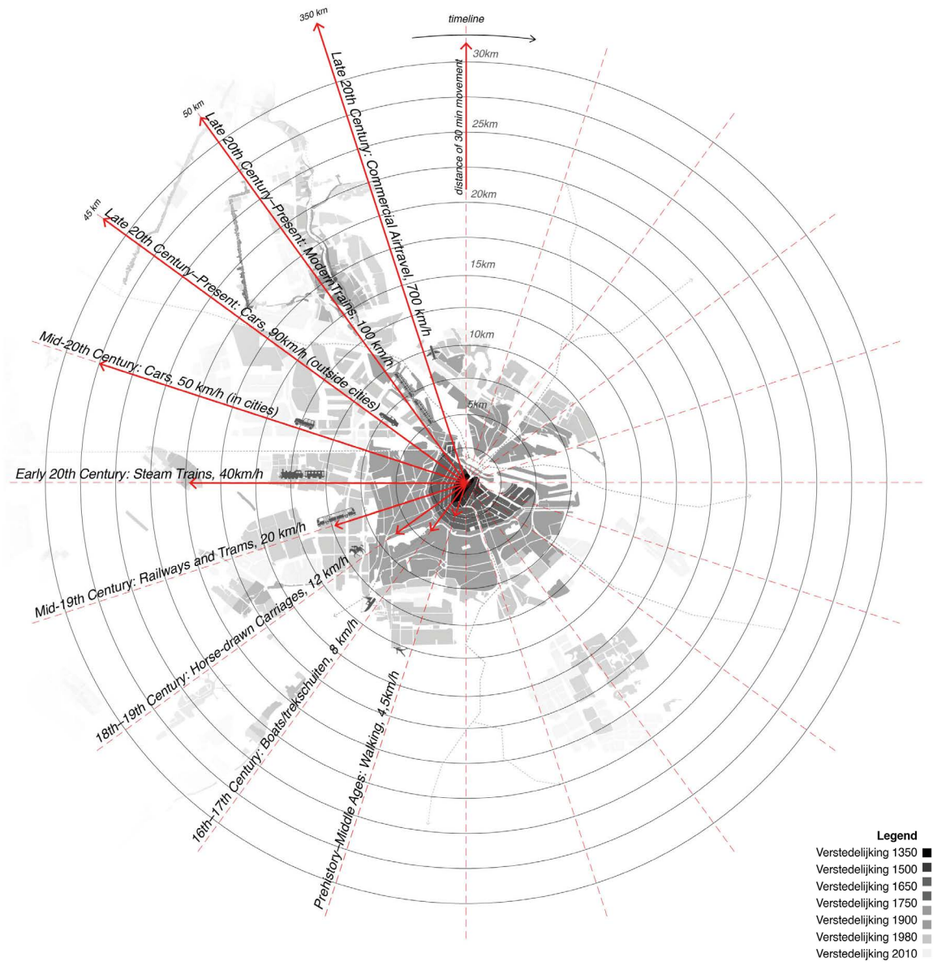


Figure 7 Growth of Amsterdam and travel times with new, faster modes of transport

spreads global habits of fast consumerism, replacing local characteristics of communities (Mayer & Knox, 2009). Globally, our day-to-day lives, along with the places we live, become more and more similar.

The demands of efficiency and moving fast are also evident in our spaces. Cities of modernity have separated spaces for different functions, such as living and working, in the name of efficiency, and delegate lots of their space to fast mobility like cars (Knox, 2005; Mayer & Knox, 2009). Additionally, this systems seems to sustain itself, as spaces are now set up divided in functions separated functions, with vast distances between them, which are, conveniently, interlinked by car infrastructure. This is visible in the explosive growth of cities, such as Amsterdam. Amsterdam expanded in line with the technological advancements in faster transport which allowed for bigger and bigger cities to exist, and even merge into metropolitan areas, perceived as one city (see Figure on the right). Similar patterns are evident on a global scale as well, where a growing specialized, interconnected system emerges.

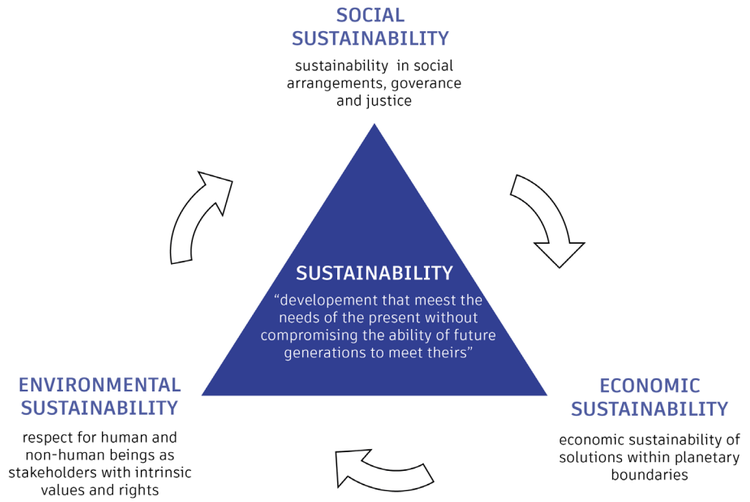


Figure 8 Sustainability (based on: Rawls, 1971)

1.2. Urgency

The previously discussed developments, among others, lead to the modern-day fast paced society, where most people live fast, hurried lives, which is unsustainable. The system does not meet the needs of the present, and it compromises the abilities of future generations the meet their own needs (Rawls, 1971).

The poor mental and physical wellbeing of individuals signifies that the needs of the present are not met. The abilities of future generations to meet their needs are endangered by the fast paced system as sustaining it exceeds the planetary boundaries. Moreover, not merely seeing sustainability as environmental and economic, but also social, it is evident that growing inequalities, socio-spatial divisions and unequal access to the current system threaten the sustainability of our way of life as well.

This calls for urgent changes, as the fast paced society proves to be unsustainable, compromising public wellbeing and breaching planetary limits.

The nature of these problems and their relation to the fast paced system is examined in-depth in the following paragraphs.

Wellbeing:

Individually, the pressures of productivity and feelings time-crunch of fast-paced life lead to chronic stress and restlessness (Garhammer, 2002; Levine & Norenzayan, 1999). Leading a fast and global social life can also take its toll mentally, as local and social ties loosen and connections less meaningful and real-life based. The fast pace of life contributes to physical inactivity as well, as technological advancements in transport and telecommunication take you everywhere you need, while you sit in a car or behind a desk, there is no need to move (Ingold, 2021).

This low physical and mental wellbeing proses a real emergency. The WHO describes a global pandemic of inactivity (World Health Organization, 2024). In the Netherlands, for example, currently only 45% of the population (aged 4 and over) meets the guidelines for physical activity (2.5 hours of movements throughout one week), which is less than years prior (Gezondheidsraad, 2017; RIVM, 2023b). Inactivity is strongly linked to our habits of uninterrupted sitting (Lieberman, 2021). In 2023, the Dutch population (aged 4 and up), sat on average 9 hours each day, a number that slowly increases each year (Sporten en Bewegen in Cijfers, 2023). We sit the most during worktime, often the full 8 hour workday (TNO, 2023). The time we spent seated in our free time adds on average 3,4 hours to our daily total, and sitting during transportation adds on average another hour (TNO, 2023). Inactivity is linked to many modern health conditions such as heart diseases, diabetes and certain types of cancer, and even factors into a shorter life expectancy (Lee et al., 2012).

Sitting and inactivity (NL)

9h/day
work: 2-8h
free time: 3,5h
commute: 1h
(2023)

55%
does not meet the physical activity guidelines
(2023)

CHD's
heart diseases

Figure 9

Sitting and inactivity in NL (based on: CBS, 2024; Gezondheidsraad, 2017; RIVM, 2023a, 2023b; Sporten en Bewegen in Cijfers, 2023; Vrij Nederland, 2024) (images: Brickley & Vector points, the noun project)

Mental wellbeing & GZZ (NL)

40%
feelings of anxiety & depression
(2023)

20%
burn-out at work
(2023)

100.000
people waiting for mntal health care
(2024)

Figure 10

Mental Wellbeing in NL (based on: CBS, 2024; Gezondheidsraad, 2017; RIVM, 2023a, 2023b; Sporten en Bewegen in Cijfers, 2023; Vrij Nederland, 2024) (images: Prosymbols, the noun project)

Mental wellbeing poses a similar crisis. About 40% of Dutch people over the age of 12 experiences feelings of anxiety and depression, which is a 4% increase compared to ten years ago (CBS, 2024a). Moreover, 19% Of employees in the Netherlands (over the age of 15) experience burn-out (RIVM, 2023a). Especially young people are increasingly experiencing emerging mental health issues due to work-related stress (TNO & Ministry of Social Affairs and Employment, 2023). Simultaneously, the mental health care sector (the 'GZZ') deals with a major shortage in capacity, leading to their waiting lists increasing from 30.000 to 100.000 people between 2017 and 2024 (Vrij Nederland, 2024). The Dutch inhabitants also

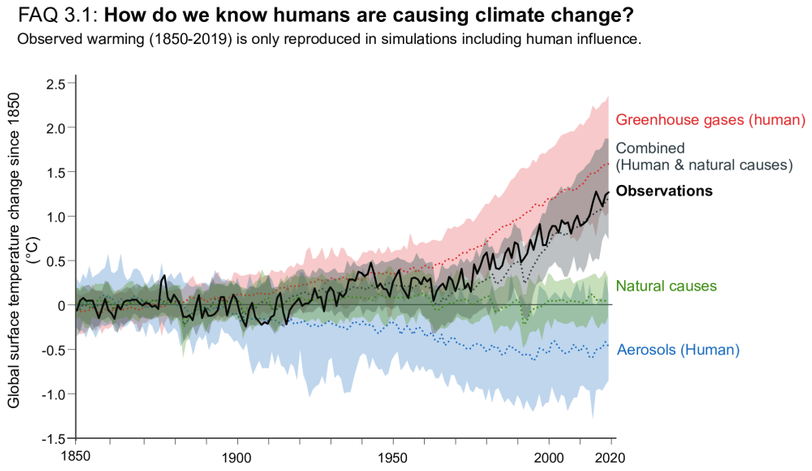


Figure 11

Trends of global warming and human activities (IPCC (2021), retrieved from: https://www.ipcc.ch/report/ar6/wg1/figures/chapter-3/faq-3-1-figure-1)

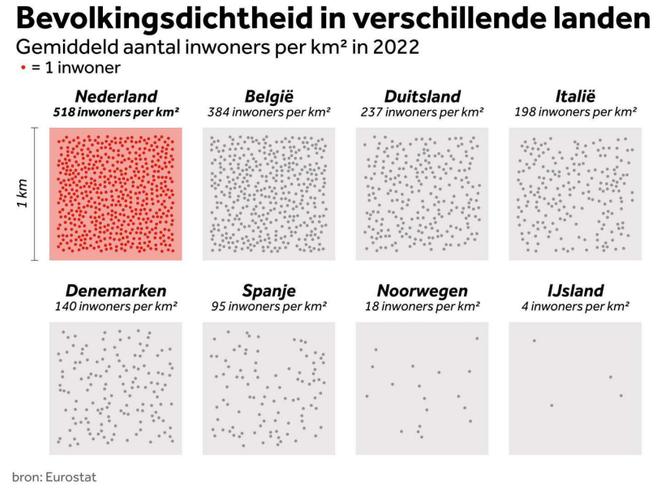


Figure 13

Population density of the Netherlands compared to other countries in Europe (Eurostat (2023), retrieved from: https://nos.nl/artikel/2533325-vandaag-is-het-zover-18-miljoen-mensen-op-dit-hele-kleine-stukje-aarde)

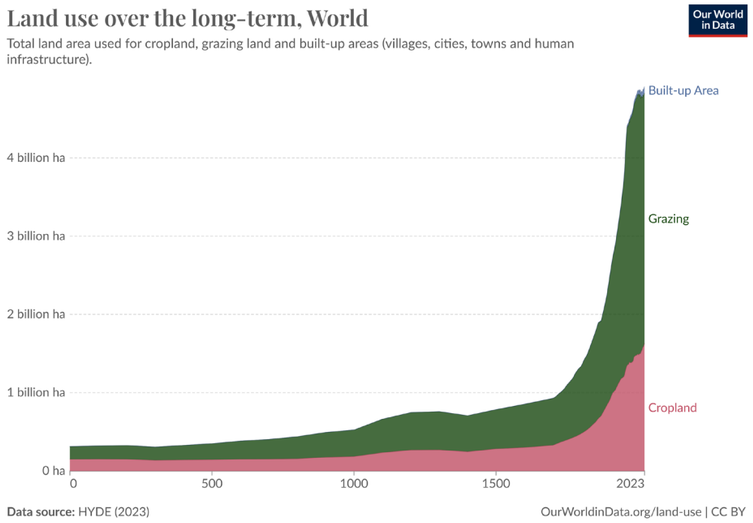


Figure 12

Trends in the world-wide land use humans (HYDE (2023), retrieved from: https://ourworldindata.org/land-use)

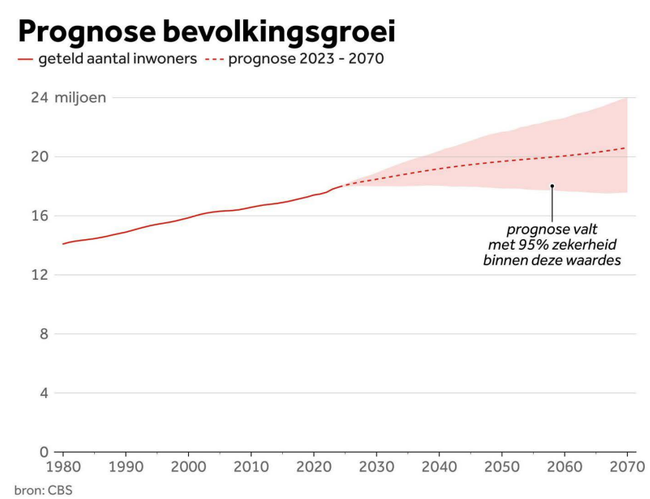


Figure 14

Projected population growth of Netherlands (CBS (2024), retrieved from: https://nos.nl/artikel/2533325-vandaag-is-het-zover-18-miljoen-mensen-op-dit-hele-kleine-stukje-aarde)

see these problems of wellbeing themselves, identifying mental health, stress, obesity and diabetes as the biggest health problems their country is facing, with men prioritizing the physical health over mental issues, compared to women prioritizing mental health (Ispos, 2022).

Planetary boundaries:

The main actors of the profit-driven consumption, production, communications and transport in a trans-national industry, the “fast world”, put enormous pressures on the planet as well, driving it into its current state of a climate emergency (Mayer & Knox, 2009; Moore, 2014). According to the concept of the ‘Capitocene’ this even marks a new geological epoch, evident in the significant alteration the Earth’s surface, atmosphere, and ecosystems by human activities, mainly in early industrialized countries or the ‘the Global North’ (Brenner & Katsikis, 2020; Moore, 2014).

The IPCC has reported thoroughly on these effects of human behaviour on the state of crisis of our planet (Figure 11).

These effects are not merely greenhouse gas emissions, but also vast amounts of land necessary to support our lifestyles in the Capitocene (Figure 12).

Especially in a densely populated, small country such as the Netherlands, this presents a real challenge.

Figure 15 Problem statement

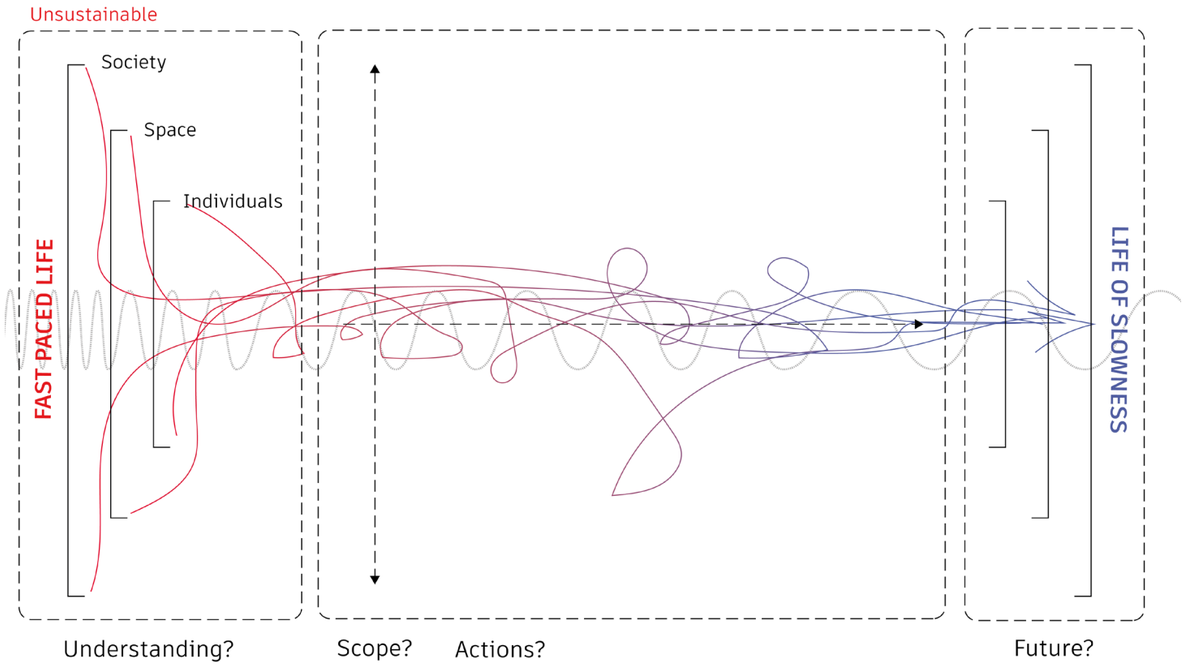


Figure 16 From problem to research aim

1.3. Problem statement

To conclude, fast paced life proves to be unsustainable, as it detrimental to both our, and the planets wellbeing. It contributes to alarming numbers of inactivity and chronic stress, as well the global climate emergency, with its increasing land use and emissions related to human activities, and injustices between the 'slow' and 'fast', across global, regional and individual scales.

This project will address these problems of a fast paced life, with spatial planning and design.

However, as the high speed of life manifests in our habits, our spaces and society as a whole, a change should incorporate alternative ways-of-doing, as well as different values and new uses and designs for our spaces, and untangle the web of their complicated relationships of causations, correlations and co-evolution.

1.4. Research Aim?

In addressing this problem, this project will propose planning and design strategies to move towards slowness, posed as an alternative to our unsustainable fast paced life. This is presents a very broad research scope. Therefore, the project proposes walking as a part of this alternative future, and contributor to slowness.

However, before a methodology can be proposed, some preliminary questions need to be answered, for example:

A: What does it mean to adopt 'slower' lifestyles?

B: Does walking contribute to 'slowness' and in what ways?

Moreover, as this involves changing both how we live our daily lives, and addressing our society-wide beliefs in fastness and its related institutions, another question arises:

C: How is space and spatial design and planning related to how we live (our behaviours, habits, etc.) and our societal beliefs as a whole?

To answer these questions, a literature review of theories around slowness, behaviour change and walking is presented in the following chapter.

2. Theory.

2.1. Slowness
2.2. Practice Theory.
2.3. Walking.
2.4. Conclusions and Conceptual framework
2.5. Scientific and Societal Relevance

CHAPTER SUMMARY.

The in-depth exploration of walking, slowness and practice theory provides the research with a narrowed research scope, methodologies, suggested outcomes, steps towards an approach and of course, further questions which will shape the thesis.

The projects aim of Slowness has been refined, focusing on individual wellbeing and post-growth futures. Walking will be employed to address these aims. Its diverse benefits and pleasures present a holistic antidote to fast-paced life, while exemplifying principles of slowness, by creating desirable alternative futures, of Post-Growth and wellbeing.

Walking, therefore, contributes to the transition towards a Post-Growth future; however, it does not encompass the full institutional changes required. Both wellbeing and Post-Growth are understood as ongoing processes rather than fixed end states, calling for flexible and open-ended outcomes, with walking positioned as a means, not the end goal in itself.

Practice Theory will aid in understanding the complicated relationships between societal values, space and individual lives, and how we can change these. This calls for not merely spatial, but also social and political interventions, with attention towards diverse social and spatial sub-contexts. Diverse walking preferences and habits and Cittaslow environments are identified as interesting sub contexts to explore further. Moreover, It exemplifies how individual actions can contribute to the aimed-for, big institutional shift. Lastly, Practice Theory suggests looking for ‘change points’ in daily life, which hold opportunities to introduce slower practices, and leave faster ones behind.

The project will focus on promoting one practice, walking. Walking will not be romanticized. By considering diverse, ‘lived experiences’, in daily life, the project does not solely promote more walking, but also pleasurable and fun walking experiences. These will be explored by employing walking as a research method, where the project’s methods will be aligned with its aim of slowing down.

Figure 17

The high way, Route 66 and Radiator Springs (Pixar (2006), Retrieved from https://www.takefiveaday.com/2019/03/01/disney-pixar-cars-radiator-springs-map-wallpaper/

quickly from A to B

enjoy the ride

Figure 18

Cars driving route 66 and highway 40 (Pixar (2006), Retrieved from https://www.uzhafashion.shop/?ggcid=2377477

2.1. What does it mean to adopt 'slower' lifestyles?

The opposite of the fast paced society is slowness, which seeks to improve the quality of life. Slowing down enhances our experiences by intently focusing on various stimuli and diving into the richness of an experience (Csikszentmihalyi, 2002; Garhammer, 2002). A good example of speeding up and slowing down is the Pixar movie Cars (2006). In the film the introduction of a fast highway has caused a once-thriving rural town along the scenic Route 66, Radiator Springs, to decline into an insignificant ghost town, as it got bypassed to save 10 minutes of driving. The movie ends in many of the humanoid cars actively choosing to drive the slower Route 66, to enjoy the beautiful scenery, stop along the way and have a good time together.

Two major social movements promoting the philosophy of Slowness are the Slow Food movement, and the Cittaslow movement, a direct descendant of the Slow Food movement (Mayer & Knox, 2009). These explain the principles of Slowness further.

Slow Food movement

A notable example of life speeding up and global habits spreading is fast food, and the so-called "McDonaldization of society" (Ritzer, 2004). These developments contributed to the founding of the Slow Food Movement in 1986, initiated in Italy by Carlo Petrini in response to the opening of a McDonald's restaurant in Rome's historic Piazza di Spagna (Mayer & Knox, 2009). In 1989 the Slow Food Manifesto was published, advocating for a rediscovery of flavours of regional cooking, while condemning the degrading effects of fast food (Petrini, 2001; "Slow Food Manifesto," 1989). The philosophy behind it is that of slowness, 'tranquillo': unhurried, calm and restorative for body and soul, while defending the "right to pleasure" (Mayer & Knox, 2009; Petrini, 2001; "Slow Food Manifesto," 1989).

Cittaslow

The Cittaslow (or Città Slow, or Città Lente, or Slow Cities) movement bring a lens of slowness and quality into space, resisting the high paced society and "placelessness" that comes with it (Mayer & Knox, 2009). The movement started with Paolo Saturnini, who organized a meeting with three other mayors in Greve-in-Chianti, a Tuscan hill town. During this meeting, they defined what might characterize a slow city (Cittaslow; Mayer & Knox, 2009). Their principles aimed at creating calmer physical environments that are healthy and free of pollution, which can be fostered by new technologies. Additionally, they stated to conserve local aesthetic traditions and inspire local crafts, cuisine and production. Lastly, the importance of raising citizen awareness of a slower pace of life and sharing knowledge and experience on the topic were emphasized. These principles have now evolved into a charter which consists of a 54-point indicator system, which are linked to action plans. The principles are used to judge and certify cities as official slow cities. Usually, the initiative to become a slow city comes from the grass-roots level of mayors or local business (Mayer & Knox, 2009).
In 2001, the first 28 official slow cities were acknowledged, which were mostly located in Italy, where the movement was founded (Cittaslow). Now, in 2024, there are 10 located in the Netherlands: Alphen-Chaam (Brabant), Borger-Odoorn (Drente), Echt-Susteren (Limburg), Eijsden-Margraten (Limburg), Gulpen-Wittem (Limburg), Heerde (Gelderland), Midden-Delfland (Zuid-Holland), Peel en Maas (Limburg), Vaals (Limburg) and Westerwolde (Groningen) (Cittaslow Nederland, 2024). From the current list of slow cities, we can conclude that most of these "slow cities" are actually slow villages. Additionally, they are mostly situated in the rural areas of the Netherlands. This aligns with the principles of the Cittaslow movement, as for example having less than 50 000 inhabitants is one of the official characteristic of a slow city (Mayer & Knox, 2009).
The Cittaslow movement is particularly relevant to this project, as it brings the concept of slowness into space. However, the range of applicability and the inclusivity of the Slow Cities concept can be questioned. Especially the fact that slow cities only have populations of under 50,000 inhabitants and are mostly positioned in rural areas, which are conditions that might naturally lend themselves for slower living. And should qualitative, healthy environments not be strived towards everywhere, especially in environments with more urban characteristics, where slowness is often more scarce?

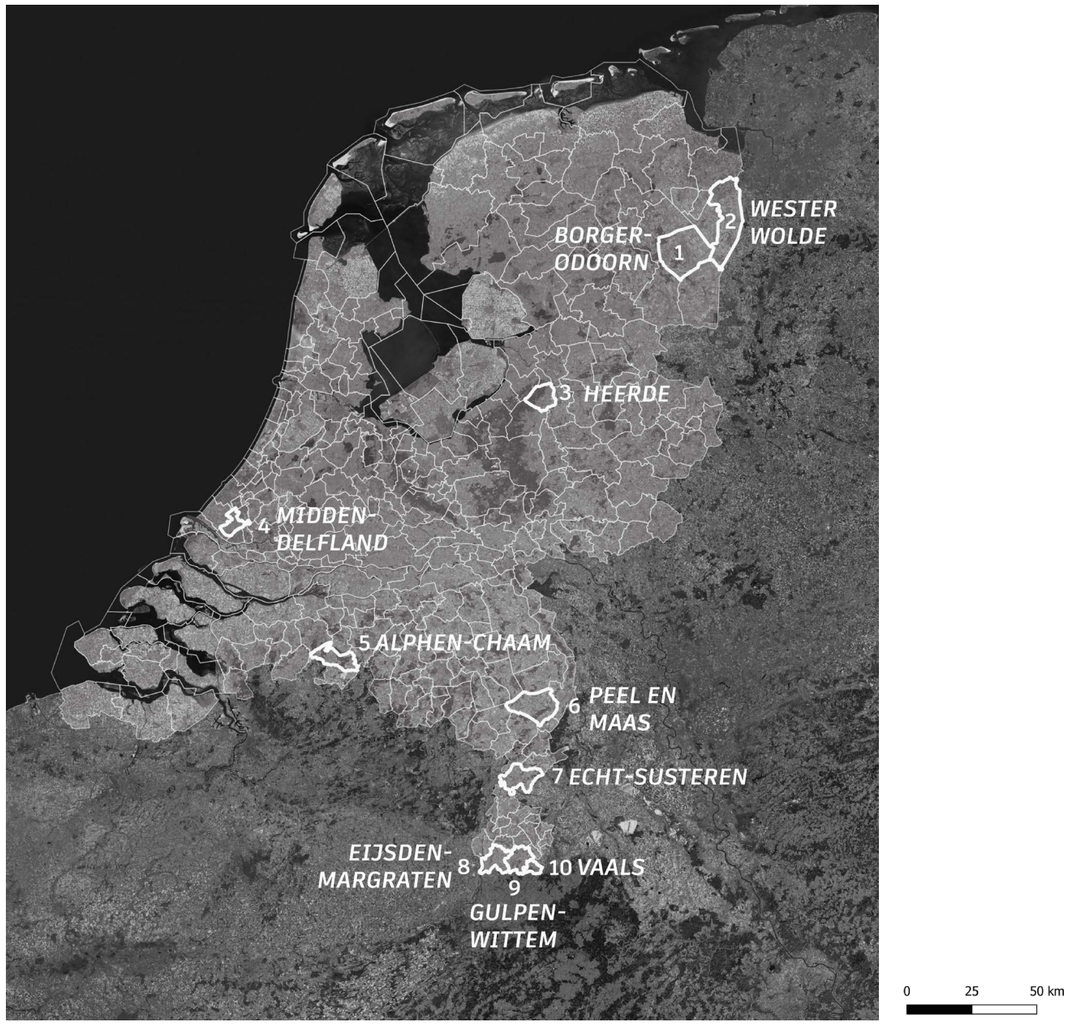


Figure 19 Slow cities in the Netherlands

To conclude, 'Slowness' introduces new principles, such as the aims of quality, health and locality. With it, it suggests new ways-of-life, like eating seasonal, rich foods, and new spaces, the slow cities, a concept which can still expand in its applicability and the inclusivity. With its principles it even questions and presents an alternative to current societal values, such the capitalistic pursuit of (economic) growth as the only path to prosperity. Therefore, a change towards Slowness will encompass an institutional shift, away from capitalism, towards new systems which do not exceed planetary boundaries, such as 'Post-growth', and focus on quality and wellbeing.

Post-growth and wellbeing

For over half a century, the global economy has been defined by a pursuit for economic growth, which is seen as the only path to prosperity (Philipsen, 2015; Savini et al., 2022). However, the exponentially growing pressures this capitalistic pursuit of economic growth places on the earth and our social and individual well-being, illustrates the need for a systemic, institutional change, as seen in Chapter 1. The 'Limits to Growth' report of the Club of Rome, published in 1972, set the first parameters for the critique on the endless pursuit of growth, establishing five factors that determine and limit growth (population increase, industrial output, agricultural production, pollution generation and non-renewable resource depletion) (Meadows et al., 1972). The theory of 'Post-Growth' presents an alternative for growth, stating growth is not inevitable, ceaseless capital accumulation is not a condition for a "good life". It focuses on quality, instead of quantity (Savini et al., 2022). Post-Growth is not about "less", but about "different". It encourages alternatives: "different activities, different forms and uses of energy, different relations, different gender roles, different allocations of time between paid and non-paid work and different relations with the non-human world" (D'Alisa et al., 2015, p. 4). Which together create new systems that can thrive without growth. The concept of 'Degrowth' is related, but focuses on actively reducing economic activity.

Tim Jackson (2009, 2021) and Kate Soper (2020), both advocate for Post-Growth and both condemn hedonistic lifestyles based on consumerism. Soper proposes an alternative form of hedonism, where limiting consumption does not work against human pleasure and desire (Soper, 2020). This makes Post-Growth not a punishment, but a desirable future.

In the practice of spatial planning and design, Post-Growth initiatives are not blueprints of no-growth futures, but rather suggestions of alternatives of futures, still a "work-in-progress" and transformation (Savini et al., 2022). This approach acknowledges uncertainties, tensions and contradictions of stepping out of the pro-growth paradigms that have been embedded in the practice for centuries (Savini et al., 2022). It is about planning and designing with contrite hope: genuine, wilful action, arising from informed discontent with the present situation (Levitas, 1990).

The project will approach wellbeing in the broad framework of 'Positive Health', as proposed by Machteld Huber. Positive Health is an alternative to defining health by illnesses and their cures as healthcare often does, and it even goes beyond merely mental and physical wellbeing. Instead, it focuses on people, their resilience, self-management and what makes their life meaningful. Positive health states that health is characterised by quality of life, sense of meaning and purpose, participation in society, mental state, bodily functions and day-to-day operations (Institute for Positive Health, 2020).

Multiple views on wellbeing acknowledge it as a process as well, not an end state. This shifts away from a components-based view of wellbeing, and aligns with seeing a post-growth future as a process, not a project. Rybråten et al. (2019) advocate for a view of wellbeing as a relational and situated process, involving connections between people, places, and particular times, which are in constant change. Moreover, it is a process towards wellbeing and pleasure, that can create a desirable post-growth future.

Conclusion

To conclude, 'Slowness' introduces new principles, such as the aims of quality, health and locality. With it, it suggests new ways-of-life, like eating seasonal, rich foods, and new spaces, the slow cities, a concept which can still expand in its applicability and the inclusivity. With its principles it even questions and presents an alternative to current societal values, such the capitalistic pursuit of (economic) growth as the only path to prosperity. Therefore, a change towards Slowness will encompass an institutional shift, away from capitalism, towards new systems which do not exceed planetary boundaries, such as 'Post-growth', and focus on quality and wellbeing.

Overall, Post-Growth and wellbeing theories clarify the project's goal of Slowness: to propose actions that support a shift towards a desirable, alternative future rooted in slowness, Post-Growth, and wellbeing. As the problem statement highlights, this transition must address complex links between individual habits, spatial design, and the societal norms of fast-paced life. This is where Practice Theory will offer support.

2.2. How is space and spatial design and planning related to how we live and our societal beliefs as a whole?

Practice Theory provides a holistic, grounded and broad framework for understanding behaviour change, moving beyond approaches focused on individuals, like nudging. Instead of viewing behaviour as driven solely by rational self-interest, motivation, or habits, this theory examines the social and material contexts in which behaviours occur (Shove, 2014). A new approach is essential, as current policy efforts addressing the challenges of sustainability and wellbeing, often centred on encouraging better individual choices, have shown limited successes (Shove, 2014).

Practice Theory offers an alternative by focusing on practices, routinized activities and actions, both physical and mental (Schatzki, 2002; Schatzki, 1996; Shove et al., 2012). A practice is what individuals do. Practices persist because individuals routinely engage in them, reinforcing their continuity (Heisserer & Rau, 2015). The collective performance and reproduction of practice in everyday life shapes our social life, our behaviours (Shove, 2014).

Immaterial context.

Practices reflect our values, shared goals, current cultures and norms, such as the pursuit of comfort (Shove, 2014). Similarly, immaterial contexts also shape and constrain practices, by what the collective perceives as a normal and acceptable way to live (Shove, 2014). The emphasis on the specific sociotechnical contexts of practices highlights how they are historically situated and also co-evolve over time (Schatzki, 2002). Practices that are commonplace today and considered normal, would have been illogical or even unimaginable several decades ago, showcasing the ongoing evolution of everyday life. Understanding the dynamics between practices and their immaterial context is crucial for addressing the stability of practices and identifying pathways for long-lasting transformations.

Material context.

Similarly, practices reflect, are constrained by and co-evolve with our environments and material context (Schatzki, 2002; Shove, 2014). Practices and their immaterial contexts shape how people interpret and influence their environment, while the environments also provide the infrastructure that makes certain practices possible (Heisserer & Rau, 2015; Schatzki, 2002). Practices and corresponding ideas about standards of living are deeply embedded within the ways infrastructures are designed and governed, as for example the layout of a city or building determines which practices can or should occur (Shove, 2014). As Churchill expressed in his speech to the House of Commons on October 28, 1943, “We shape our buildings and afterwards our buildings shape us.”

Recruit practitioners.

To conclude, Practice Theory highlights that meaningful change requires reconfiguring our daily practices. It shifts the focus from individual ‘consumers’ to the systems and contexts underpinning daily practices, including an comprehensive range of material and immaterial factors that shape and sustain them. This implies that lasting, robust change cannot be achieved through technical solutions alone; it also necessitates changes in values, institutional reform, and legislation (Shove, 2014). This addresses the complex relationships between individual ways-of-doing, space and society as a whole, highlighted in the problem statement.

The theory views individuals as active practitioners who reproduce practices based on their understanding of the world and knowledge, contrasting with views of individuals as passive consumers (Heisserer & Rau, 2015). This shifts the project aims towards recruiting practitioners for alternative, slower, desirable practices. The project will acknowledge that practices have lives of their own. As they are reproduced by groups of people, differences in localised instances occur, as people make them

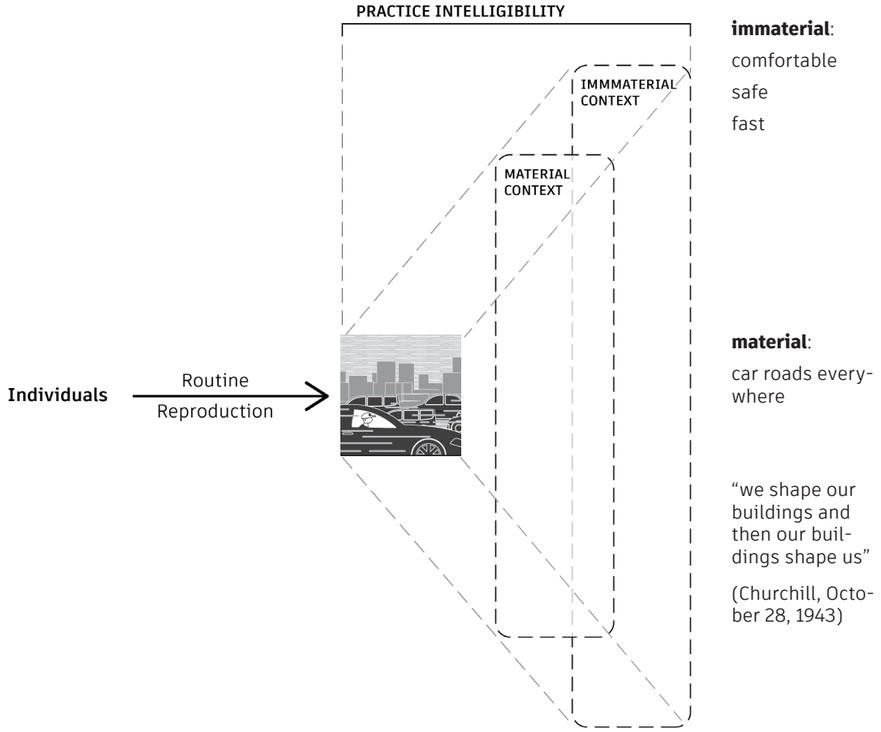


Figure 20 Practice Theory (based on: (Heisserer & Rau, 2015; Schatzki, 2002; Schatzki, 1996; Shove et al., 2012; Shove, 2014; Watson et al., 2020)

their own (Shove, 2014).This process of co-evolution sustains practices and keeps them alive, relevant and desirable (Shove, 2014).

However, such change is difficult. What a group perceives as ‘natural’ or ‘sensible’ is often unexamined and happens unaware (Shove, 2014). Shifting norms on a global scale, where ideas of success and normality circulate freely, complicates this process (Shove, 2014).

An in-depth examination of the concepts around practices is essential to propose actions for change, which address the complicated challenges Practice Theory reveals.

Practice Intelligibility

The Performance of a practice is what people are doing, the sets of actions that belong to a practice, which we see as logical to do (Heisserer & Rau, 2015). For example, if someone commutes to work by car, this implies the driver follows the road, and indicates when they turn. This performance is guided by rules (such as traffic laws), shared understandings and ‘teleoaffective structures’, the customary ways of doing things (Heisserer & Rau, 2015). The guiding principles are related to the previously discussed material and immaterial context, for example supported by purposes, beliefs, emotions, and interpretations. These elements are referred to as a ‘Practice-as-entity’ (Shove, 2014). For a commute to work, these include the norm of everyone going to work, and shared values of wanting an efficient, safe and comfortable journey.

Following these principles, a commute car is viewed as practical, safe and comfortable. This is then the logical thing to do, especially compared to other options, like cycling, taking public transport or walking, which might not even be consciously considered. This highlights the importances of relations between different practices, the ‘social site’ (Heisserer & Rau, 2015). Fostering change

should consider relationships between practices, reshape them to have alternative, slower practices be the logical choice.

Altogether, these aspects of what makes sense to do and how it is done, are referred to as 'practice intelligibility', which is part of the practice, not just a context in which the practice is performed (Heisserer & Rau, 2015). It determines what is logical for a person does next in the flow of actions (Schatzki, 2002). A difference in practice intelligibility can therefore also explain a difference in practice performance.

This approach to practices presents an opportunity to change what we do.

Change points.

Change points are moments in everyday routines where different courses of action can be taken, and slower practices can be introduced (Watson et al., 2020). The mentioned example of commuting is an example of a change point, however, looking at everything we do in daily life, there are many more change points to identify. Considering the practice intelligibility, including the material and immaterial context and social site, change initiatives can proposed, which should provide the moral and material infrastructure around which the desired practices might develop and are framed as normal, logical choices (Shove, 2014).

This is complicated, as the material and immaterial context are involved both as the specific socio-technical context in which change initiatives are enacted, and as the institutions and structures they try to change (Shove, 2014). For this project, these entail the status-quo of values, spatial configurations and design and other aspects daily life in the Netherlands.

Additionally, in different sub-contexts, the probabilities of encountering or participating in practices are unequal. Sub-contexts can be divisions between groups of people, such as differences in age, gender, social class and beliefs and by spatial regions, such as the differences between rural or urban areas (Heisserer & Rau, 2015; Shove, 2014). Behaviours, for example, differ between these contexts, reflecting and restricted by the local characteristics (Heisserer & Rau, 2015). Choosing for a different mode of transport in your commute might be easier when there are more options, for example in a city with a strong public transport network. Whereas in a rural area, a lower density might rule out an option such as walking. This ties together with other material and immaterial aspects, such as the normalcy of everyone owning a car in certain sub-contexts.

Lastly, the social site should be considered, including the identification of potential symbiotic as well as competitive relationships in the network of practices, considering past configurations and relationships between practices, and searching for possibilities of integrating new practices with existing ones (Harries & Rettie, 2016; Shove, 2014).

Conclusions.

Practice Theory provides both a framework to understand the complicated implications of the fast paced society, spanning daily life, space and societal values, and an approach to change, by looking for daily change points and making slower practices the logical and desirable choice. This calls for acknowledging differences across different spatial and social sub-contexts, to achieve a just transition. Addressing both material and immaterial contexts calls for combining spatial design with socio-political interventions, like policy interventions and social programs. The specific spatial and social sub-contexts which are relevant for the project should be defined in one of the first steps in the research.

However, this project scope remains broad. Therefore, the project will focus on one practice to implement and encourage, which encompass principles of Slowness and contributing to a desirable Post-growth future of wellbeing: walking.

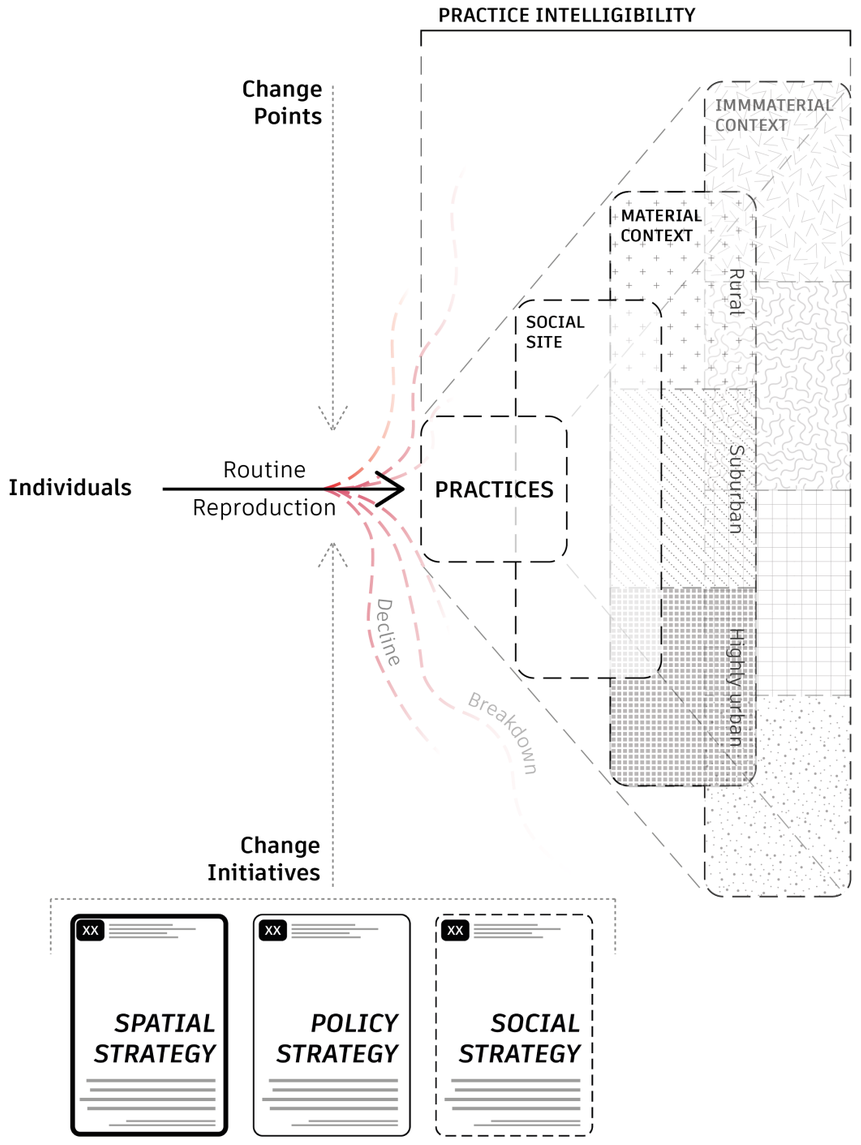


Figure 21

Change Points (based on: (Heisserer & Rau, 2015; Schatzki, 2002; Schatzki, 1996; Shove et al., 2012; Shove, 2014; Watson et al., 2020)

2.3. Does walking contribute to ‘slowness’ and in which ways?

The project focus is encouraging daily walking, associated with slowing down both physically and mentally. It is a form of leisure and transport, that does not entail consumption, contributes to wellbeing and offers diverse, pleasurable experience. It proves an interesting case, as the possibilities to walk and quality of experiences, is highly related to someone’s immediate surroundings, and thus spatial design. Additionally, walking is an accessible activity, that can be done almost everywhere, by almost everyone, presenting opportunities of an inclusive transition.

This chapter examines the theoretical foundations of walking, addressing its significance, methods, and application within this project. First, the chapter explores the potential benefits of walking in contrast to the consequences of a fast-paced society and aspects slowing down. It considers how walking can contribute to an desirable post-growth future of well-being and examines which forms of walking that foster slow, meaningful experiences. The chapter concludes by outlining an approach to walking aligned with Practice Theory to guide this project.

Benefits of Walking

Physical Health

Walking is an accessible form of increasing physical activity, which can diversify our habits monotonous sitting and addressing the global inactivity pandemic. It aligns with humans’ evolutionary tendency to conserve energy, a big barrier to increasing physical activity, as waling requires endurance rather than power or speed, which is what humans are biologically suited for (Lieberman, 2015; O’Mara, 2019; Selinger et al., 2015).Moreover, walking avoids the post-exercise inactivity common with more strenuous activities like running or weightlifting (O’Mara, 2019).

Mental Health

Walking is strongly linked to mental well-being, with research showing its ability to reduce depression, tension, and tiredness (Cooney et al., 2013; D’Arrigo, 2020; Harvey et al., 2017; Thayer, 1989). Walking offers meditative qualities that encourage presence and grounding (Gros, 2014). .Practices like Japanese “forest bathing” (shinrin-yoku) emphasize the therapeutic effects of walking in natural environments (Antonelli et al., 2022). Walking can also cater to different moods, from reflective walks in melancholic places, to restorative walks in nature (Hoexum, 2024b; O’Mara, 2019; Song et al., 2018). Philosopher Frédéric Gros described walking as a timeless, identity-free state:

“There is a moment when you walk several hours that you are only a body walking. Only that. You are nobody. You have no history. You have no identity. You have no past. You have no future. You are only a body walking” (Interview 24 April, 2014)

Moreover, walking with others fosters connection, which improves mental health. The synchronized movement enhances communication, a principle applied in “Walk and Talk” therapy (O’Mara, 2019; Prince-Llewellyn & McCarthy, 2024). Group walks provide a sense of shared purpose, even generating a psychological high and fostering self-reflection through anonymity in crowds (Gabriel et al., 2017; Hoexum, 2024b). Even the period of rest after walking enhances mood and provides a sense of fulfillment (Ekkekakis, 2003; O’Mara, 2019).

Thinking, Creativity, and Learning

Walking has long been praised and practices by many philosophers, from Rousseau, Nietzsche, Aristotle and Socrates to Kierkegaard, Kant and Thoreau, as a means to stimulate thought and creativity (O’Mara, 2019). Thoreau stated in his journals that “the moment my legs begin to move, my thoughts begin to flow” (19 August 1851), Rousseau even claimed “When I stop, I cease to think; my mind only works with my legs” (Rousseau & Cohen, 1953, p. 382). Additionally, walking inspired many writers and poets across time and genres, from T. S. Elliot and Virginia Woolf to Andre Breton, Edgar Allen Poe and Ray Bradbury (Beaumont, 2020).

Modern-day sciences supports this idea of walking improving thinking, creativity and even learning. Walking increases blood flow to the brain, especially to areas linked to memory and learning, enhancing problem-solving and fostering creative connections (Oppezzo & Schwartz, 2014; Solnit, 2001). The rhythm of walking induces a “flow” state that facilitates free thinking and creativity (O’Mara, 2019).Mind-wandering during walks integrates information and solves problems, balancing focus and distraction (Baird et al., 2012). Nature walks, in particular, enhance memory and thinking compared to urban walks (Berman et al., 2008). Walking with a companion adds collaborative dimensions to creativity through shared thoughts and feelings (O’Mara, 2019).

Social Benefits

The mental and cognitive benefits of walking can be strengthened by walking together. Additionally, shared walks offers profound social benefits, from deepening existing connections during shared walks to fostering community ties in organized walking groups (Ladenburg, 2020). Walking together even transform spaces into therapeutic landscapes that foster emotional support (Doughty, 2013). Walking can ease a challenging conversation, as the synchronized movement of a walk enhances connection. Moreover, casual encounters during solo walks, such as greeting a fellow walker, affirm shared humanity and provide fleeting yet meaningful connections (Hoexum, 2024a; O’Mara, 2019).

Connection to Surroundings

Unlike faster forms of travel, walking allows sensory-rich engagement—experiencing colours, textures, sounds, and smells (Ingold, 2021; Robert, 2015) It offers a human-scale interaction with space, measuring spaces based on bodily experience instead of abstractions such as meters (Ladenburg, 2020; Robert, 2015). A walk allows for qualitative exploration, rediscovering familiar surroundings and uncovering everyday wonders, or re-connecting with more-than-human inhabitants of the world, such as birds or trees (Hoexum, 2024a; Litman, 2014; Springgay & Truman, 2018). Walking also leaves a physical and social imprint on spaces, enlivening them through presence and activity (Hoexum, 2024a; Litman, 2014).

Autonomy, Agency, and Freedom

Walking can be viewed as an expression of personal freedom and autonomy, requiring no machinery or heavy infrastructures and allowing individuals to move independently and shape their own paths (Ladenburg, 2020; Robert, 2015). This freedom begins in childhood, when one learns to walk, and continues through life, enabling exploration and social engagement (Clearfield, 2011; O’Mara, 2019). However, modern trends of control and risk aversion restrict autonomy, particularly for children, teenagers, and the elderly (de Haas & Hamersma, 2019; Horton et al., 2014; Vlaar et al., 2019). Children’s independent obility, and with it their ‘roaming range’ is shrinking each generation (Vlaar et al., 2019).

Walking also empowers people to influence their environments by creating informal pathways or revitalizing public spaces (Hoexum, 2024a). De Certeau and Lefebvre even bring this into the political realm, as pedestrian-friendly environments foster individual and collective agency, reclaiming urban spaces for personal and meaningful use (Butler, 2012; De Certeau, 1984; Middleton, 2016; Milerius, 2019). This introduces an alternative form inhabiting the city, opposed to formal citizenship, with the notion of ‘right to the city’ (Butler, 2012; Middleton, 2016).

Sustainability

Walking is an environmentally sustainable mode of travel and leisure, producing no emissions, requiring minimal material or spatial resources (Chapman, 2007; European

Environment Agency, 2024; Transport and Environment, 2024). It especially offers a meaningful alternative to transportation systems, which contribute significantly to climate change (Chapman, 2007; European Environment Agency, 2024; Transport and Environment, 2024). Artist Hamish Fulton encapsulates this idea: "The only thing we should take from the landscape are photographs. The only thing we should leave are footprints" (n.d.).

Accessibility?

Walking is one of the most inclusive activities, requiring no special equipment and accessible to people of all ages and socioeconomic backgrounds. Almost everyone can participle in it, almost everywhere (Choi et al., 2007; Hart, 2009). However, promoting walking should consider groups with walking limitations, ensuring efforts are inclusive and equitable

Cittaslow and walking

The connection between walking, space and slowness proposes the question of how walking is integrated in the Cittaslow movement. For this, we will examine the Slow City Charter, which states the principles, linked to action plans, that are used to judge and certify cities as official slow cities.

Multiple versions of the slow city charter were found in literature, with several of their criteria directly mentioning walking, and criteria that influence walking indirectly, for example criteria concerning urban revitalization, accessibility for all and urban quality (Cittaslow, 2006; Cittaslow International Charter, 2012; Cittaslow International Charter, 2014).

The version of the charter from the German department for slow cities stated the need for:

> "Programs to minimize traffic and support of a pedestrian environment and alternative mobility (bike paths, public transportation, traffic calming, etc.)" Mayer and Knox (2009, pp. 27-29).

The Cittaslow International Charter (2012) of the French department elaborates this criteria, providing more guidance:

> "Plans favouring alternative mobility over private transportation and for the integration of traffic with public means of transportation and pedestrian areas (extra-urban car parks linked to public transportation, escalators, moving walkways, rail or cable installations, cycling tracks, pedestrian itineraries providing access to schools, work places, etc.)"

Most notable is the Charter shared by the Dutch delegation of the Cittaslow movement in 2014, where walking or pedestrian zones are not mentioned in the criteria, but three policies concerning cycling are mentioned:

> "Efficient cycle paths connected to public buildings
>
> Length (in kms) of the urban cycle paths created over the total of kms of urban roads
>
> Bicycle parking in interchange zones"

This questions not only the applicability across different contexts of the slow city charter, but also its comprehensiveness, especially the Dutch version, as walking is not included as a demand or action point.

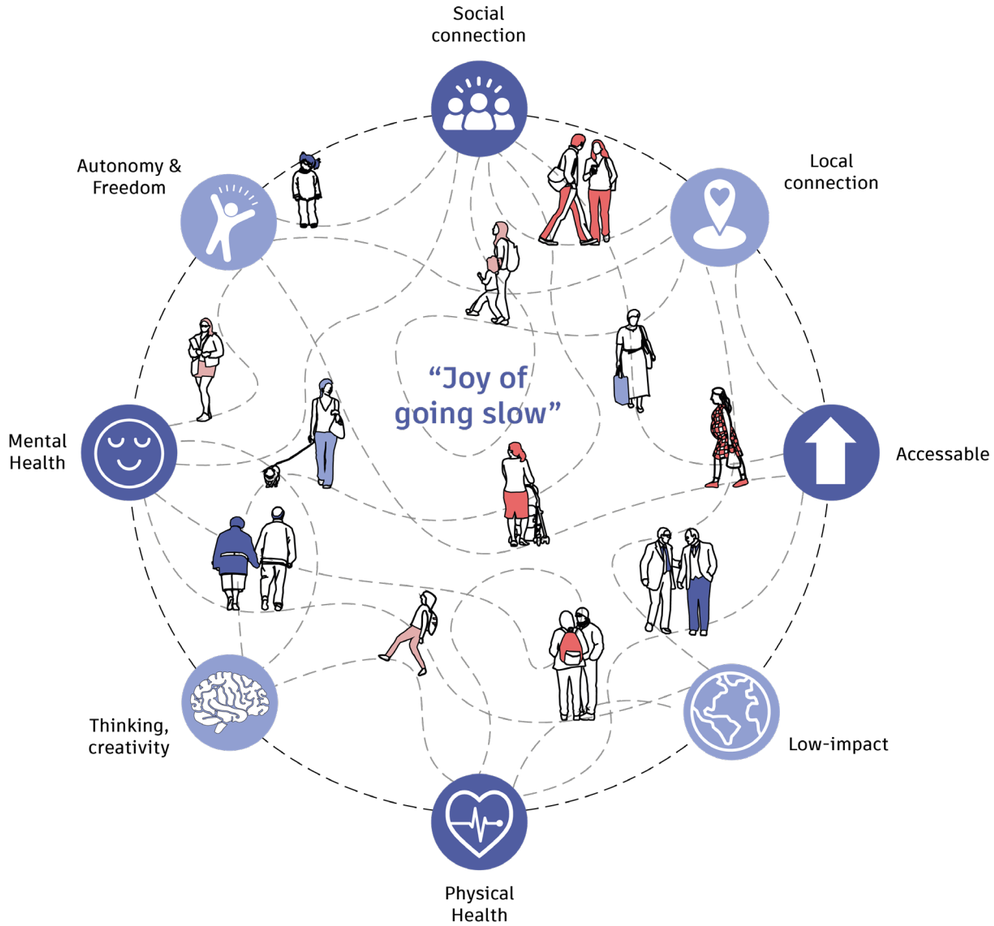


Figure 22 Walking benefits

Conclusions

Walking serves as a holistic antidote to the challenges of modern fast-paced life, addressing issues of health, climate impact, and social justice. Moreover, the diversity of walking illustrates the many pleasures walking can bring: the joy of being outside, of being together and connectivity, of creativity, of freedom, of accomplishment, of satisfaction and rest after physical extortion, to name a few. In these pleasures, possible without consumption, it exemplifies the principles of a desirable post-growth future. The act of walking, then, becomes part of the transition toward a post-growth society rooted in well-being, an alternative future where slowness becomes a source of joy. The benefits of walking, combined with the framework of 'Positive Health', are summarized in Figure 22.

As Architect Philippe Robert (2015) describes in his book 'Architrek', walking embodies "a lovely praise of slowness, marked out by halts, meanders, going back, passing from shadow to light. Walking also means quietude, slowing down, availability, relaxation" (p. 43).

Walking for slowness

To propose walking as the 'joy of going slow', questioning if all walks are slow or if certain types of walking should be promoted above others. The perception of time, the slowness, during a walk might vary, depending on several elements of the walk, such as the setting, place, duration or focus of the walk. Research indicates that for example walking uphill often leads to a perception of slower time compared to walking downhill (Chapman, 2007; O'Mara, 2019).

A long forest walk in solitude.

In walking for slowness a first suggestion might be to promote long, solo walks in nature. As previously stated, nature walks are particularly restorative, reducing stress, enhancing mood, and replenishing mental energy (Barton et al., 2009; Berman et al., 2008; Song et al., 2018). Moreover, longer walks, such as multi-day journeys, have been shown to elicit cumulative positive effects, increasing throughout the walk, such as such as increased well-being, stress reduction and even personal growth (Crust et al., 2011)

However, even a short walk, such as a 10-minute stroll around the block can also boost mood and energy levels (Thayer, 1989). Additionally, the wildness or tendedness of the green environment of nature does not affect the benefits of a nature walk, so a walk in a nearby urban park, will give the walker a sense of slowing down (Martens et al., 2011). This also seems more accessible and achievable in daily life, a walk around the block can and can be done spontaneously without planning or preparation (Hoexum, 2024b). Lastly, a walk in the city can also be revitalizing, especially when walking with a companion (Johansson et al., 2011). A walk in nature, however, does prove more beneficial in solitude (Johansson et al., 2011).

All in all, walking, offers significant benefits by countering the fast pace of modern life and promoting slowness, in all its forms, whether it is long or short, in an urban or natural environment, or solo or social. While specific factors like walking in nature or a walk with companions are particularly advantageous, we should advocate for walking in general, emphasizing its universal value. This shifts efforts of walking for slowness towards encouraging the choice to walk, in daily life, for which approaching walking as a practice and finding the change point, will deem beneficial, and based on individual preferences and experiences, which will be investigated further.

Dérive.

Another way of walking for slowness is walking without an aim. The Lettrist International's proposed this type of walking, "derive", in the 1950s, as a way to protect their free time from being turned into time of production or passive consumption by the post-war capitalist system (Careri, 2002; Marshall, 2023). This playful, liberating form of walking consists of drifting through the city, roaming with openness to surprises and detours, experiencing and inhabiting the city in a new and different way (Careri, 2002).

This practice proposes a strong alternative against the elements of the fast paced society that might infiltrate a walk, such as a high walking speed and multitasking.

Fast walking is inversely linked to risks of stress-related cardiovascular diseases, while a slower walking pace is associated with greater relaxation and mental restoration (Franěk, 2013; Imran et al., 2019). An unhurried, self-chosen pace is thus key for slowness. However, pace is not solely a reflection of individual stress but also influenced by the focus of a walk, for example trying to catch a train, the environment, and even gender, status and societal values such as individualism and competitiveness (Schmitt & Atzwanger, 1995). These links illustrate why, in research, a high walking pace is even directly associated with a high pace of life and used as an indicator for it (Bornstein & Bornstein, 1976; Levine & Norenzayan, 1999; Schmitt & Atzwanger, 1995). The pace of walking is for example often high, compared to walking in rural areas (Bornstein & Bornstein, 1976; Levine & Norenzayan, 1999)..

Multitasking during a walk can distract from its benefits as well. Research shows that engaging in secondary cognitive tasks, like talking on the phone, impairs performance on both the task and the walk itself (Hill et al., 2013). The growing trend of 'smombie' behaviour—walking while absorbed in a phone— not only poses traffic hazards, but also negatively effects a person's health and well-being (Park & Oh, 2024). Interestingly, under high cognitive load, individuals tend to walk more slowly or even come to a halt altogether, for example when solving a hard equation (Hill et al., 2013; O'Mara, 2019).

The practice of derive and considerations of pace and multitasking during walking pose the question of how slow can walking truly be in a fast-paced world. However, compared to many alternatives, such as transport via car or spending free time watching Netflix, a walk will always provide more slowness. However, a thorough analysis of the fast-paced context, which is both the context within which walking occurs and the context this project aims to change, is essential. This aligns with practice theory. Additionally, it is important to avoid romanticizing walking as a universal experience or all-encompassing solution, as everyone's walking experience is highly personal, based in realities of daily life. City planner Jeff Speck (2013) highlights this by stating that the most effective walks are those that integrate seamlessly into daily life.

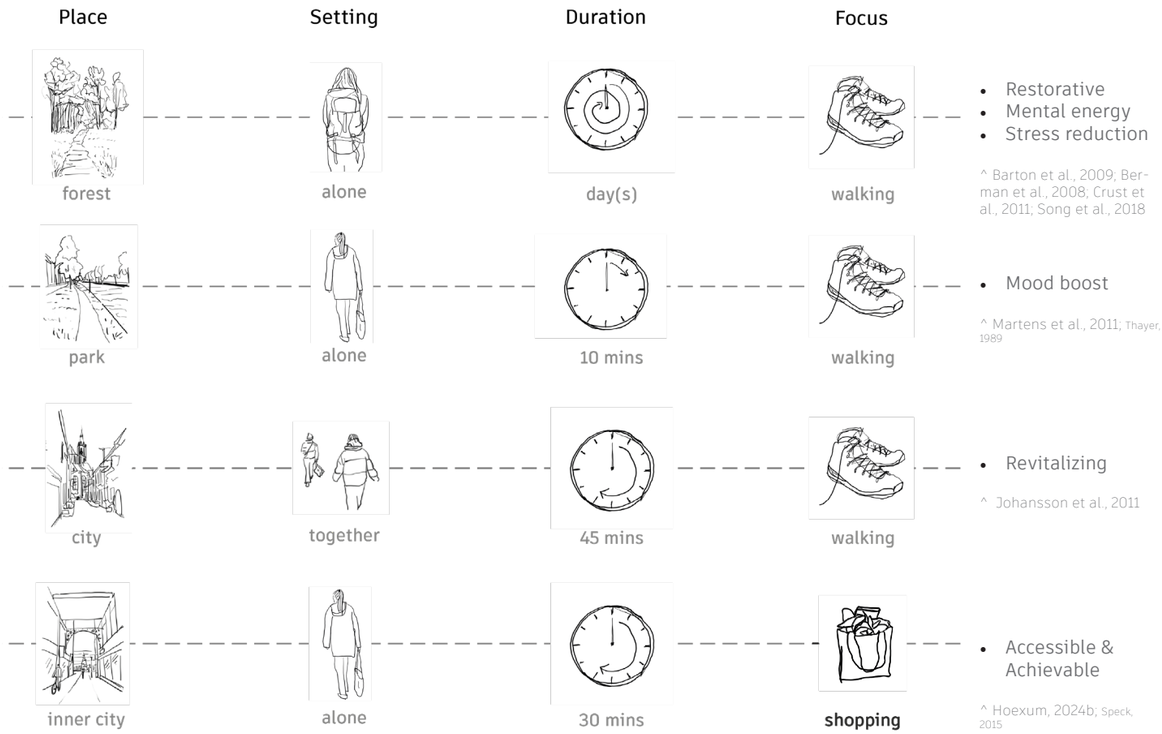


Figure 23 Benefits of the different walks

Walking as a nuanced, personal practice

The pitfall in studying walking is over-romanization and viewing walking as something inherently positive. Middleton (2016), while recognizing the potential benefits of walking, critiques this idealization, emphasizing the nuanced and diverse experiences of pedestrians, particularly in urban, everyday contexts. She questions for example weather everyday walkers perceive their movements as 'liberatory acts of resistance and creativity' as proposed by De Certeau (Middleton, 2016). And while providing interesting insights, artistic and poetic engagements with walking, such as Baudelaire's flâneur figure, further illustrate the tendency to romanticize walking (Middleton, 2016). The

Figure 24 A Walking evolution

flâneur, in particular, has been critiqued for representing a privileged, male-centred perspective on walking, as women did (and do) not have the same freedom to walk alone in the city, and moreover, this was viewed as improper (Beaumont, 2020). The approach of 'Walking-with' further destabilizes humanist binaries (of nature vs. culture, human vs. non-human, and subject vs. object) and proposes walking in connection with others—whether they are people, animals, or aspects of the environment). This was proposed by Springgay and Truman (2018), who call for a shift away from celebrating the leisurely white male flaneur and propose "queering" walking to rejecting traditional, hierarchical ways of thinking about the act of walking, especially those rooted in human-centred perspectives or privileges. This approach recognize walking as a deeply collaborative and relational act, embedded in the complexities of both human and non-human contexts (Springgay & Truman, 2018).

Walking practices are thus deeply entwined with material, embodied, and political contexts, and shaped by social and infrastructural constraints, as Practice Theory has previously stated. Moreover, the walking experience is not merely a sum of its benefits, but a highly personal. This calls for a more grounded, qualitative approach, that integrates the experiential, embodied, and social dimensions of walking into policy and planning discussions (Middleton, 2016). It necessitates more empirical research that capture the 'lived experiences' of pedestrians (Rybråten et al., 2019). The concept of 'Lived Experience' stems from the study of Phenomenology, a discipline for example developed by Heidegger and Merleau-Ponty (Heidegger, 1971; Merleau-Ponty et al., 2013). Lived experiences are central to phenomenology because they form the foundation for understanding how meaning and knowledge are constructed, by providing data in the form of collecting individual accounts of personal experience. They are informal and practical compared to Phenomenology, and used in multiple disciplines, including spatial planning. Considering diverse lived experiences to promote walking accounts for differences in personal preferences, and can encourage not solely more, but also pleasurable and fun walks.

The need for a qualitative, grounded approach of collecting individual experiences of walking leads us to 'walking as a research method'. This approach addresses aspects of recognition justice, moving beyond a one-size-fits-all assumptions, and addresses aspects of procedural justice, as elements of participation are introduced.

Walking as a Research Method

To root the study in real-world contexts and personal experiences, walking can be proposed as a research method, including both personal and shared walks. It includes engaging in open conversations while walking with others, to place oneself in someone else's shoes so to speak, and reflecting on my own daily walking practices. This immersive fieldwork prioritizes lived experience and situates the researcher within the process, encouraging a participatory and grounded perspective.

Walking offers a respectful and situated form of inquiry, contrasting with the "hubris of zero-point" scholarship critiqued by Santiago Castro-Gómez (Ladenburg, 2020). Rather than adopting an abstract, detached stance, walking embeds the researcher in a specific time and place. As Ladenburg (2020) observes, walking creates a framework for interpreting landscapes through rhythm and presence:

"More than a rational arrangement of the landscape based on a car ride, or on Google Maps, the rhythm of walking creates an awareness of the framework within which I interpret. Walking makes me aware of my relationship with the landscape." (pp. 35)

This type of learning is called 'embodied research', which situates the researcher physically within the study. It challenges the traditional mind-body divide by recognizing the body's role in producing knowledge alongside the mind (Ellingson, 2017). Moreover, walking as a research method diverges from conventional, step-by-step, fast methodologies. Ladenburg (2020) critiques the contemporary approaches as inadequate for addressing pressing, complex, global issues like climate change, highlighting the irony of conventional academic formats—jetting to conferences to explore solutions to climate change in a detached environment. Walking offers a slower, more reflective mode of inquiry, which places researchers and designers actively in the world and the research process, aligning with the urgency, complexity and nuance of many contemporary challenges (Ladenburg, 2020). Through embodied research, even the familiar surroundings and habitual behaviours of the researcher or designer or other participants can be reinterpreted, prompting reflection and deeper engagement (Ladenburg, 2020).

The subjectivity inherent in this method is deliberate, though it requires caution when attempting generalization for the sake of practical application of the gained insights. Prioritizing depth and nuance over breadth, leaves a focus on a limited number of experiences.

3.5. Conclusions and Conceptual Framework

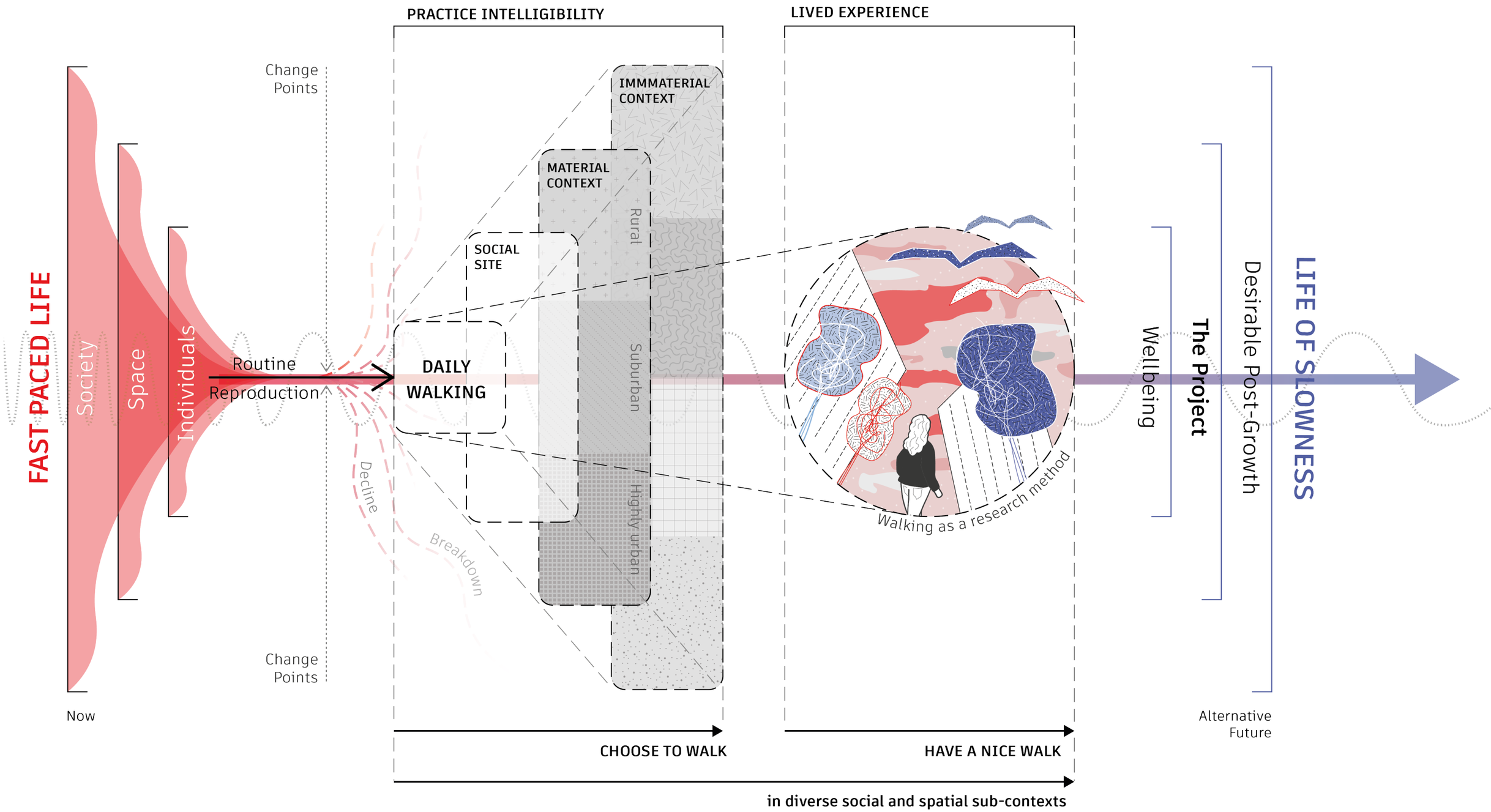


Figure 25 Conceptual framework

2.4. Conclusions and Conceptual Framework

The in-depth exploration of walking, slowness and practice theory provides the research with a narrowed research scope, methodologies, suggested outcomes, steps towards an approach and of course, further questions which will shape the thesis.

The projects aim of Slowness has been refined, focusing on individual wellbeing and post-growth futures. Walking will be employed to address these aims. Its diverse benefits and pleasures present a holistic antidote to fast-paced life, while exemplifying principles of slowness, by creating desirable alternative futures, of Post-Growth and wellbeing.

Walking, therefore, contributes to the transition towards a Post-Growth future; however, it does not encompass the full institutional changes required. Both wellbeing and Post-Growth are understood as ongoing processes rather than fixed end states, calling for flexible and open-ended outcomes, with walking positioned as a means, not the end goal in itself.

Practice Theory will aid in understanding the complicated relationships between societal values, space and individual lives, and how we can change these. This calls for not merely spatial, but also social and political interventions, with attention towards diverse social and spatial sub-contexts. Diverse walking preferences and habits and Cittaslow environments are identified as interesting sub contexts to explore further. Moreover, It exemplifies how individual actions can contribute to the aimed-for, big institutional shift. Lastly, Practice Theory suggests looking for 'change points' in daily life, which hold opportunities to introduce slower practices, and leave faster ones behind.

The project will focus on promoting one practice, walking. Walking will not be romanticized. By considering diverse, 'lived experiences', in daily life, the project does not solely promote more walking, but also pleasurable and fun walking experiences. These will be explored by employing walking as a research method, where the project's methods will be aligned with its aim of slowing down.

These conclusions are summarized in the conceptual framework (previous page).

2.5. Scientific and Societal Relevance

Scientific relevance

- The project contributes to understanding of promoting walking, by not seeing it merely as a mode of transport or leisure, but framing it both in a broader societal context, the fast paced society, and as a qualitative, highly personal experience. The project combines theories and concepts of the social sciences, such as Practice Theory and Lived experience, into a new approach to address the complexity of the challenge of promoting walking and to gain practical design knowledge. Additionally, the project will contextualize and test these theories and concepts in the Dutch context. All in all, this will contribute to the understanding of walking and promoting walking as a means to plan and design for desirable, healthy and sustainable futures.
- A methodological innovation will also be explored in the project, by using walking as a research method, to bring a qualitative, real-world experiences into scientific research and design.
- Several concepts related to spatial planning will also be reviewed. Most importantly, the limitations of the Cittaslow Charter are explored, and additions, especially to the Dutch version of the charter, will be proposed. Additionally, the project will address certain walking-related concepts, like the 15-minute city and STOMP, reviewing their impact and relevance within the project approach.

Societal Relevance

- The project aims to challenge and change societal values and norms, to contribute to tackling many real-world challenges related to the fast pace of life, such as inactivity, declining mental health, the global climate change and disparities between 'slow' and 'fast' worlds. In this I take a position, a future I view as good, and propose strategies to bring real-world change, towards a future of wellbeing, slowness and post-growth. Walking is proposed as a accessible and widely applicable solution. This asks for caution in not excluding certain groups for whom walking is hard or impossible, and leave no one behind in the transition towards an alternative future.
- The project will propose strategies that inform planners and designers, especially by transforming abstract theories and concepts (such as Practice theory, Post-growth and 'lived experience' of walking), into actionable and understandable strategies. Additionally, the project aims to influences the perspectives of citizens on their daily practices by building awareness, and even activate them to adopt new practices.

3. Methodology

3.1. Research aim and main Research Question
3.2. Process
3.3. Expected outcomes
3.4. Sub Questions and Methods
3.5. Methods
3.6. Graduation plan

CHAPTER SUMMARY.

“How can planning and design interventions enhance both the quality and quantity of walking in urban, suburban, and rural contexts in the Netherlands, to promote slowness, improve wellbeing, and support a transition to a post-growth society?”

3.1. Research aim and Research Questions

This thesis sets out to answer the following research question:

"How can planning and design interventions enhance both the quality and quantity of walking in urban, suburban, and rural contexts in the Netherlands, to promote slowness, improve wellbeing, and support a transition to a post-growth society?"

Research Aim

The project addresses the challenges of a fast-paced society by redefining walking as a central, valued practice in everyday life, supporting the transition to a more post-growth society of wellbeing.

The primary aim is to develop a holistic strategy of theoretically grounded, actionable spatial and socio-political interventions that increase both the quantity and quality of walking in diverse contexts: urban, suburban, and rural. Recognising wellbeing and Post-Growth as evolving processes, the strategy remains open, adaptable, and inclusive.

Practice Theory's attention to material and immaterial conditions informs the identification of opportunities and barriers, particularly at transitional moments in daily life. Walking is also used as a research method, with embodied, eye-level investigations offering first-hand insights into solitary and social walking experiences. By integrating practice-based and experiential, embodied perspectives, the project aims to create a flexible, context-sensitive framework that repositions walking as a natural, desirable part of daily life.

These aims and approaches of the project bring several design challenges, such as translating abstract concepts from Practice Theory and nuanced walking into concrete design interventions and balancing inclusivity and contextual sensitivity with the need for generalisable, workable strategies.

Research Questions

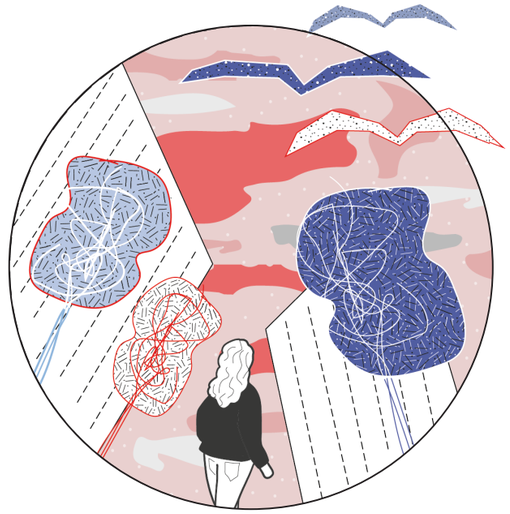
1. How do current walking practices, both in their performance and intelligibilty, shape our understanding of walking in the Netherlands, and what implications does this have for promoting it?

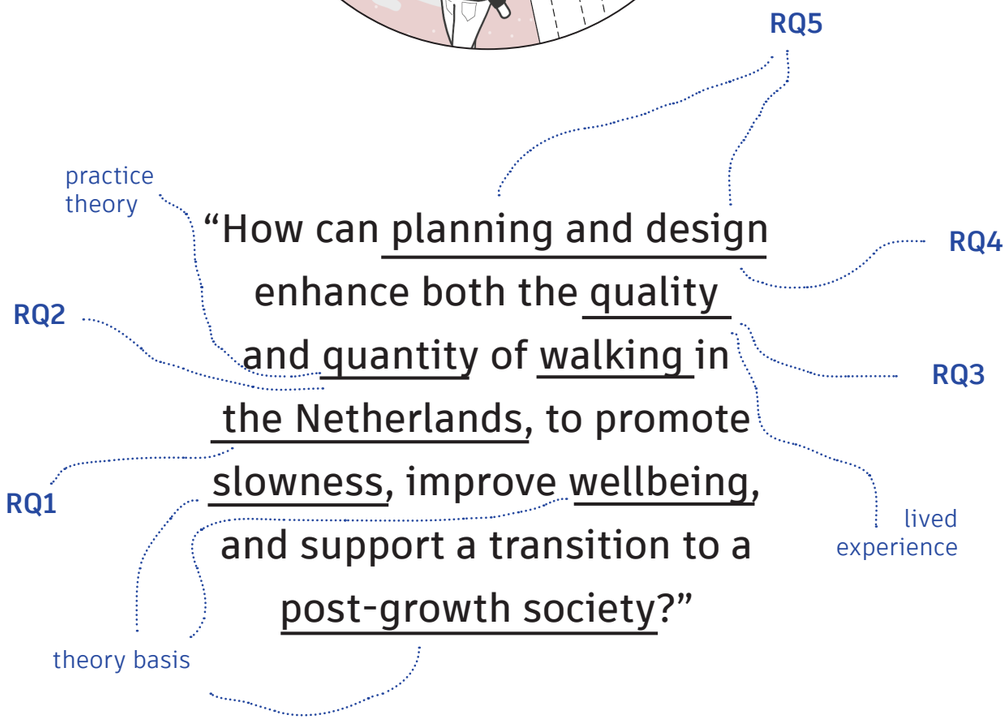
2. What opportunities for encouraging walking arise at change points in daily life, and what challenges emerge, particularly in relation to competing alternatives?

3. How can insights from personal and collective walking experiences in varied environments inform fostering enjoyable, diverse walking experiences?

4. What form could a spatial design intervention in the case study areas (Heerde and Zwolle) take to support walking, and how might this process challenge or refine prior assumptions and strategies?

5. What implications do the project's findings hold for (urban) planners and designers in shaping our environments to enhance both the quality and quantity of walks?





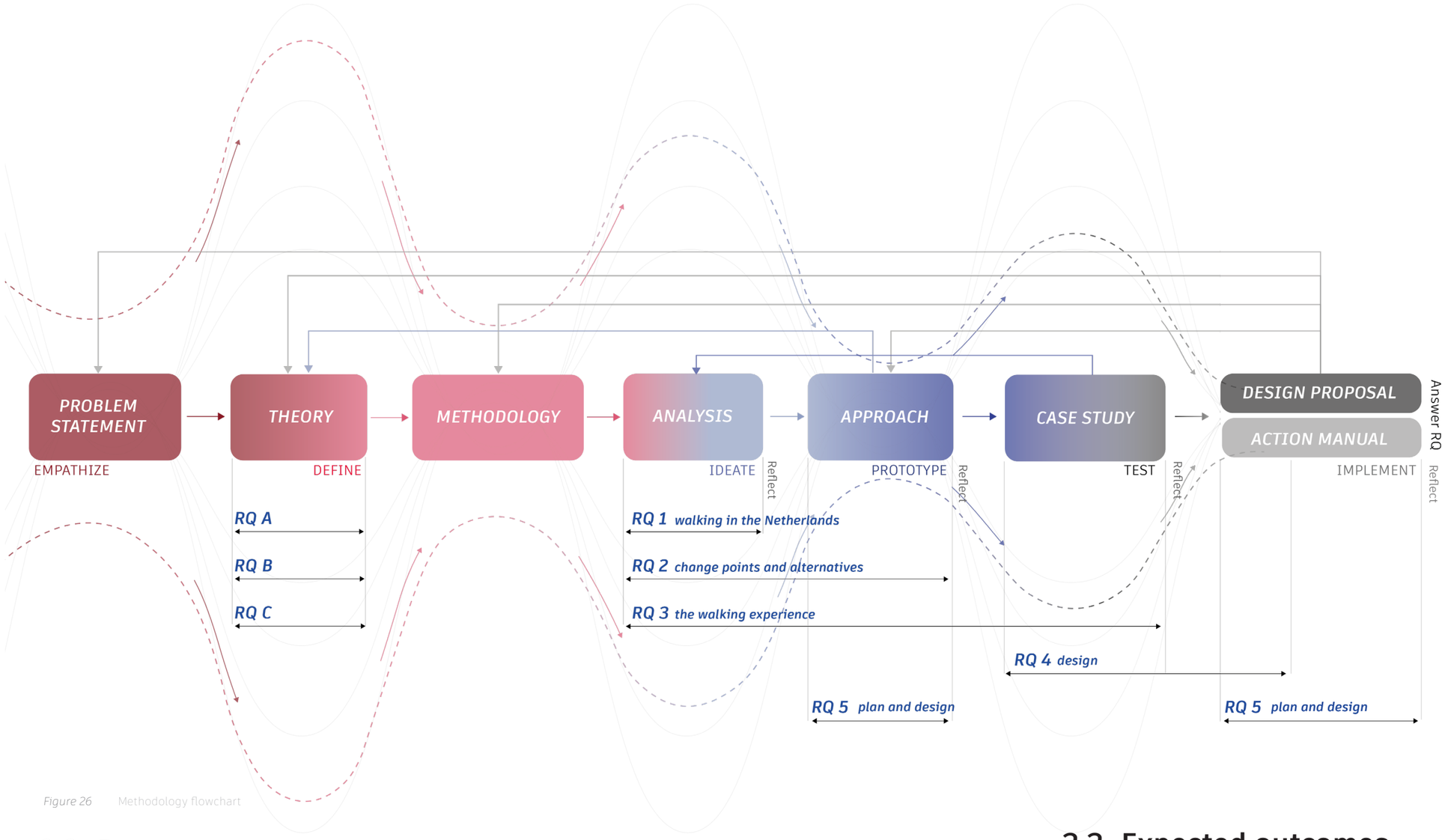


Figure 26 Methodology flowchart

3.2. Process

The methodology for this project will be structured around the principles of "Design Thinking". This structure addresses precisely the design challenges the research aim has brought forth. Rather than a linear, step-by-step process, Design Thinking provides a perspective that emphasizes non-linear problem-solving and the practice-based nature of design (Auernhammer & Roth, 2023). This approach offers a flexible framework to address the challenges inherent in this project, such as transitioning from abstract theoretical concepts to tangible, real-world interventions through design. Central to this process is the need to render theory actionable and applicable. Similarly, while addressing diversities, inclusivity and applicability across varied settings there is a need for generalization and structuring—such as developing typologies. Moreover, the iterative, non-linear nature of Design Thinking aligns with the project's process moving fluidly between theory, practice, design and varying scales of intervention, enabling a dynamic relationship between these phases as the project evolves.

3.3. Expected outcomes

System of strategies.

The project will develop a comprehensive strategy of spatial interventions, social programs, and policy recommendations. The strategies function like a pattern language, where spatial, social and political changes are interconnected, throughout different scales. It will be a flexible system, open to future changes, as it represents a process of change, not a blueprint of the future. The strategies are based on theory, real-world experiences and design exercises, as each research question revises and adds to them.

Vision.

In RQ4, a vision will be created of what walking in the future can mean, in daily life in the Netherlands. This will consists both of the values attributed to walking, and the walking behaviours in which this results, for different individuals, at different times throughout the day or year. Visioning is done through visual storytelling, where we imagine daily walking in the future.

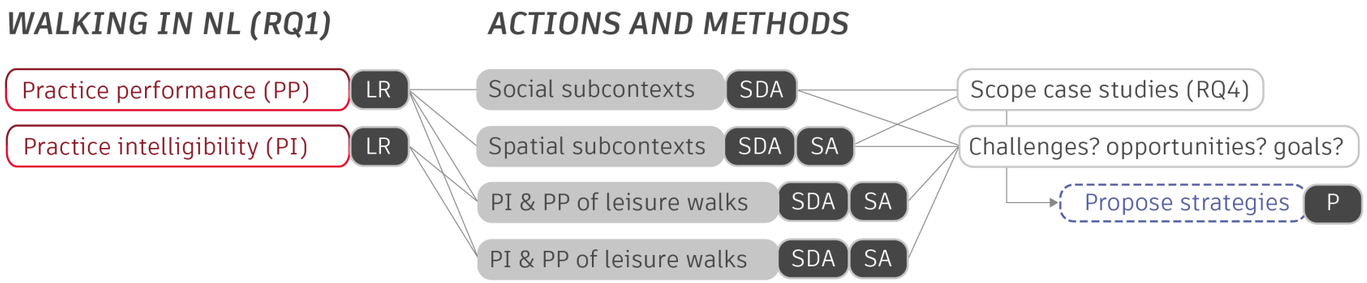
Design Proposal.

In the process of creating and testing the strategies, a spatial design proposal for the case study area (Heerde-Zwolle, as concluded in RQ1) will be created. This will consist of imagining the daily walking routes of 4 personas (of the 4 different BSR-types, living in either a rural, suburban or urban context, as is concluded after RQ1), and designing the changes needed to accomplish that these personas will choose to walk and have enjoyable walking experiences, based on the system of strategies that is created in RQ 1, 2 and 3. The designs are evaluated by reviewing the walking experiences and the contribution of the proposal to the design goals (posed in the vision) to Positive Health. The final design step will consist of combining the different routes in the area, questioning how they will exist together.

Action manual.

From the system of strategies, main strategies are derived. These are the essential changes needed to promote walking. They will be summarized in a practical manual for actors, especially designers and planners, and should both inspire, and provide the tools for change.

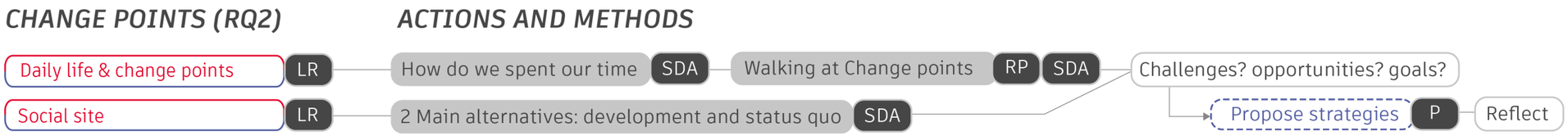
3.4. Research questions and Methods



1. How do current walking practices, both in their performance and intelligibilty, shape our understanding of walking in the Netherlands, and what implications does this have for promoting it?

This question explores the current state of walking in the Netherlands through the lens of Practice Theory, focusing on both its observable performance (e.g., frequency, purpose, demographics, spatial patterns) and its intelligibility– how walking is understood, valued, and structured in Dutch society. By examining both material (infrastructure, access) and immaterial (cultural attitudes, norms) aspects, it builds a comprehensive view of walking as a socio-spatial practice. These insights will support the development of relevant strategies and help define the scope and approach for the case study (RQ4).

Limitations include fragmented and limited data availability, particularly the split between 'leisure' and 'functional' walking. This makes synthesising and comparing data challenging. Moreover, the nation-wide date might not reflect localized behaviour. and challenges in translating national data to local contexts.



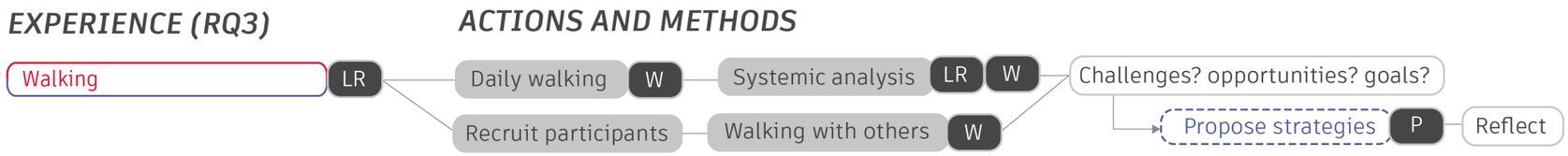
2. What opportunities for encouraging walking arise at change points in daily life, and what challenges emerge, particularly in relation to competing alternatives?

This question investigates how walking can be embedded more meaningfully into life by identifying "change points": the moments in everyday life where routes can shift (a concept of Practice Theory). These moment occur during a single day, but also during a year or lifetime.

Using secondary data analysis and reference projects, the analysis assesses opportunities for integrating walking into more aspects of daily routines, such as work, commuting or education. It also evaluates competing practices, focused on car use and cycling, and their underlying social and spatial appeal.

The methodology aims at discovering a society-wide perspective on promoting walking, focusing on the generalized context of 'daily life'. Findings will be refined with input from RQs 3 and 4, where contextual diversity is more closely examined. Moreover, the research is exploratory, not all-encompassing.

3.4. Research questions and Methods



3. How can insights from personal and collective walking experiences in varied environments inform fostering enjoyable, diverse walking experiences?

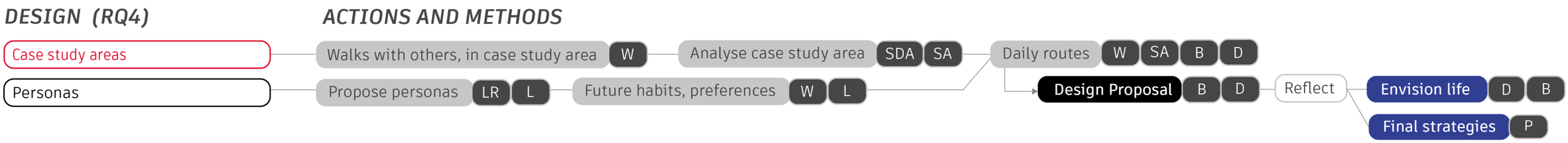
This question draws on qualitative walking research, combining solo walks (autoethnography) and walks with others (participatory observation) to explore the sensory, social, and spatial qualities of walking.

Personal walks are systematized through reflective abstraction, based in both walking experiences and theory (for example theory of wayfinding and sensory ethnography).

The participatory walks require an HREC application (including a data management plan and informed consent form, see Appendix A). The locations of the walks are focused on the case study area (Heerde-Zwolle), a Cittaslow town and a bigger city in its vicinity, or comparable environments (for example other slow cities). The 1-2 participants per walk will be recruited through local institutions (municipalities, libraries, community centres, Cittaslow representatives) and personal networks. The 'Walks and Talks' are informal, based in what participants want to show and tell. The walks concluded in textual summaries, a selection of photos and psychogeographic maps, which synthesize subjective, eye-level experiences with spatial movements.

The insights of the walks inform what makes walking enjoyable or less so, and how such elements might be translated into spatial, social or policy strategies. Moreover, the findings both inspire and steer the research directions of the RQ1, 2 and 4.

Limitations include a small and potentially non-diverse participant pool, which is not representative of the Dutch society. The subjective nature of the method also limits the generalizability. However, quality, depth and richness are prioritized over quantity and generalizability.

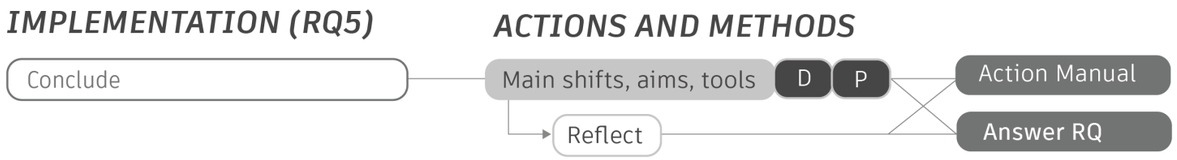


4. What form could a spatial design intervention in the case study areas (Heerde and Zwolle) take to support walking, and how might this process challenge or refine prior assumptions and strategies?

This question tests and materializes previously developed strategies, aims and shifts, through spatial design in two contrasting case study contexts: a town and a city. Using fictional personas (based on BSR profiles (RQ1) and walking experience (RQ3)), the design explores how interventions might support preferred walking experiences in daily routes over short- and long-term horizons (+1 year and +25 years), using backcasting and literary design approaches. In the routes of different personas allows for the exploration of possible conflicts between walker preferences, and other uses of space (such as greenery, other forms of transport). The design reviews, refines and links previously proposed strategies, and visualizes what a future of walking could look like, both in space, and in daily life.

Limitations include the focus on only two areas, making broader generalization limited. However, it provides grounded, real-world testing that strengthens the project's validity.

3.4. Research questions and Methods



5. What implications do the project's findings hold for (urban) planners and designers in shaping our environments to enhance both the quality and quantity of walks?

This final question synthesizes all research findings into a practical output: a design and planning action guide. It summarizes the different approach to promoting walking (main shifts). In line with the shifts, concrete actions are proposed: a different methodology and aims. The sets of patterns both tools that can be used in this process, linking experience and spatial, social and policy actions, and the strategies that should be implemented.

The aim is to provide both overacting principles and concrete actions and examples to promote walking across the Netherlands.

Limitations stem from the need to simplify complex findings for practical use, which may obscure the nuance and variability uncovered in the experiential research.

3.5. Methods

Literature review

The literature review consists of creating a theoretical background, to gain knowledge and understanding of the thesis topic and scope, identify knowledge gaps, and contextualize the research within the broader academic discourse (Institute for Academic Development, 2024).

Secondary Data Analysis

Secondary data analysis involves examining existing data from sources such as government reports, academic or independent studies, and public databases (UCL). It is used to identify patterns, trends, or insights relevant to the research question without collecting new data. It provides a foundational understanding of the context and informs design and planning decisions.

Spatial analysis

The spatial analysis will consist of (geospatial) mapping, analysing landscape layers, typo-morphological studies, historical research and a space-time geography approach (hägerstrand). It draws on insights from secondary data as well as direct observations during walking. The analysis is done across scales (from the eye-level experience of walking to broader local, regional, and national spatial dynamics).

Reference projects

There are already a lot of projects done about walking, which gives me a wide pool to draw inspiration from and the opportunity to learn from practice what works and what does not, in many different contexts.

Case study

The case study approach enables the application and testing of proposed strategies in a defined geographic area—Heerde—Zwolle. This method facilitates the translation of general insights into site-specific interventions, and vice versa. It allows for iterative reflection between scales to ensure contextual fit and broader relevance. A limitation of this method is false or too much generalization of findings on the small scale. This needs to be handled carefully, as it is an important step.

Walking

Walking is used as both a research and design tool, offering a slow, embodied, and reflective mode of inquiry (Ladenburg, 2020). It enables the researcher to be immersed in the spatial and social context, diverging from conventional, fast step-by-step methods. Walking is deployed as a method in different ways:

Daily Walks: These self-led walks generate reflective insights based on the sensorial-spatial experience. Observations are abstracted and analysed to inform design and strategy.

Participatory Walks: Walking with others (residents and/or experts) creates opportunities for open-ended, situated conversations. Rather than structured interviews, these are guided by the participants' routines and preferences, offering deep, place-based knowledge and diverse perspectives. These walks will primarily take place in the case study area and in comparable 'slow cities'.

Limitations of this method include its qualitative nature and lack of generalizability. However, it offers rich, contextual, and experiential understanding that complements other data sources.

Design

Designing is about exploring and proposing change, in the form of an object, process or system, which will contribute to the research aim. This method will consist of visioning, strategizing, scenario exploration and drawing design interventions, where spatial, socail and policy layers will inform and influence each other.

Backcasting

Backcasting is a strategic foresight method that begins by envisioning a desirable (or undesirable) future scenario and then works backward to identify the steps and decisions needed to reach—or avoid—that future (Kishita et al., 2024). Backcasting focuses on normative goals and long-term thinking.

Literary

The Literary Method incorporates literature and narrative fiction as analytical and imaginative tools in studying and shaping urban environments (Marshall, 2016; Marshall, 2019). It explores the complications and possibilities of urban life, through the experiences of individuals as they live and engage in our world.

Pattern language

The pattern language approach helps translate empirical and literary findings into design and planning rules, solutions, actions or principles, the 'patterns'. Originally developed by Alexander (1977), it allows for organizing complexity, stimulating debate or exchanging expertises and assessing situations. Patterns are interrelated, and can be applied systematically (Alexander, 1977; Rooij & van Dorst, 2020; Salingaros, 2000).

3.6. Graduation plan

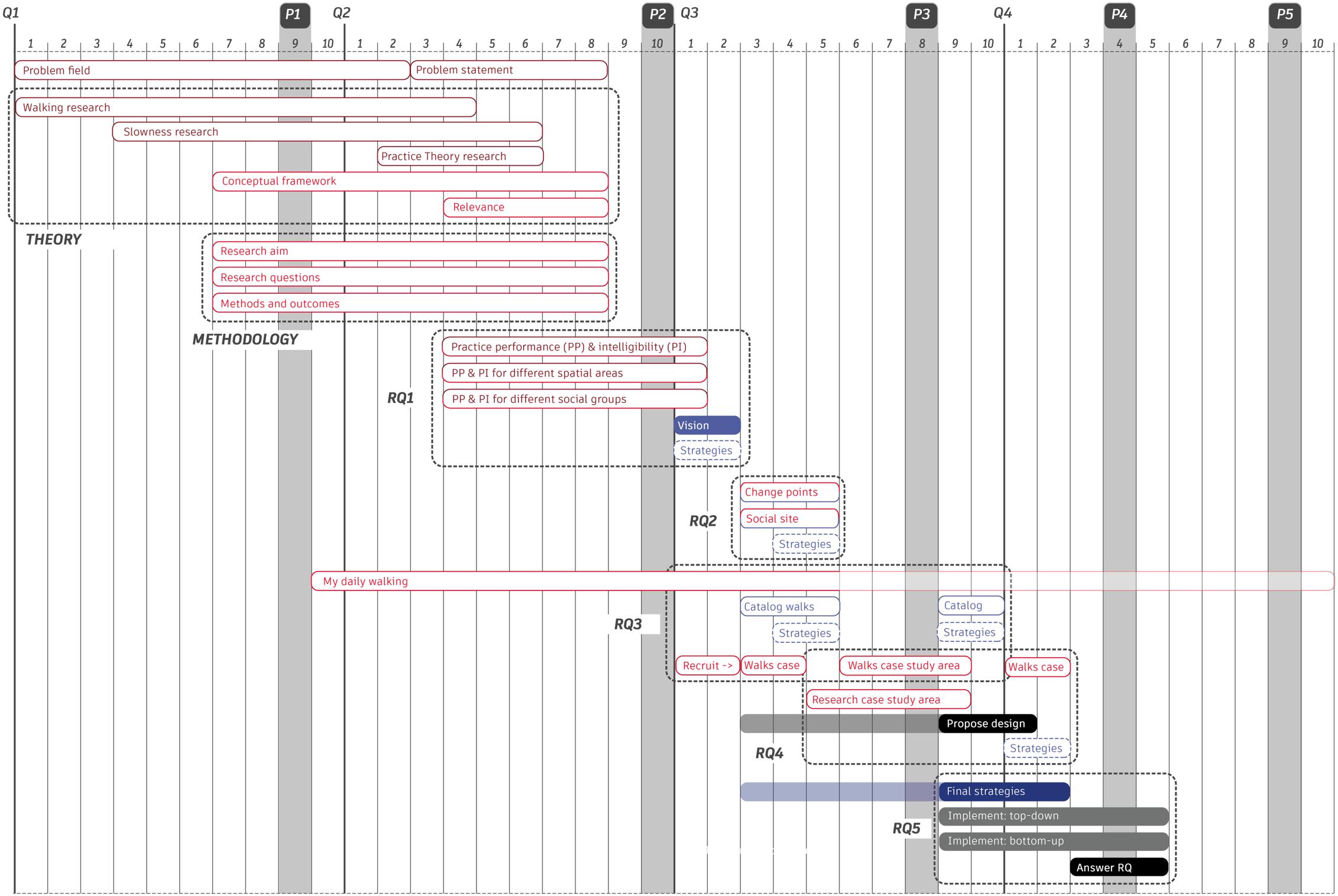


Figure 27 Graduation planning

4. Walking in the Netherlands

4.1. Practice Performance in NL
4.2. Walking in different social sub contexts
4.3. Walking in different spatial sub contexts
4.4. Practice intelligibility of walking in NL
4.5. Conclusion

CHAPTER SUMMARY.

The Netherlands is often characterized as a country of cycling (‘fietsland’), yet the research reveals it is also very much a nation of walkers, with particularly a culture of leisure walking (‘wandelen’). Practices such as ommetjes, lunch walks, and organized walking events like the vierdaagse reflect an existing affinity for walking, a great starting point for enhancing and expanding walking practices. As currently, walking tends to be narrowly framed as either utilitarian (for transport) or recreational (for leisure), with different standards and expectations attached to each. Reframing the status quo involves recognizing and integrating this dual identity while questioning how it can be broadened to support walking as a valued and integrated part of daily life.

The differences in walking preferences and performances, both spatially and socially, will be further investigated in the case study of RQ4, exploring the differences in rural and urban environments, and value-based lifestyles of individuals (BSR types).

4.1. Practice Performance of walking in NL

The Dutch population walks very little, and moslty short distances. The furthest and longest walks are for leisure. Quite a lot of walking trips are made for shopping or part of a a public transport trip. Very little trips are made to commute.

Walking throughout history

In 2023, 45% of all trips in the Netherlands were made by car, 27% by bicycle, and just over 20% on foot (CBS, 2023). On average, Dutch people (of age 6 and up) walking 17 minutes, or 1,1 kilometres each day (Ruimte Voor Lopen, 2024). This has changed a lot over the last centuries. Especially the rise of autonomous motorized vehicles made an impact on how much we walk. In 1900 for example, people were walking 15 kilometres a day on average, and walking made up 75% of all trips (Methorst, 2021). Nowadays, walking only makes up 18% of all trips (de Haas & Kolkowski, 2024).

Walking compared to other countries

Based on data from 2017 to 2019, Dutch citizens walk relatively less compared to residents of other countries (Buehler & Pucher, 2023). This is partly attributed to the relatively high prevalence of cycling in the Netherlands (de Haas & Kolkowski, 2024)

Walking as transport

The choice to walk depends highly on the distance of the trip. Most walking trips cover short distances, with walking accounting for 80% of trips under 500 meters. However, as distances increase, the share of walking declines significantly. Distances up to 2.5 km, in particular, should ideally remain walkable (de Haas & Kolkowski, 2024). In general, cars are the most used form of transport, for all distances and types of trips (IenW, 2023). The substantial group that prefers cars even for short distances, uses a car particularly for visiting family and friends (37%) or traveling to supermarkets (32%) (IenW, 2023). For longer distances, most people opt for other modes of transportation, often bicycles. Cycling is generally a sustainable option, however, speed, and therefore resource and energy use by bikes is increasing, as more and more people opt for an electric bikes. Notably, there is a correlation between frequent cycling and walking. According to IenW (2023), 68% of Dutch individuals who cycle daily also walk daily for short distances, particularly for purposes such as commuting to work or engaging in sports and hobbies. This link could point towards the possibility of a symbiosis of more walking with biking.

Besides most walking trips being short, those who walk frequently tend to live closer to amenities such as shops, parks, and playgrounds, as opposed to those who rely more on cars or scooters (IenW, 2023).

Walks with a different focus

The extent of walking varies depending on the type and purpose of the activity (CBS, 2023; de Haas & Kolkowski, 2024). Overall, most walking, in terms of amount of trips, distance, and time, is for leisure. Dutch citizens are not only walking the most for leisure, walking is also the most popular leisure activity in the Netherlands (I&O Research, 2024). Between 2019 and 2020, 9.2 million people took weekly 'ommetjes' (short recreational walks), while 9.6 million walked 5–10 kilometres, and 30% of individuals aged 16 and older participated in day hikes of 2.5 hours or more (Stichting Wandelnet, 2021). The amount of walking for leisure, also grew between 2018 and 2023, driven initially by the COVID-19 pandemic but remaining more popular than afterward (de Haas & Kolkowski, 2024).

Besides its recreational value, people in the Netherlands also walk more for daily tasks such as (grocery) shopping, and dropping off children shopping, compared to other mobilities (IenW, 2023). Additionally, walking plays a significant role in connecting with public transport, particularly for the "last mile" at the activity side (de Haas & Kolkowski, 2024).

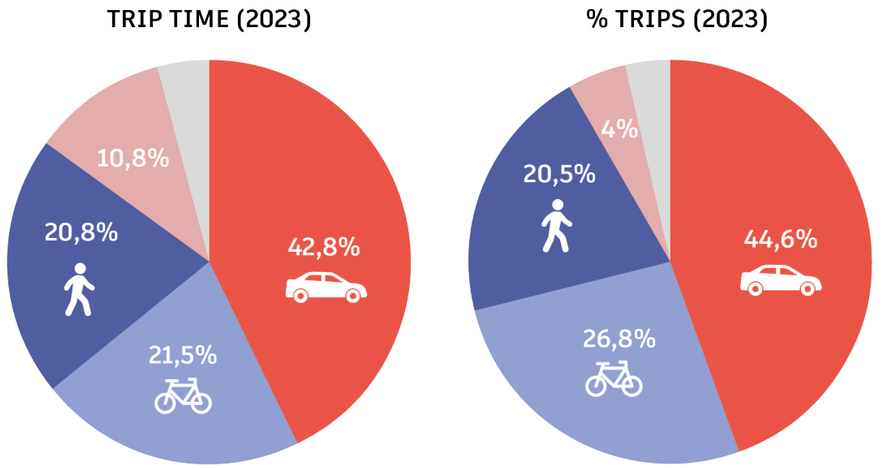


Figure 28 Trip time and % Trips in NL (based on: https://www.cbs.nl/nl-nl/visualisaties/verkeer-en-vervoer/personen/hoeveel-reisden-inwoners-van-nederland-en-hoe-)

4.2. Walking in different social sub contexts

Practice performance

Walking patterns in the Netherlands vary significantly across demographic groups. Several reports (based on survey data and self-reporting), such as "Loopfeiten" from Kennisinstituur voor Mobiliteitsbeleid (de Haas & Kolkowski, 2024), the "Nationale Wandelmonitor" (Stichting Wandelnet, 2021) and "Vaker te voet" (IenW, 2023), provide key insights into these variations. The inventorization of different walking behaviours across social contexts is concluded in the different social sub-contexts the project should take into account, following the project approach of a just transition.

Age

Walking frequency differs by age group. Children aged 6–12 and adults over 70 walk the most, with older adults typically taking 20-minute walks (Stichting Wandelnet, 2021). Walking rates decline sharply after age 12, coinciding with increased bicycle (de Haas & Kolkowski, 2024). Despite this, 77% of young people take short recreational walks, 45% occasionally walk 5–10 kilometres, and 14% engage in day hikes (Stichting Wandelnet, 2021). Adults aged 25–34 partake in the most free-time activities of all age groups, making walking one of many competing leisure activities (Stichting Wandelnet, 2021). Younger walkers prefer nearby nature areas due to time constraints. (Stichting Wandelnet, 2021).

Motivations for walking also vary by age. Older adults prioritize health benefits and practical considerations, such as the availability of seating (IenW, 2023; Stichting Wandelnet, 2021). Younger walkers are generally more goal-oriented, focusing on step counts or speed (Stichting Wandelnet, 2021).

Gender

Women walk more frequently than men, with walking accounting for 25% of their trips compared to 21% for men (CBS, 2023a). This difference reflects distinct activity patterns, as women often integrate caregiving and shopping into their journeys. Women also undertake 70–80% of caregiving-related walks, such as escorting children or assisting individuals with mobility challenges. Consequently, poorly designed public spaces disproportionately affect women (Albrecher et al., 2023).

Gendered differences extend to walking motivations. A study from Norway found that men are more likely to walk with a specific goal, such as reaching a fishing spot, while women walk primarily for recreation, exercise, or transport, often accompanied by a friend (Rybråten et al., 2019).

Socioeconomic Status

Walking frequency for transportation inversely correlates with household income: individuals in the lowest income bracket walk the most (34%) (de Haas & Kolkowski, 2024). However, leisure walking trends are opposite. Individuals with degrees in higher education are more likely to engage in day hikes (41%) but do so less frequently (21 times per year) than those with a background of practical education (29 times per year) (Stichting Wandelnet, 2021). Conversely, they take short recreational walks more often (163 times per year) than those with middle (148) or lower (139) education backgrounds (Stichting Wandelnet, 2021).

Migration Background

Residents of the Netherlands with non-European migration backgrounds walk the most frequent, although their overall walking share is similar to those with European (excluding Dutch) backgrounds (de Haas & Kolkowski, 2024). Higher walking rates among these groups are partly explained by their higher likelihood of living in urban areas, where walking is more common. Cycling rates, however, are lowest among those with non-European backgrounds (de Haas & Kolkowski, 2024). These patterns might be culturally influenced. Allen in all, combined rates of active travel (walking and cycling) are the highest among individuals with European migration backgrounds (de Haas & Kolkowski, 2024).

Individuals with walking limitations

A significant portion of the Dutch population experiences physical limitations that restrict their ability to walk:

- Approximately 2 million people have auditory, visual, cognitive, or motor impairments, with 1 in 11 facing mobility restrictions (Ruimte Voor Lopen, 2024)
- Foot pain affects 10–24% of the population, further limiting walking ability (Ruimte Voor Lopen, 2024)
- Many individuals require assistive devices to walk, and even footwear can be a limiting factor (Ruimte Voor Lopen, 2024)

The Netherlands is dealing with pressures of a greying population, as an increasing large part of its inhabitants elderly. The share of the population aged 65 and up is expected to rise from the current 35, to 45 percent in 2040 (CBS, 2024b).

Barriers these groups experience include the availability of resting areas (including toilets), spatial constraints, and uneven terrain make walking more difficult for those reliant on mobility aids.

Beyond physical constraints, reduced overall mobility contributes to lower walking rates. Some individuals rarely leave their homes, a phenomenon that increased post-COVID (Stichting Wandelnet, 2021). Contributing factors include the fast-paced nature of modern life, where most needs can be fulfilled from home (IenW, 2023). Encouraging this group to take the steps outside their home requires targeted interventions.

Conclusion

Walking behaviours differ across genders, ages and backgrounds. As practice theory states, these variations are not purely individual choices but are shaped by societal context, linked to differences in practice intelligibility. For instance, for an elderly person discomfort might outweigh the benefits of health a walk has, causing less or shorter walks. Women's walking habits often reflect caregiving responsibilities, highlighting how social expectations influence mobility. Approaches to walking should avoid reinforcing these roles or prescribing singular patterns for specific groups. People are not merely an addition of characteristics like age, gender and socio-economic status.

Instead, the research of diverse walking behaviours can provide insights into design needs to create accessibility

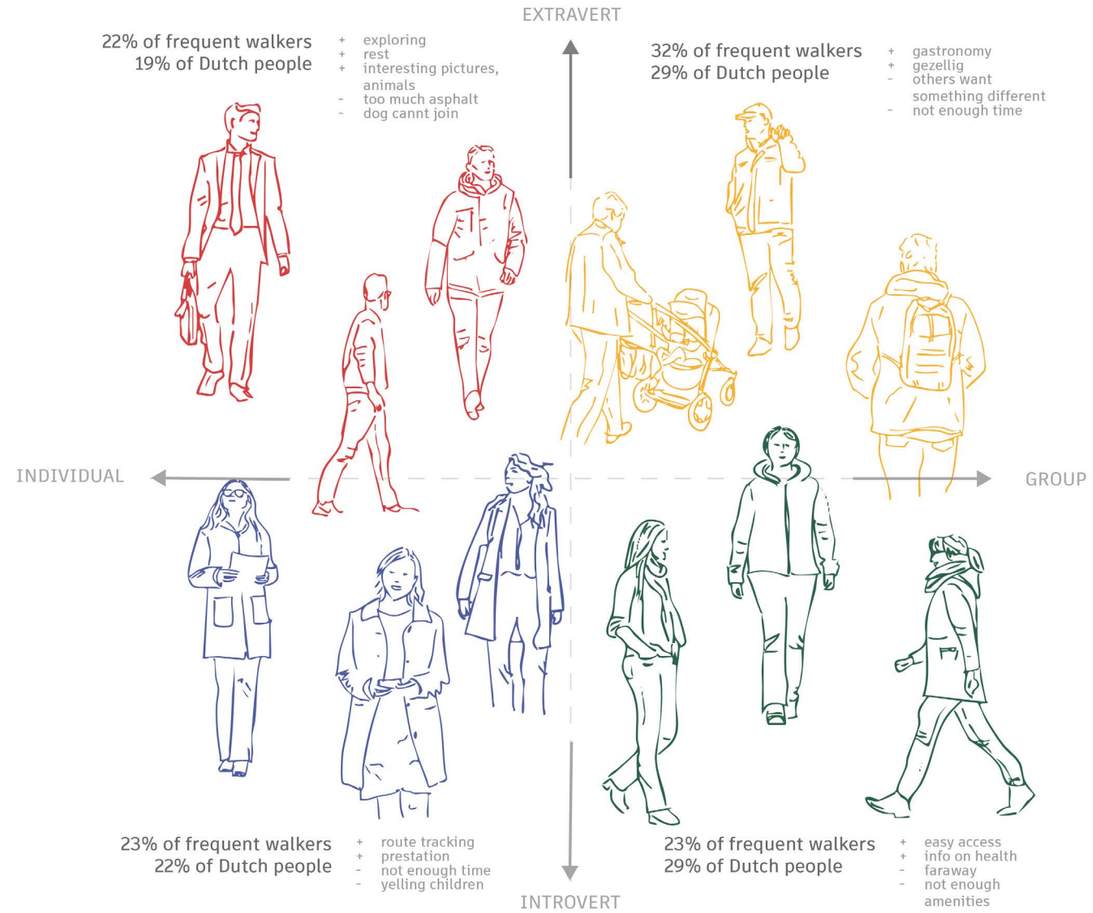


Figure 29 BSR types as walkers (based on: IenW 2023; Stichting Wandelnet, 2021)

and inclusivity, for example highlighting marginalized populations who walk less or face greater challenges, due to inequitable access to public spaces. The design of many urban environments—often shaped by and (therefore) for able-bodied, well-off men—disproportionately impacts those excluded from this dominant paradigm, leaving their needs unmet. This creates cities which, unjustly, trap marginalized groups in their homes.

Groups with walking limitations should not be disadvantaged by encouraging walking. Moreover, social sub-contexts around stereotypes where assumptions about preferences and lifestyles are merely derived from characteristic such as age and gender. Individuals should be approached as complex, active practitioners, with diverse values and lifestyles, transcending demographic traits. This leads to value-based social sub-contexts, the BSR-types. The BSR lifestyle model classifies individuals into four categories, based on psychology and sociology (Boom Management, 2020; Groen & van Geest, 2019; IenW, 2023; Leefstijlvinder). These lifestyle distinctions have many applications, from marketing and consumer preferences, to management and group dynamics. The BSR lifestyles have also been researched in their walking behaviours, which provides a strong basis to have these lifestyle types lead the design steps. This is explored further in the case study (Chapter 10).

4.3. Practice performance and intelligibility of different spatial areas

Practice performance

Walking patterns in the Netherlands vary significantly across spatial contexts. Data about walking behavouirs in different places is based on self-reported surveys from the “Onderweg in Nederland (ODiN) 2023” study, covering 64,459 participants (approximately 4% of the Dutch population). It should be noted that for smaller municipalities, the data may not be fully representative.

Residents in highly urbanized areas take more frequent walking trips but generally walk for shorter durations. Conversely, in rural areas, walking trips are less frequent but tend to be longer in duration (de Haas & Kolkowski, 2024). The Randstad region demonstrates particularly high walking activity levels, consistent with its urban density and infrastructure. South Limburg exhibits a relatively high share of walking, even in less urbanized municipalities, potentially influenced by its hilly terrain, which is less conducive to cycling (de Haas & Kolkowski, 2024).

The purpose of a walk strongly influences its frequency and duration. Recreational walking tends to involve longer distances and less frequent trips, while functional walking, such as trips for shopping or commuting, typically involves shorter distances and is more common in urban areas (de Haas & Kolkowski, 2024).

Certain regions in the Netherlands are highly frequented for recreational walking. Popular areas include natural landscapes such as the Veluwe, Utrechtse Heuvelrug, and the dunes, as well as green spaces surrounding rivers (CBS, 2021; de Haas & Kolkowski, 2024). These areas frequently face high foot traffic, and there seems to be a mismatch between high demands for walking space, in densely populated areas, and the available, natural, walking spaces (Stichting Wandelnet, 2021). However, it might also be a mismatch between available walking space and space that is generally perceived as attractive or better suited for walking .

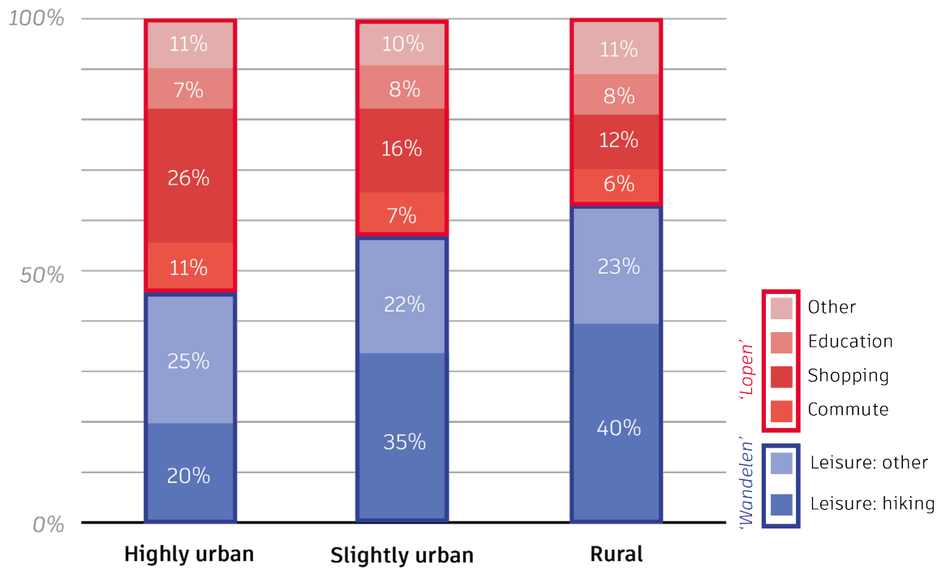


Figure 30

Types of walking in % of total walking trips, for different levels of urbanity (based on on:https://www.kimnet.nl/binaries/kimnet/documenten/publicaties/2024/10/02/loopfeiten-2024/KiM+brochure_+Loopfeiten+2024_defDT.pdf)

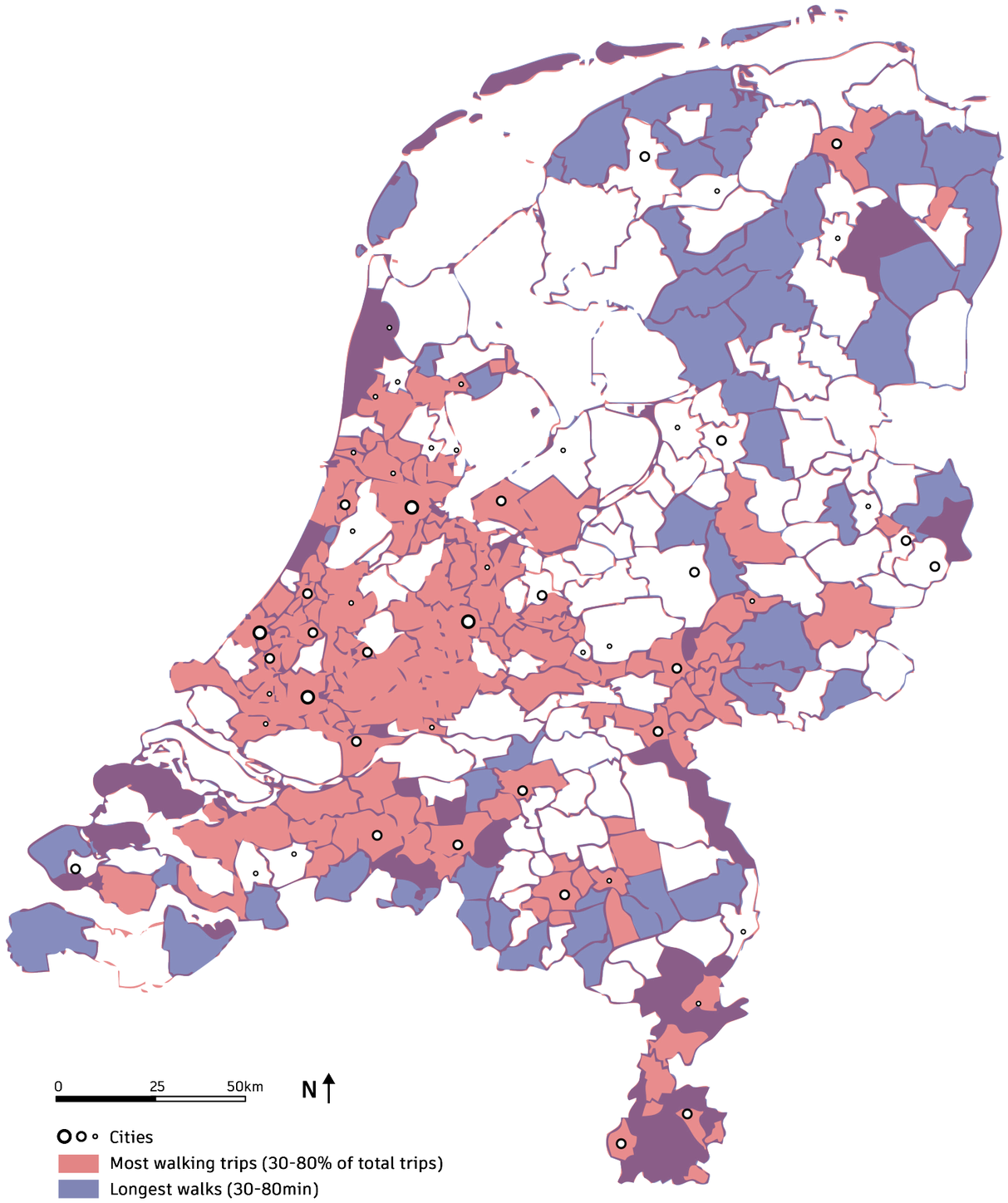


Figure 31

Walking in NL (based on: https://www.kimnet.nl/binaries/kimnet/documenten/publicaties/2024/10/02/loopfeiten-2024/KiM+brochure_+Loopfeiten+2024_defDT.pdf)

Conclusions

There is a noticeable difference in walking patterns between rural and (highly) urban areas, which warrants further investigation. According to CBS, rural areas are defined as non-urban, with fewer than 500 addresses per square kilometre, a classification that covers a significant portion of the Netherlands. Highly urban areas, on the other hand, are defined as those with more than 2,500 addresses per square kilometre. This proposes interesting cases to study in more detail.

Rural an urban areas have diverse sub- contexts. If the proposed practice intelligibilities around walking are compared across these areas, there are notable differences in network characteristics (smaller grid size versus recreational walking networks), proximity (higher density of functions in urban areas), and the qualities of walking spaces that people value. Additionally, the immaterial context may differ, with factors such as car usage being more normalized in rural areas, which simultaneously might attract inhabitants which are more likely to appreciate nature as well.

The rural-urban division thus present interesting case studies. These will provide more in-depth insights into these contextual differences. Suburban contexts, with their unique blend of urban and rural characteristics, are of interest to the research as well. These areas may offer proximity to nature while also maintaining an appreciation for urbanity, making them an intriguing subject for further exploration. For the purpose of this research, suburban areas will be defined as 'moderately or sparsely urbanized,' as indicated by CBS (with 1,500-500 addresses per square kilometre), focusing on the contrast at the periphery of cities.

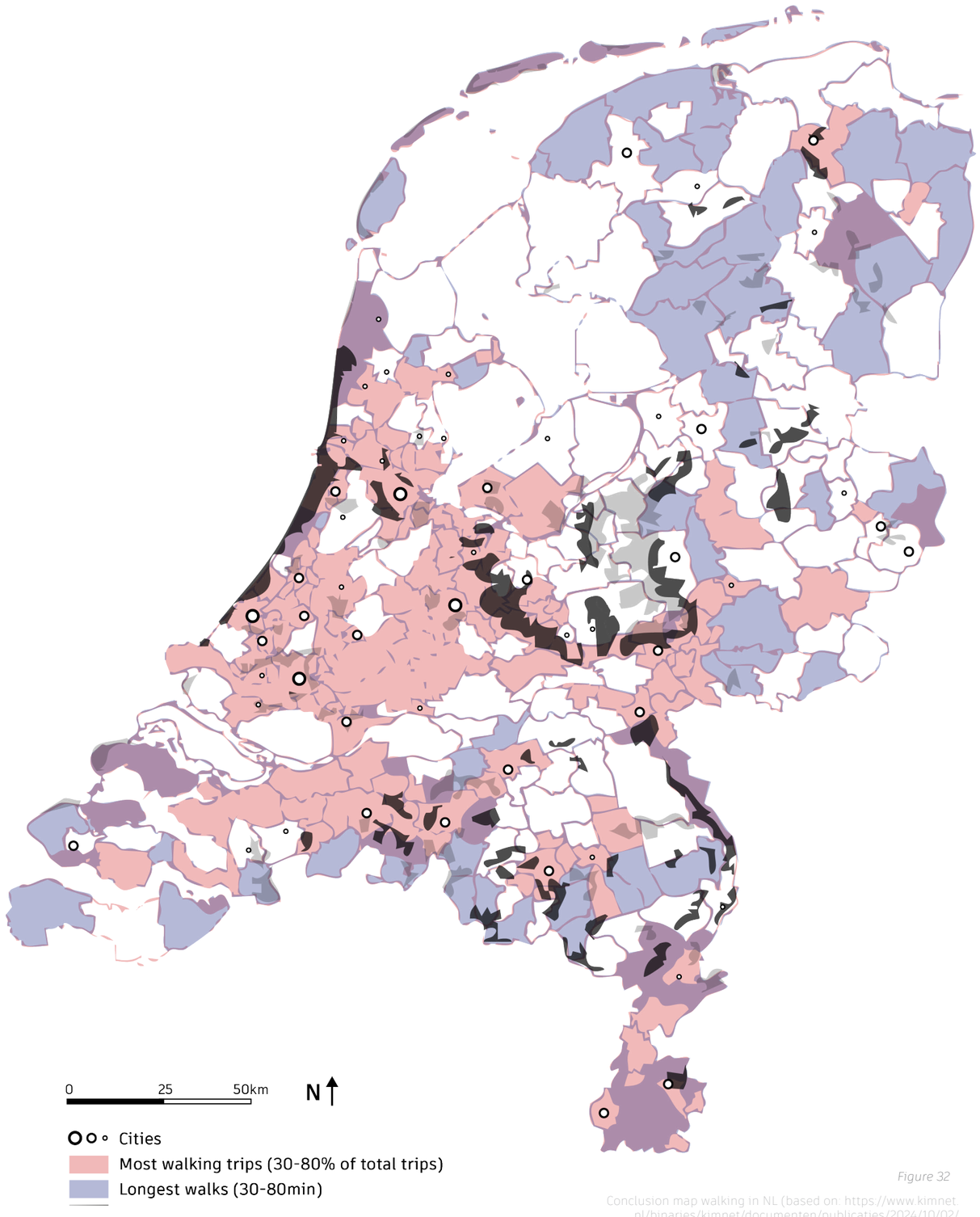


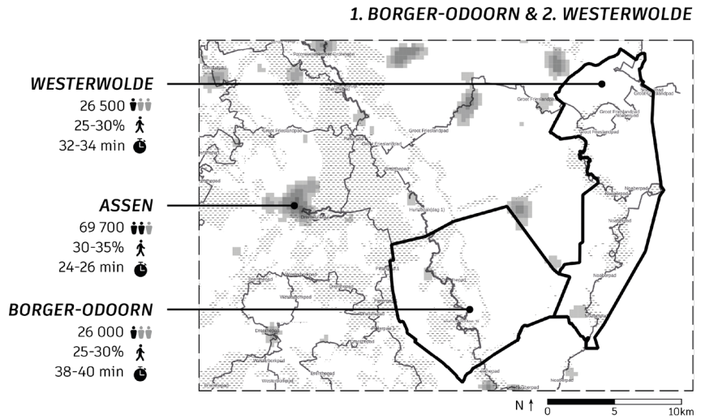
Figure 32

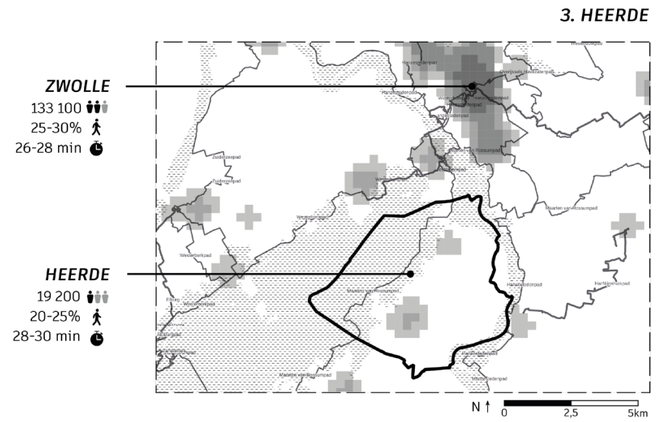
Conclusion map walking in NL (based on: https://www.kimnet.nl/binaries/kimnet/documenten/publicaties/2024/10/02/loopfeiten-2024/KiM+brochure_+Loopfeiten+2024_defDT.pdf)

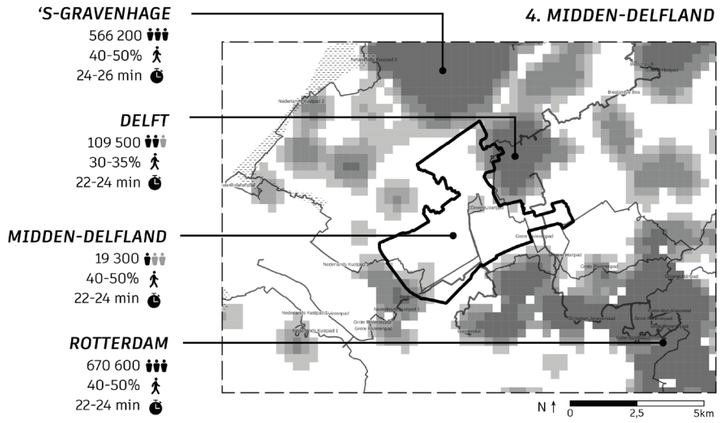
Spatial sub-contexts: the case study area

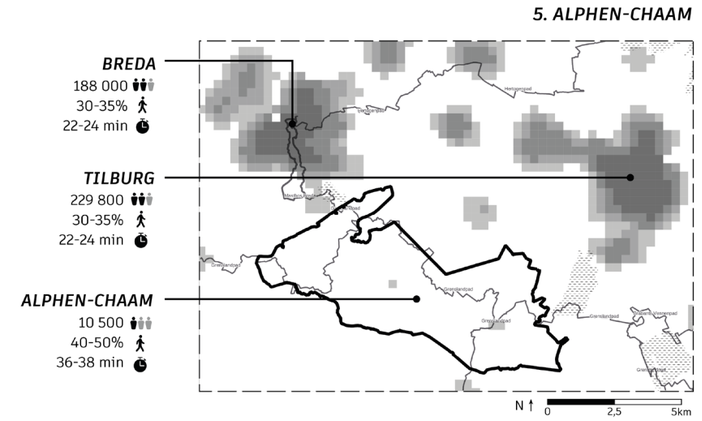
The case study locations are based on exciting Slow cities of NL, where around the slow cities, the project will compare rural, urban and suburban contexts.

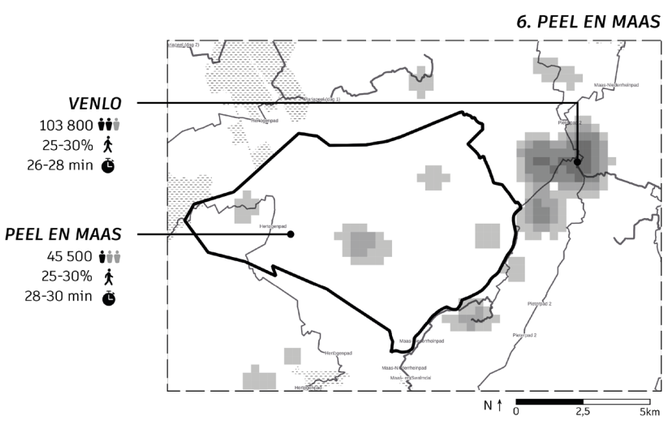
The options were compared and reviewed based on their individual characteristics in urbanity, walking habits (amounts of trips and lengths of trips) and spatial characteristics related to recreational walking, such as walking routes and nature areas. Overall, the case studies should be diver, to make comparing them interesting. Moreover, the extremes were considered, as well as aligning with or defining expectations of the perceived general pattern of more walking trips in cities, and less, but longer walks in rural areas.

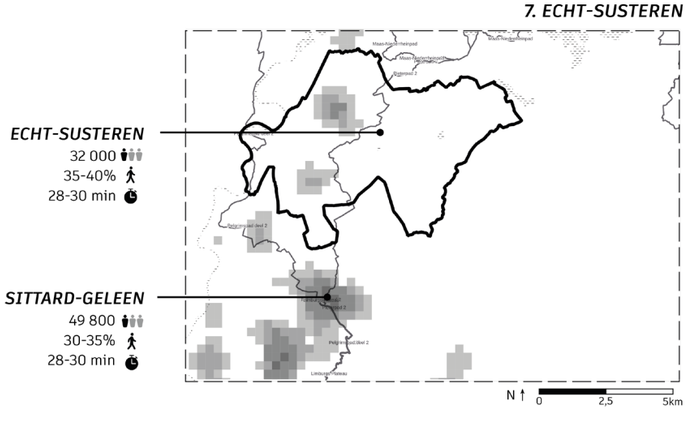












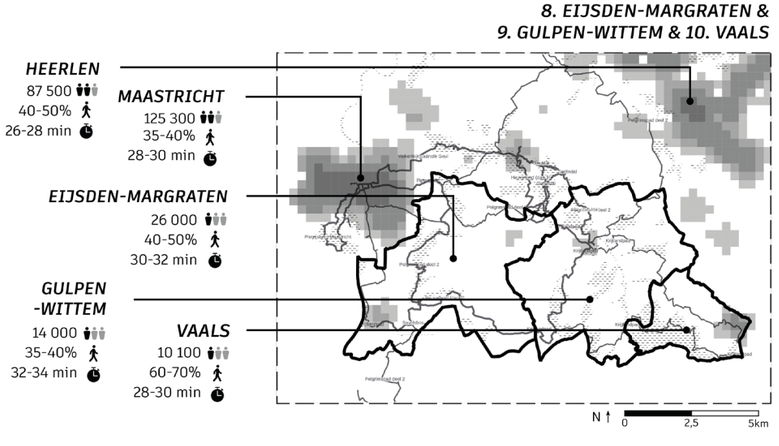


Figure 33 Case sutydy options

3. HEERDE

ZWOLLE
133 100
25-30%
26-28 min

HEERDE
19 200
20-25%
28-30 min

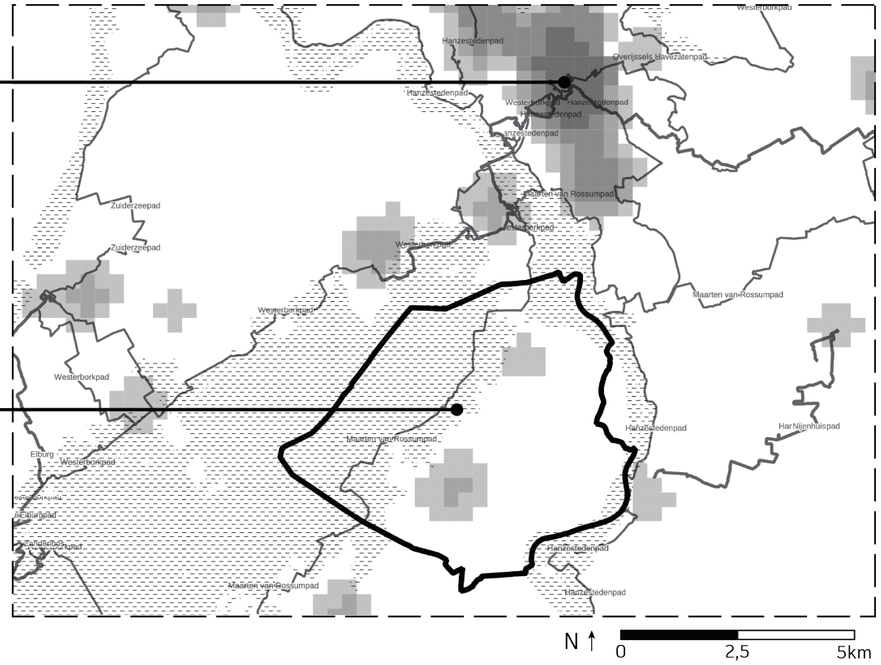


Figure 34 Case sutydy Heerde and Zwolle

Case study: Heerde and Zwolle

Heerde, Alphen-Chaam and Peel en Maas all presented similar cases: not a big difference in walking between urban and rural areas, and generally low levels of walking and short walks. These areas have the highest need for change and make interesting cases to test the strategy and create a design proposal for. Additionlly, Heerde-Zwolle was chosen based on accessability, as for me organizing a walk here will be easier (my parents live closeby).

If time remains, other rural-urban slow city cases will be considered, to investigate the differences in the sub-contexts across the country when generalizing results. The following areas pose interesting cases to a walk:

Midden-Delfland, Rijswijk and The Hague

Highly urbanized environment, and yet: a slow city!

The % of trips that is walked is and walking times are similar in the ‘rural’ and urban contexts.

For a rural area, Midden-Delfland has low walking times, similar to the cities around it, but a high percentage of trips are walked (more than in Delft!)

Suburbs of Rijswijk are an interesting case as well: both the % of walking and the walking time a little higher than its surroundings actually

The closeness of Midden-Delfland also makes it achievable to visit more often

Vaals and Maastricht

(South) Limburg is an interesting case: lots of slow cities and, in general, both a lot of walking and long walks

In Vaals has the highest percentage of trips are walked in the whole of the Netherlands, even though it is a rural town, what can we learn for that?

Back-up: Borger-Odoorn

Borger-Odoorn is also being considered as a backup option, as it is home to some of the longest walking routes in the Netherlands. A walk in this area therefore could be very interesting.

4.4. Practice intelligibility of walking in NL

To review the different practice performances of walking, the project will explore the practice intelligibility of walking in the Netherlands. The 'Practice intelligibility' of walking, deems if it makes sense to go for a walk, if walking is a good, logical action at a certain time in a certain place, and how it is done, for example if someone takes a long or short walk, alone or together.

We concluded that Dutch people mostly walk short trips, compared to other modes of transportation. However, if a walk is made for the purpose of leisure, people walked much further and longer. We will research if differences in intelligibility can account for these different behaviours of longer walks for leisure and shorter walks for transport. This will involve comparing insights into the reasoning behind going from a walk from organizations studying recreational walking (typically focused on areas outside of cities) and institutions which view walking as part of mobility (predominantly examining walking in urban areas).

4.4.1. Walking as transport

Immaterial context: Walking culture?

Despite its internationally recognized cycling culture positioning the Netherlands as a leader in active mobility, walking as a mode of transport remains uncommon. It is a conscious choice to walk in the Netherlands, not something self-evident in daily life, opposed to other countries with walking traditions of promenading and flânerie (France) or ramblas and passeggiata (Spain and Italy) (Ladenburg, 2020; O'Mara, 2019; Ruimte Voor Lopen, 2024).

It is precisely the Dutch cycling culture which can account for these difference: while walking is seems feasible for short distances, when distances increase it is quickly overlooked in favour of cycling (Ruimte Voor Lopen, 2024). This links closely to values of a fast-paced society, where speed, convenience and efficiency are prioritized. A bike ride will always be faster than choosing to walk, which makes it the logical choice. In line, perceived walkability is often reduced to walking time, with a full focus on time-saving. Moreover, values of safety, comfort and practicality play a role in walking frequency, which relate to the shared goals of a fast paced society. Walking is for example perceived as time-intensive or inconvenient for carrying items (IenW, 2023; Ruimte Voor Lopen, 2024). Aspects of habituality, identity and sociality also influence walking, similarly to other behaviours. This is where the biking culture poses another barrier. When no one around you is walking, odds are you will not start walking either (Ruimte Voor Lopen, 2024).

Material context:

Following the immaterial context, proximity becomes essential in choosing to walk, as it determines travel time and efficiency. Proximity is related to both destinations and the network.

Proximity of destinations

de Haas and Kolkowski (2024) have researched the perceived, acceptable travel times by foot for different destinations in the Netherlands. In general, the majority of Dutch individuals (68%) consider a 15-minute walk to be short and acceptable (IenW, 2023). A 15-minute walk, often presumed to be about 1200m, spans different distances for different individuals. And walking 1200m might take up to 40 minutes, far removed from the presumed 15 minutes (Jaskulska, 2025). Perceptions of "walkable distances" vary by individual, destination, and socio-technical context. Walking times deemed acceptable for work or cultural destinations are nearly double those for accessing bus stops, schools, or supermarkets, as stated in (de Haas & Kolkowski, 2024). This suggests proximity is not merely a spatial issue, but moreover a contextual one.

Network

Ideally, walking infrastructures are close, well-connected, wide, safe, obstacle-free and easily navigated. Currently, only half of the Dutch population reports having satisfactory footpaths in their neighbourhoods (IenW, 2023).

A fine-grained walking network is essential to accommodate the needs of pedestrians. Given that the average walking speed is 4 to 5 kilometres per hour, the distance between connections (such as pedestrian crossings or side streets) must remain small, to ensure connectivity and convenience (Stichting Wandelnet, 2021). However, the established benchmarks for traffic engineers is a grid size of 500m within urban areas, 1000m at a city's edge, and 1,5km in rural areas. This does not accommodate to walkers' needs, especially outside urban cores (Stichting Wandelnet, 2021). Additionally, many walking paths abruptly terminate, disrupting the walking experience (Ruimte Voor Lopen, 2024).

Many footpaths fail to meet the guidelines on size as well. Moreover, these standards often assume ideal conditions, such as two able-bodied individuals walking side-by-side without mobility aids or carrying any items, which is, in practice, often not the case (de Haas & Kolkowski, 2024). These standards do not include navigability for example individuals with walking difficulties or disabilities. In practice, obstacles like parked bicycles, trees, or the Dutch custom of using small front stoops ('voorstoepjes') for benches or planters further impede free passage, as sidewalks are often used for more than just walking (Ruimte Voor Lopen, 2024).

Quality of the environment?

When Dutch residents were asked what changes in their daily environment would encourage them to walk more, many elements they suggested were related to proximity and the network. Many respondents suggested more shops in "walking distance", better paths, more paths and well-connected paths (IenW, 2023). Suggestions vary based on factors such as age, urban or non-urban residency, and existing walking habits as well. Frequent car users prioritize proximity, reflecting values of efficiency. Frequent moped users emphasize improvements such as better lighting (16%), more connected footpaths (15%), and clearly marked walking routes (14%). Residents in highly urbanized areas tend to prefer increased police presence (11%), more landmarks (9%), and better-indicated walking routes (7%).

Very little of these proposed spatial changes include qualitative elements. The weather is one primary determinant in the choice to walk, which related to qualitative aspects (IenW, 2023). What is seen as 'good' or 'bad' weather is culturally and individually determined. Respondents also suggested closeness of green structures and landmarks would encourage them to walk. Residents in neighbourhoods which are deemed 'highly appealing', do walk more frequently, which suggests that attractive living environment significantly encourages walking (IenW, 2023). However, frequent walkers are more likely to choose an neighbourhood to live in which they find pleasurable to walk in, which makes it hard to draw conclusions. To good news is that nearly half of the Dutch population is satisfied with their current living environment and sees no need for changes (IenW, 2023). However, infrequent walkers often lack clear ideas about environmental changes that would encourage walking (IenW, 2023). This might influence their satisfaction with their environment as well, as non-walkers do not experience whether their environment is nice to walk in or not.

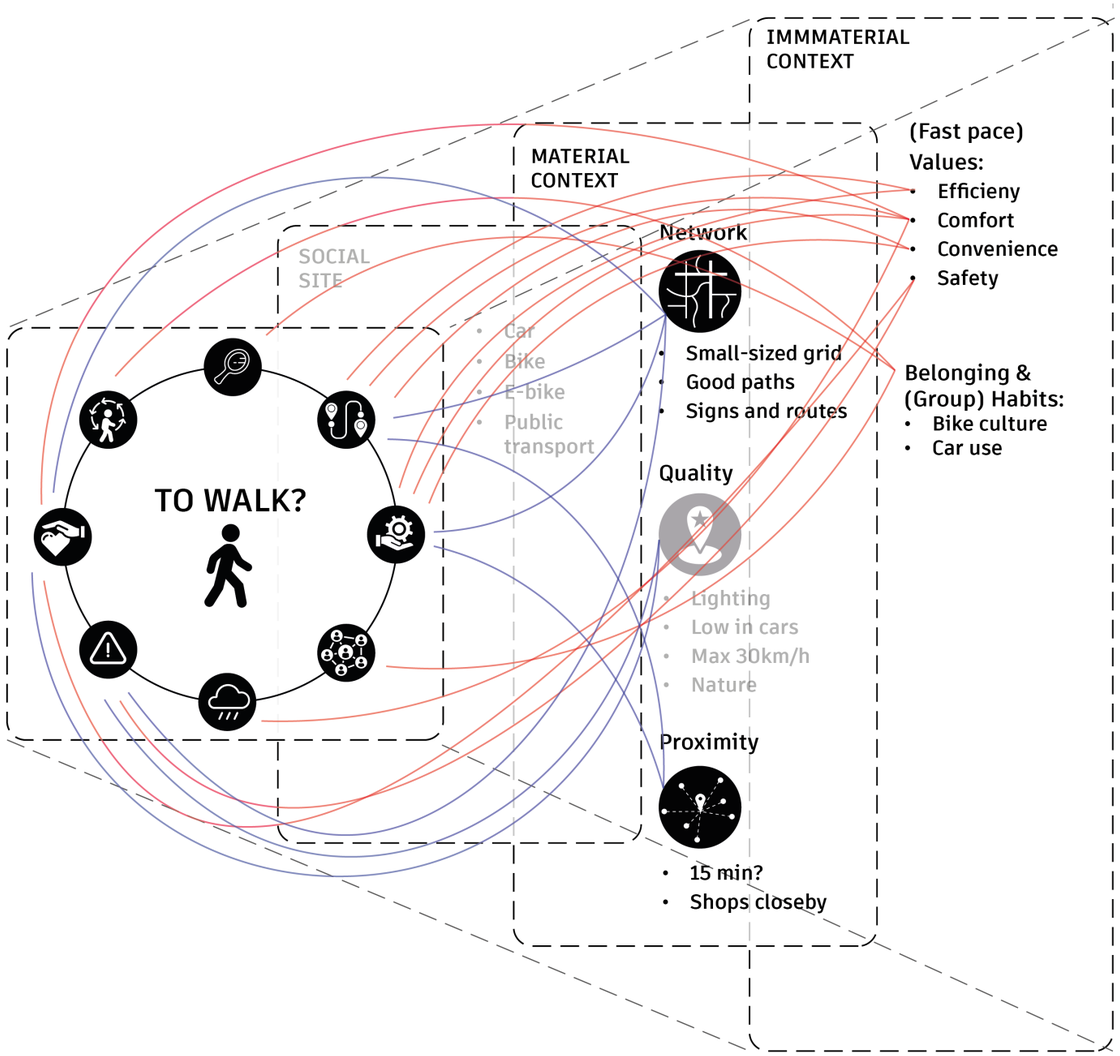


Figure 35 Practice intelligibility of walking as transport in the Netherlands

Practice intelligibility of walking as transport

The practice intelligibility of walks as transport in the Netherlands:

- **Do you (want to) identify as a walker?**
- **Will it be (perceived as) safe?**
- **Will it be practical and convenient?..**
- **Will it be comfortable?**
- **Is the distance perceived as walkable?**
- **Is it a habit?**
- **Will the weather be 'right'?**
- **Do others walk?**

The ideas behind choosing to walk are closely related to efficiency and time-saving, which means walking rarely wins out compared to other transport modes, which are seen as faster, more comfortable or safer, and only short distances are walked.

If you want to go fast (and far), walking does not seem like a logical choice.

This philosophy emphasizes spatial aspects of proximity. In general, a one-size-fits-all approach to these spatial aspects makes it probable for even less people to choose to walk.

When choosing to walk for leisure, qualitative values seem self-evident. A shift bringing a focus on the quality of a walk. This will be investigated in the following paragraphs, looking into the practice intelligibility around walks for leisure.

4.4.2. Walking for leisure

Immaterial context: Walking culture!

Unlike countries with established walking cultures characterized by promenades, ramblas, or the social practices of passeggiata and flânerie, the Netherlands lacks a comparable tradition of walking as a cultural or social activity. However, the country has a well-developed recreational walking culture, called ‘wandelen’ in Dutch (which can be translated into ‘hiking’. The term ‘hiking’, however, is often associated with walking in mountains, which is not the case with ‘wandelen’). This culture is exemplified by annual events such as local avondvierdaagsen (evening four-day walking events) and the Nijmegen Vierdaagse (Ruimte Voor Lopen, 2024). Over the past 40 years, the Netherlands has significantly expanded its recreational walking infrastructure, including the national walking network (LAWs), NS (Dutch Railways) walking routes, from station to station, and regional trails, supporting the increasing popularity of walking, as it is now the number one leisure activity in the Netherlands, meaning that most people participate in it (I&O Research, 2024; Ruimte Voor Lopen, 2024) . However, compared to countries such as Norway or England, with traditions of protesting for their access to walk in nature areas, recreational walking is not as widely supported (Ladenburg, 2020; Robert, 2015).

Recently, the recreational walking culture in the Netherlands has been growing, undoubtedly influenced by the recent COVID19 pandemic (Stichting Wandelnet, 2021). A common misconception is that walking is primarily popular among middle-aged and older adults. In reality, younger generations actively engage in walking, often rebranding it as “hiking” and sharing their experiences on social media through blogs and vlogs (Stichting Wandelnet, 2021). Walking has become increasingly “hip,” with influences from fashion trends such as “gorpcore” and the rising popularity of walking literature, with bestsellers such as ‘wild’ and ‘the salt path’ (Platteau, 2019; Stichting Wandelnet, 2021).

Motivations for leisure walks closely align with the benefits of walking explored in Chapter 2. The primary reason Dutch individuals choose to walk is for their health, followed by relaxation and unwinding, decompressing or mindfulness (IenW, 2023; Ruimte Voor Lopen, 2024). For short walks around the block (‘ommetjes’), fresh air are the main motive, followed by relaxation and fitness (Stichting Wandelnet, 2021). Motivations for longer, walks include experiencing nature, socializing, and feelings of freedom (Stichting Wandelnet, 2021). This context is closely related to qualitative values, both about the walking experience, and the environment one is walking in.

Material context:

Quality of the environment!

Following the motivations for and culture around walks for leisure, logically the quality of the environment plays a large role in determining if someone will walk. Or moreover, if they will walk there. If someone’s direct environments are not satisfactory, walkers tend venture out of their daily surroundings towards an interesting hiking destination, often by car. The longer the hike, the longer they are prepared to travel to the starting point (Stichting Wandelnet, 2021).

In choosing their walking destinations hikers value the presence of nature the most (Stichting Wandelnet, 2021). Interesting routes, with seating, signage, gastronomy and landmarks on the way, are also important factors (Stichting Wandelnet, 2021). Lastly, accessibility of the start of the hike by public transport plays a small role in the choice of walking location (Stichting Wandelnet, 2021).

Figure 36 Avondvierdaagse (van der Padt, A., 2010)

Figure 37 Uitwaaien

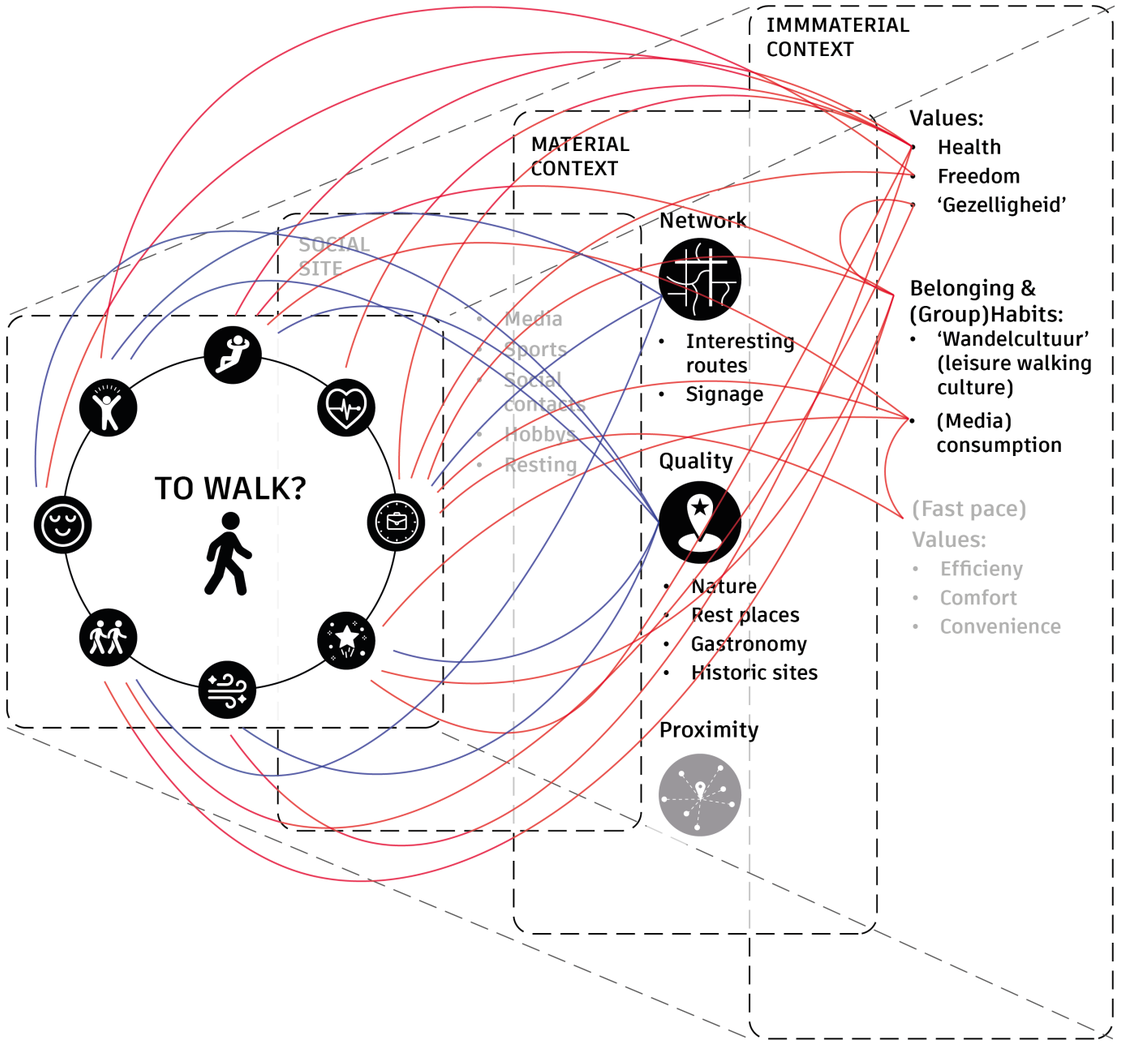


Figure 38 Practice intelligibility of walking as leisure in the Netherlands

Practice intelligibility of walking as leisure

The practice intelligibility of walks as leisure in the Netherlands:

- Will it be relaxing?
- Will it be a nice break?
- Will I enjoy it?
- Can someone else join?
- Will it contribute to mindfulness?
- Will it contribute to fitness?
- Will I feel free?
- Do I need fresh air?

These aspects focus on the quality of the walk, which . Following personal preferences, the walking environment have a big role in determining the quality of the walk. Valuing the qualities of the walking location, the proximity to it factors in less. This explains why many walkers choose to travel outside of their daily environments for their leisure walks, often taking the car to an interesting location. Their daily environments seem to not meet their standards, even when most people report to be satisfied with their surroundings, when asked what should change to make them walk more. However, the existing culture around walking for leisure presents a good starting point to promote walking.

Conclusion

After investigating the practice performance an intelligibility of walking in the Netherlands, we can start to envision an alternative future of daily walking. For example combining elements of walks for transport and leisure, such as the elements of daily surroundings and the focus on quality.

Within the Dutch context, differences between spatial and social sub-contexts will influence walking behaviours as well. Current standards for walking paths have a one-size-fits-all approach, while perceptions of walkable distances and walking capabilities are interpersonally different. Moreover, leisure walks mostly focus on non-urban contexts, while standards for the walking network are higher on urban sub-contexts, compared to rural or suburban ones. With project aims such as recognition and distributive justice, it is crucial to further explore the social and spatial differences in walking practices, considering various sub-contexts.

5.5. Conclusion

Reflecting on RQ1, *"How do current walking practices, both in their performance and social meaning, shape our understanding of walking in the Netherlands, and what implications does this have for promoting it?"*, the following insights were gained

The Netherlands is often characterized as a country of cycling ('fietsland'), yet the research reveals it is also very much a nation of walkers, with particularly a culture of leisure walking ('wandelen'). Practices such as ommetjes, lunch walks, and organized walking events like the vierdaagse reflect an existing affinity for walking, a great starting point for enhancing and expanding walking practices. As currently, walking tends to be narrowly framed as either utilitarian (for transport) or recreational (for leisure), with different standards and expectations attached to each. Reframing the status quo involves recognizing and integrating this dual identity while questioning how it can be broadened to support walking as a valued and integrated part of daily life.

The differences in walking preferences and performances, both spatially and socially, will be further investigated in the case study of RQ4, exploring the differences in rural and urban environments, and value-based lifestyles of individuals (BSR types).

5. Daily walking

5.1. Introduction
5.2. Theoretical Background
5.3. Main observations

CHAPTER SUMMARY.

Findings from daily walks and Walks and Talks (Chapter 8) reveal a more nuanced understanding of walking than current planning and design paradigms allow. Established interpretations, often focused on ‘walkable’ distances, pedestrian networks, and one-sized-fits-all approaches, overlook the experiential and qualitative dimensions of walking.

A quality-centred approach emphasises elements such as the feeling of a length of a walk, contextual (rather than standardised) and real-use path widths, the creation of nodes (where directions are chosen) instead of mere crossings, microclimates shaped by wind, sun, and greenery and every day (physical) barriers (parked bicycles, overgrown vegetation, passing others). These insights, grounded in both personal experience and validated by literature on wayfinding and weathering, informed the development social, spatial and policy patterns, and a new set of “experience patterns”. These patterns capture recurring qualities that contribute to (or detract from) enjoyable walks, and can be layered to create complete, diverse walking experiences. Each pattern is linked to broader social, spatial, and policy actions, enabling planners to integrate walking preferences from the outset.

Moreover, the analysis highlights the need to consider diverse walking types, whether alone or accompanied, in different weather conditions, for various purposes, throughout the day. A persona-based approach, reflecting distinct preferences and their daily route choices, aid in the practical application of these insights.

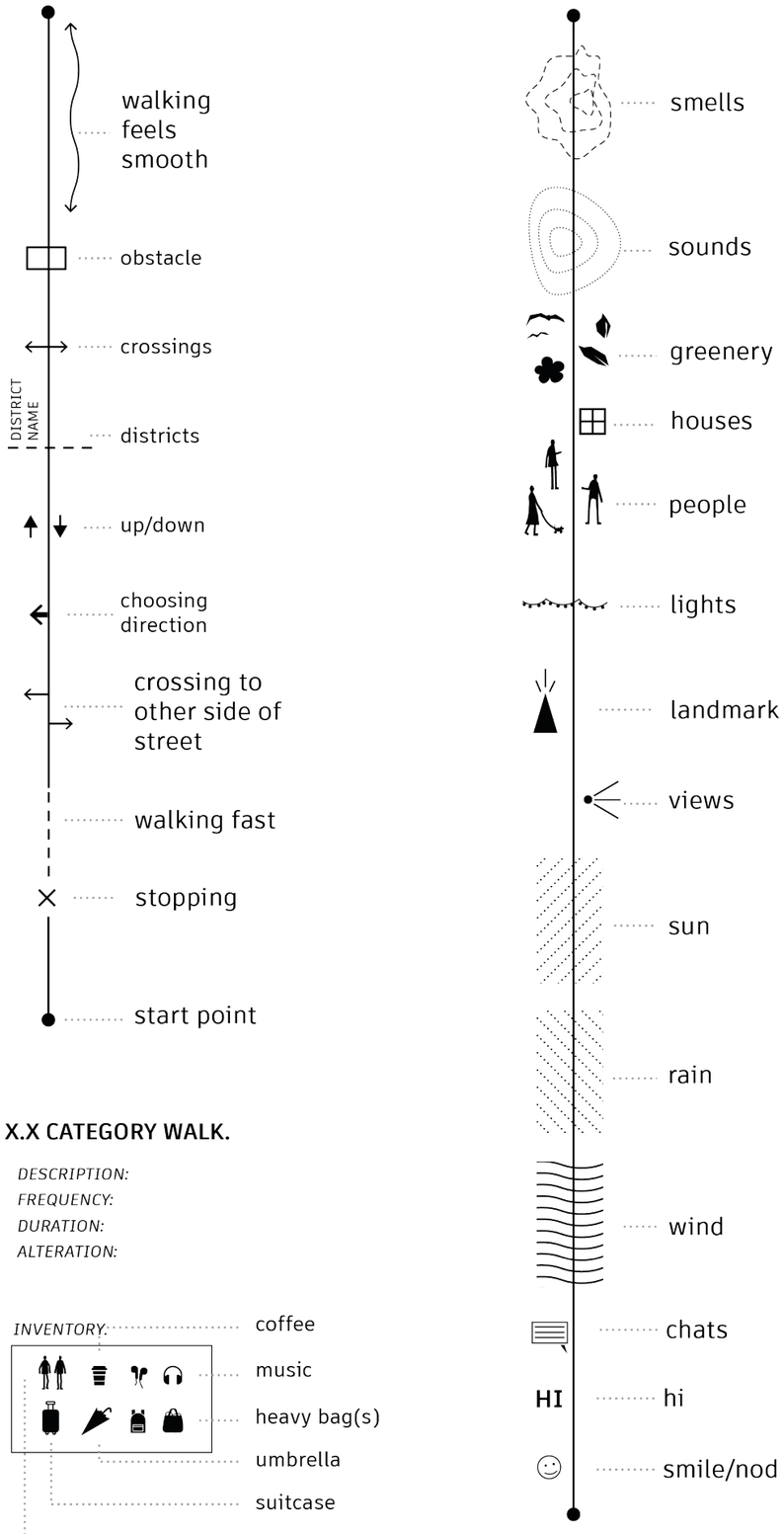


Figure 39 Legend to analyse walks

5.1 Introduction

RQ3 part one: daily walks

This chapter explores daily walks as both a method and a subject of study. By systematically reviewing these walks, the elements of a walk which foster enjoyable or unpleasant walking experiences are identified, which leads to questioning how these can be influenced with spatial, social or policy actions. All in all, these findings differ from how we typically plan for pedestrian movement.

To reduce the full experience of walking to analysable elements, a system of abstraction is proposed. This system is based in theoretical frameworks in sensory ethnography, urban wayfinding, and route theory and evolved through iterative walking practice. The abstract elements allow for a nuanced representation of full mind-body experience, of a specific subject, walking in a specific place, at a specific time. The proposed system is presented to the left. The following pages include examples of abstracted walking routes, and the main conclusions of the walks, accompanied by drawings and photos. The full inventory of these walks is available in Appendix B.

5.2 Theoretic background

Urban Imageability

In 'The Image of the City', Lynch (1964) proposes five key elements that shape people's ability to easily navigate and remember urban environments ("imageability:"): paths, edges, districts, nodes, and landmarks. In practice, these elements are interdependent and overlap, but nevertheless contribute to the imageability of a city. Interestingly, Lynch found these element by walking through cities himself and asking participants to draw mental maps (Hospers, 2010; Lynch, 1964). Moreover, he recognized the full sensorial experience of urban environments, beyond the visual cues he proposed (Landry, 2012; Lynch, 1976). Elements like sound and smell shape how we perceive the city as well.

Sensory Ethnography

Sensory ethnography emphasizes that knowledge is embodied and multi-sensory (Pink, 2015). Walking experiences are shaped not only by what we see but by how we feel, hear, smell, and move. These senses also interact . Moreover, for example the experience knowing that one is walking through nature can be shaped by seeing trees, hearing birds, feeling the atmospheric change and smelling soil. This is called "knowing in practice", which states how understanding and knowledge comes from lived experiences (Ingold, 2000; Pink, 2015). Methods of sensory ethnography values immersive observation, often represented through rich, multimodal outputs, including visual and artistic representations, which reminds of psychogeographic traditions.

Routes

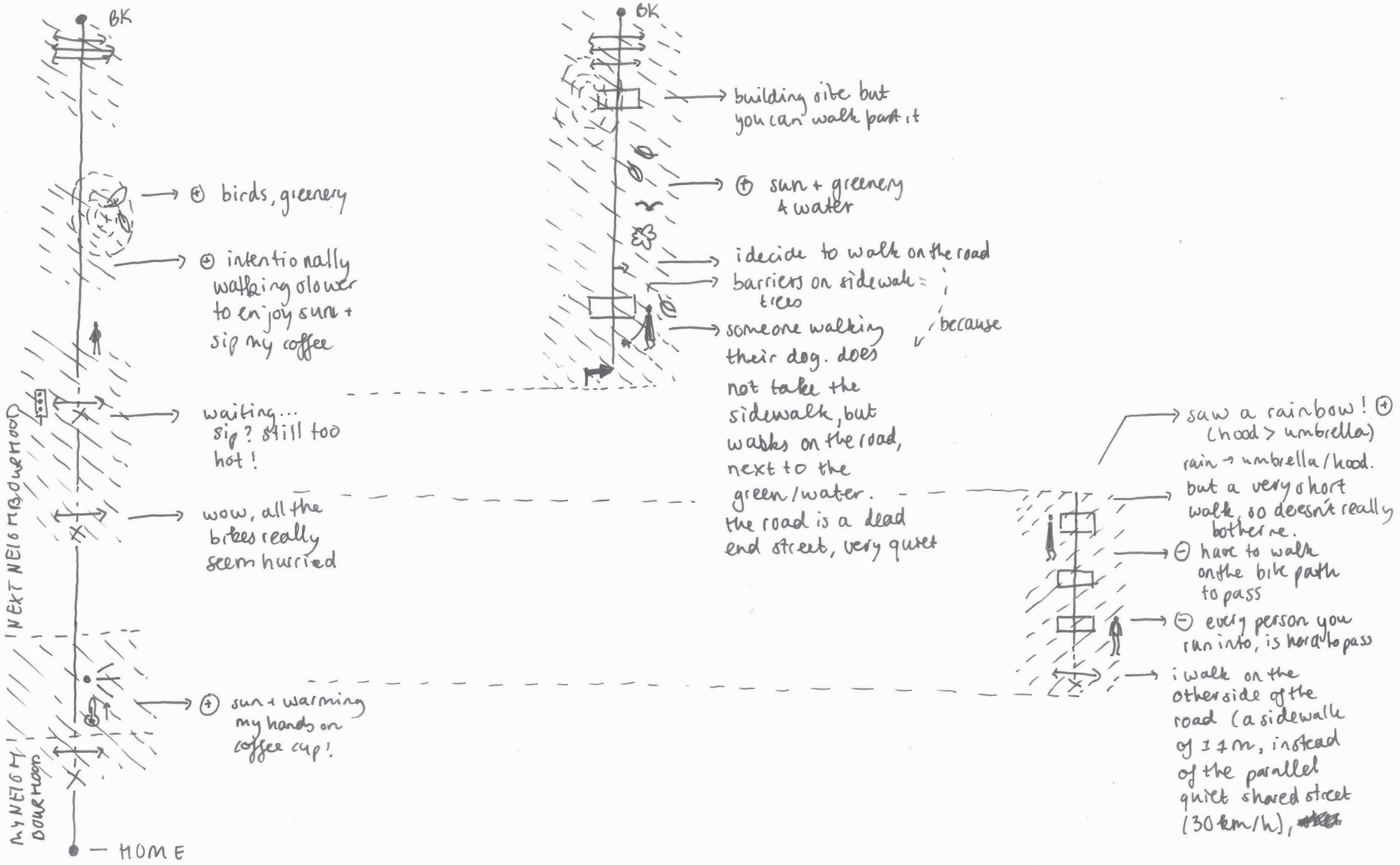
De Bruyn et al. (2014) suggest that, especially in spatial planning, routes are more than just infrastructure. A route is a flow, a process, a dymeic movement, which describes how infrastructure is used. De Bruyn et al. describe a route as composed of elements such as destinations, way stations, landmarks, foundations, fields, junctions, passageways, impacts, courses, and durations. These elements describe both the physical infrastructure and the subjective experience of traversing it, allowing for a detailed interpretation of how routes structure time, space, and perception.

Daily walking.

5.3 Main Observations

Steps towards Slowness.

Figure 40 - daily views of the same spot



1.1 TO WORK/SCHOOL #2
walk to BK
freq: 4-5 x/week
time: ~~12 min~~, start 8.30 - 9.30
alteration: with coffee
INVENTORY

1.1 TO WORK/SCHOOL #3
walk to BK
freq: 4-5 x/week
time: 10-12 min, start 8.30-9.30
alteration: different route!
INVENTORY

1.1 TO WORK/SCHOOL #4
walk to BK
freq: 4-5 x/week
time: 10-12 min, start 8.30-9.30
alteration: different route
INVENTORY

Figure 41 Alterations of walks to uni

Figure 42 Views of the sky

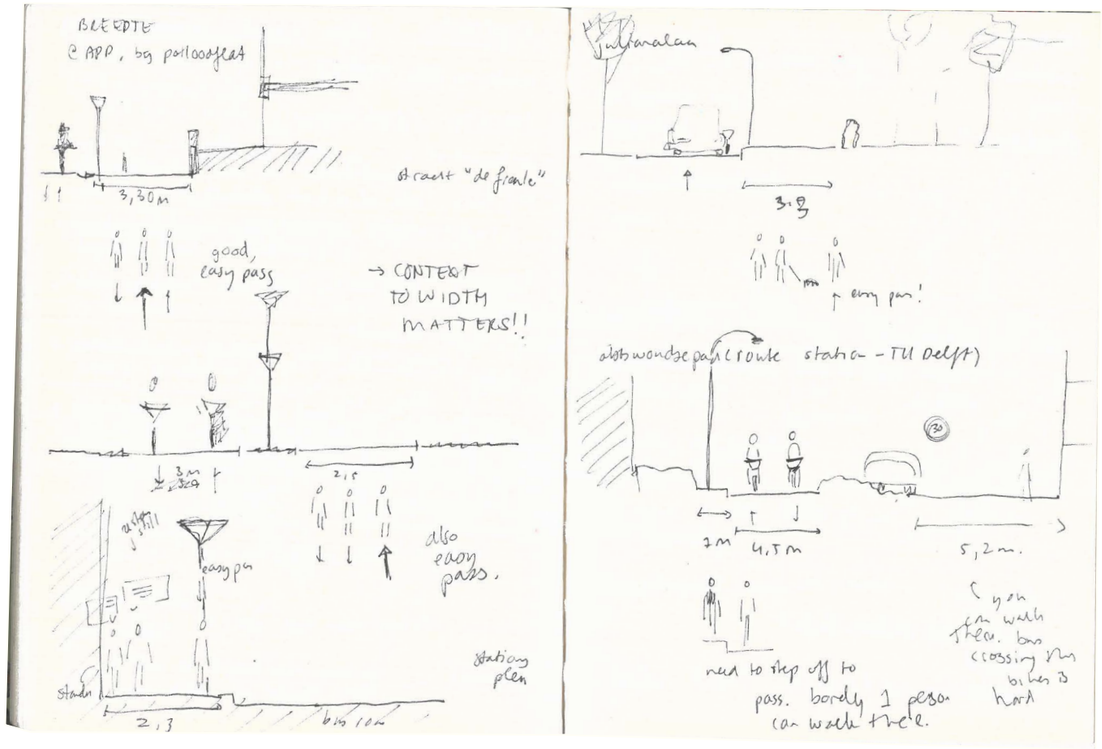


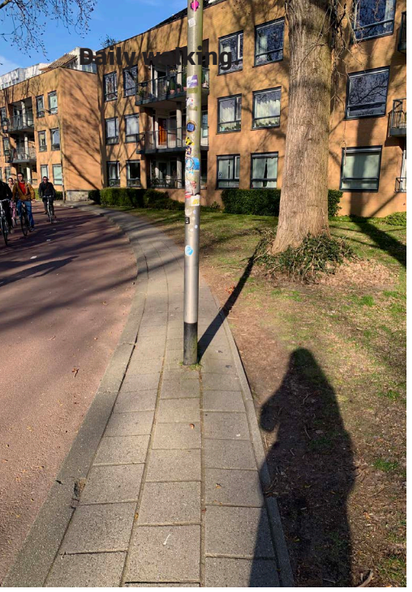
Figure 43 Observations of widths

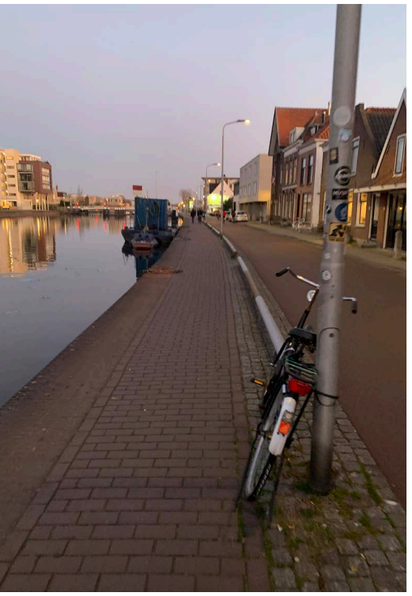
Views

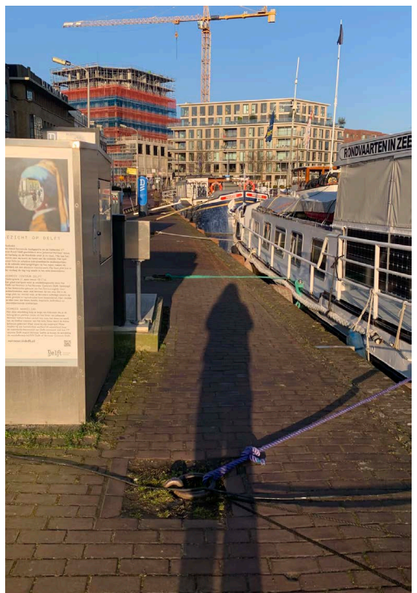
The Netherlands is flat. So views work differently. I have experienced views over the water, or even at a wide crossing, on a dyke (even 2 m higher), in an open field, a long road, 3D structures like bridges. Open spaces also invite sun, and wind. These spaces can be real qualitive and a clear route.
It can also feel like a view when you can see the sky, like a sunset, birds, or cool clouds. Especially skies are a sight to behold in the Netherlands, an ever-changing view.

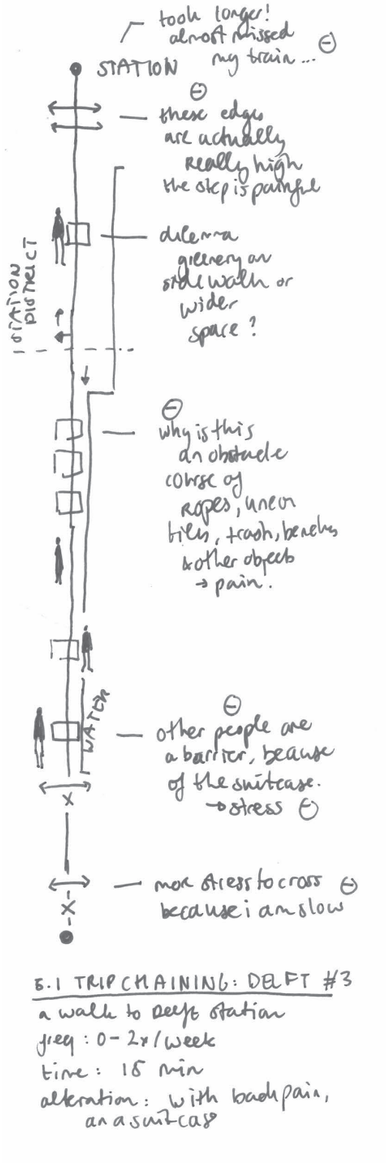
Widths of sidewalks

The widths of the sidewalk determine what can, and will happen. It should at least be possible to walk with 2 people next to each other, as this makes it accommodate to all the benefits of walking (such as there is no 'right' side, it can be social, etc), and not make it harder or impossible to walk for some individuals.
The real-life width is different from the 'technical' one. This is determined by the surroundings of the sidewalk, whether there is a plan growing over the sidewalk, or is a piece of grass next to the sidewalk, which can be used to step aside, or a busy road or water, making that impossible. The real use of the sidewalk also influences the width, for example if bikes are parked on the sidewalk, people have claimed a piece of sidewalk in front of their homes ('voorstoepjes'), people using the sidewalk to gather, stand or chat. The latter two happenings should definitely possible and brings life to the streets.









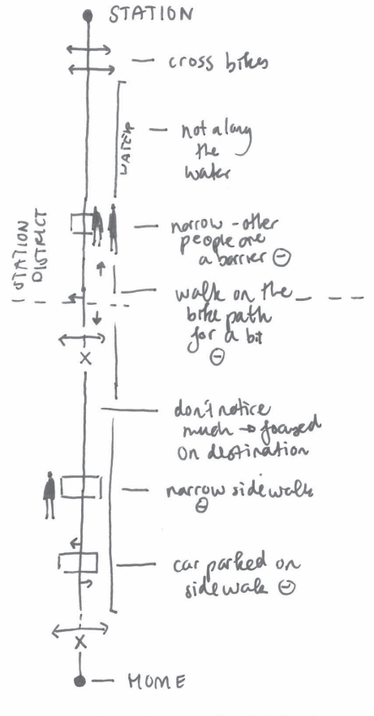


Figure 44 Photos of spatial barriers during walks

Barriers

Some barriers keep out cyclists, such as a ‘pedestrian sluice’. But do they make certain pedestrian routes less accessible also?
Passing a barrier is not a problem when there is compassion and no haste. Often barriers on the footpath, such as trees or flowers, also add quality. It is a problem that space which adds quality for everyone is always subtracted from pedestrian space.
Maintenance can influence some barriers, such as tiles that are uneven (roots), puddles (it rains a lot, and will rain even more). Roadworks are also a good opportunity to get it right, and built trust that the city will always accommodate for pedestrians (first, STOMP). This means not forcing pedestrians to make unnecessary lengthy detours, while cars and bikes can still go.

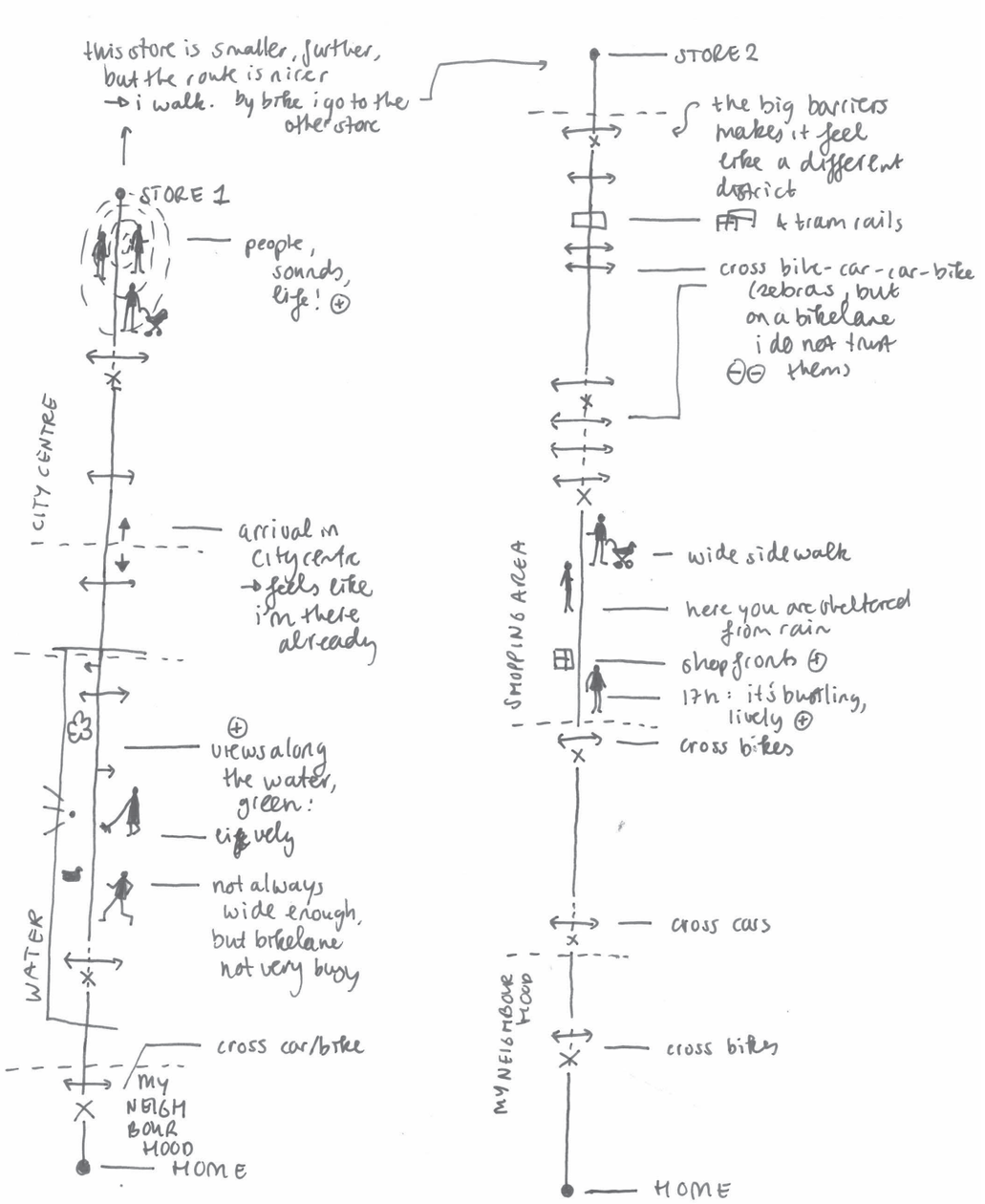


Figure 45 Abstractification daily walks to the supermarket

Figure 46 Crossing a bike street

Crossings

I almost always walk faster when crossing a road, even when there is a zebra crossing or green light.
Crossing bike lanes is very often done without help from the design of public space. And zebras are not always respected by cyclists. That can make crossing (busy) cycling routes more stressful that crossing a car road, and I trust cars more with zebras than cyclists.
Best crossings are effortless. Meaning you don't have to step off a high sidewalk, and when you are free to time them yourself. This is the case in shared streets, on squares, but also when. It can even make crossing feel like a shortcut.
A walk 'around the block' means not crossing. Heightened crossing of side roads within the block makes a block feel big, but keeps a human scale to the network.

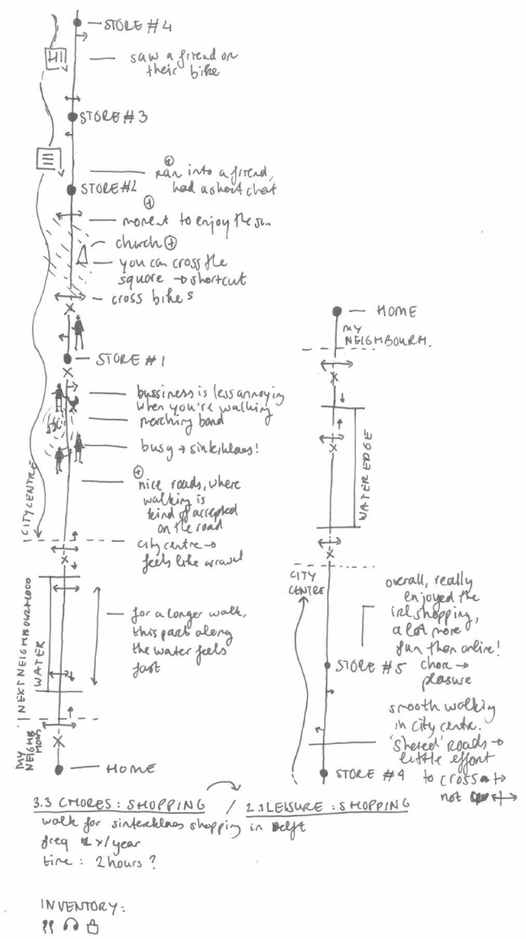


Figure 47 Experience of smooth walking

Feeling of the length of a walk

Influenced by qualitative experience, how much crossings (and if you have to stop), how many districts you pass (this you can influence!)
In a longer walk, clear, straight pieces of the route feel faster, than when they are part of a shorter walk

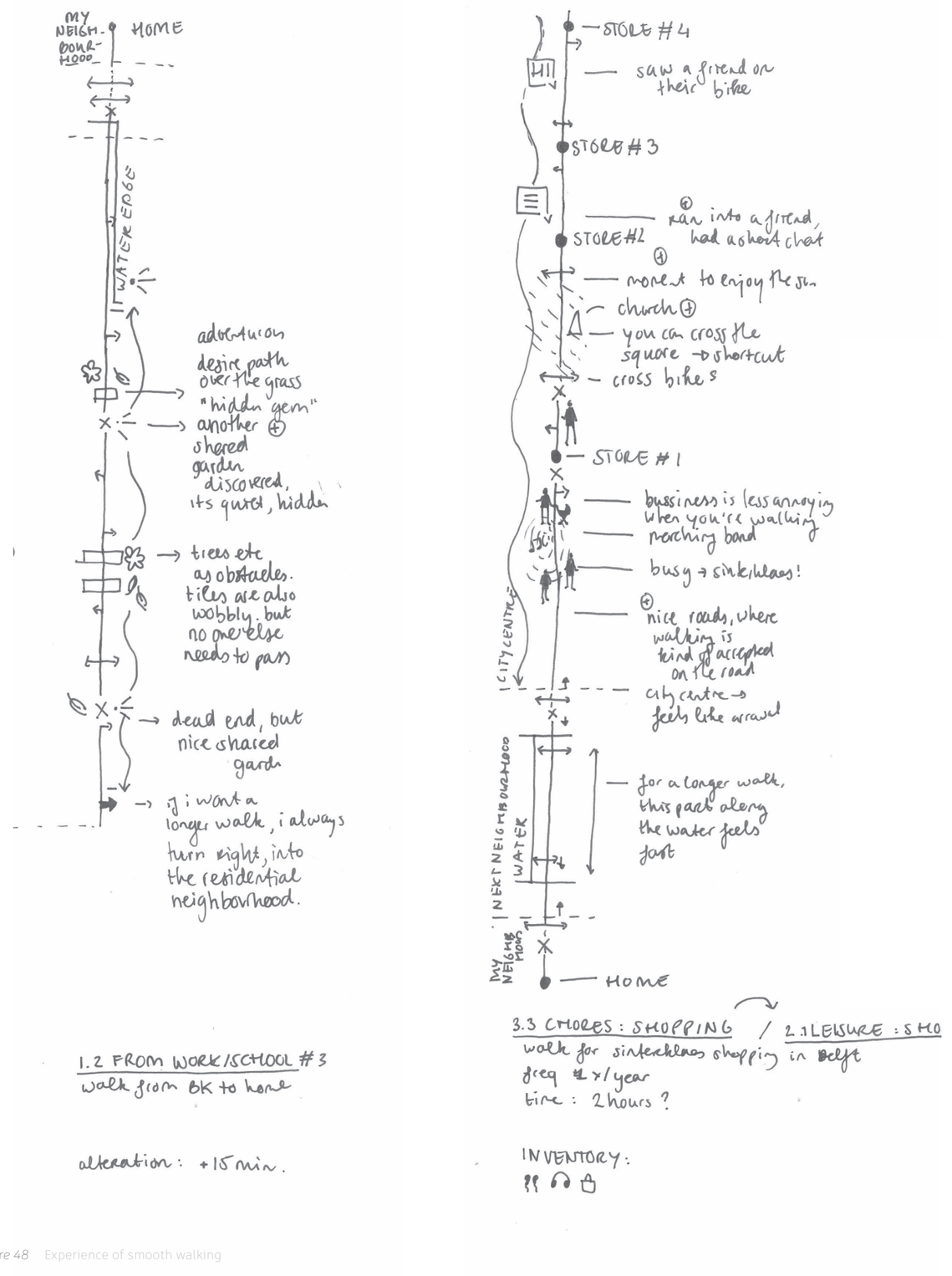


Figure 48 Experience of smooth walking

Figure 49 A solo walk and easy road, to think

Smooth walking

An experience of weaving smoothly through the urban fabric, an uninterrupted flow, which feels easy and fast. Mostly experienced that in quiet residential neighbourhood streets, where crossing is no effort, doesn't feel like a barrier. Also in the city centre, where most sidewalks are too small to walk/full with 'voortuintjes', and the streets are narrow but kind of shared, inside a 'block'. These are the best crossings, effortless for a pedestrian.

Thinking and walking

A longer, uninterrupted road, shifts less focus to wayfinding and lets my thoughts run free. Sometimes it is exactly what you need, sometimes it is boring.

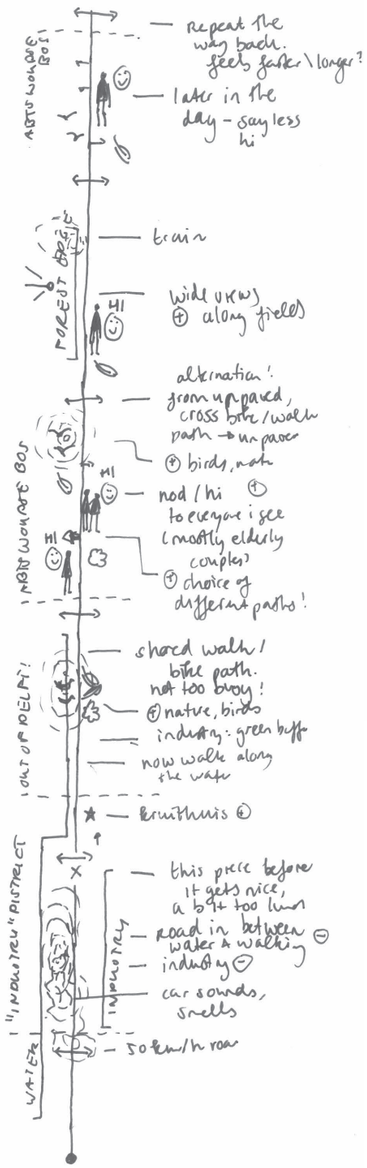


Figure 50 Waiting and observing

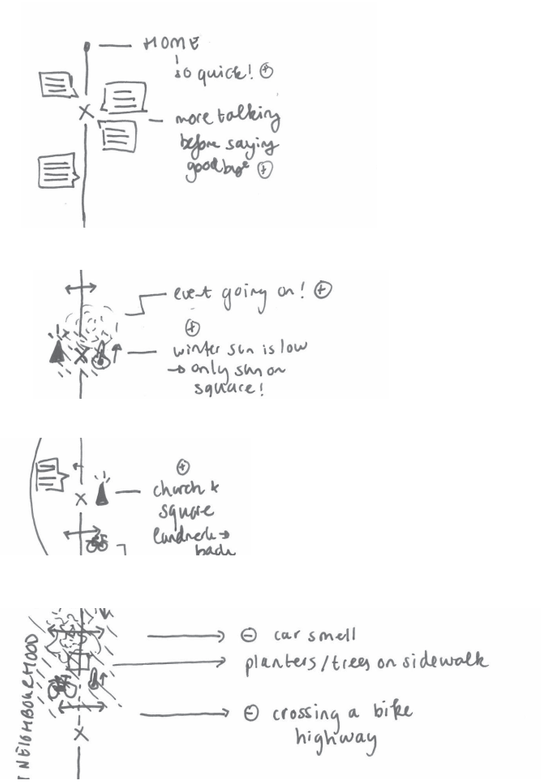


Figure 51 Moments of connection

Waiting in public space

Could be moments of connection (if not on your phone). Can be moments where car smell hits you, as cars accelerate and break at crossings.

Social connection

Overall, I say more ‘hi’ to stranger, or give them a smile & nod, in non-urban, quieter areas or a city, and more in rural places in general. For example, just outside of the city centre, people still greet each other, but when you’re in the centre, there are too many people and it does not happen anymore. Also more in green areas, even a park in the city. But it is also a personal choice. Not always in the mood, but it is nice to nod/smile to more people if you can. It can even make you feel less lonely (if you do) and safer (if you don’t). Walking makes it that when you run into people, and actually stop to have a chat (instead of passing each other by bike, or not even seeing each other in a car).
Strangers might come up to you and ask for directions, or a conservation while waiting might start.

Figure 52 Detours

Up/down

In my daily walks, only for bridges and underpasses, for water or car roads, create height differences. If these are conveniently placed, will determine your route length, and choice to walk. If the gird is too big, you can feel stuck. These bridges/underpasses sometimes are not very accessible. Very often also narrow footpath.

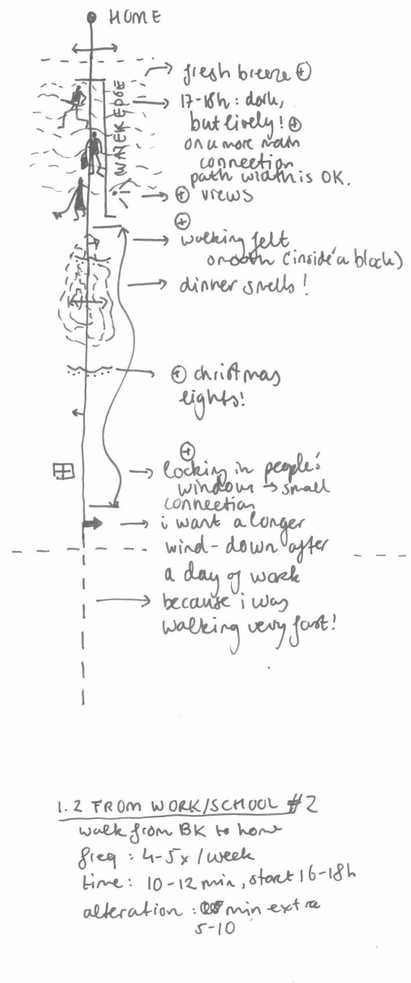


Figure 53 Windows and other connections between inside and outside

Figure 54 Collage of winter lights

Houses windows

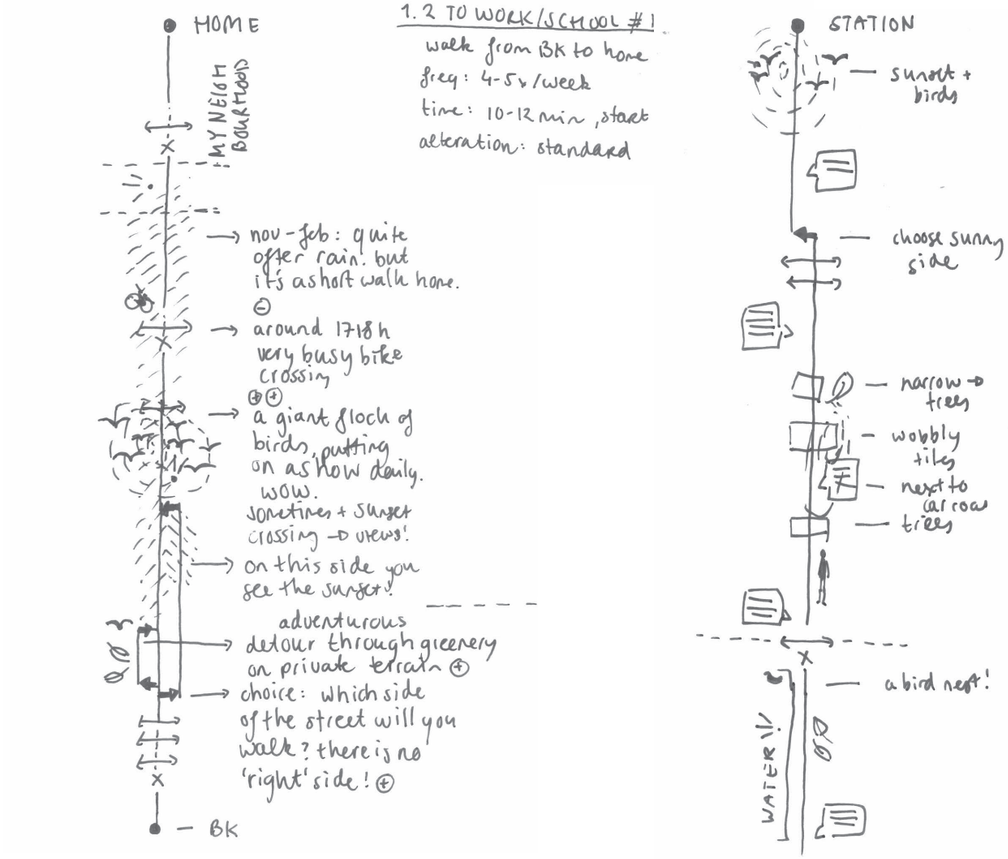
Looking in people's windows while walking past their house (a very Dutch thing to do creates some connection between inside and outside. Sidewalk next to houses makes this possible. The voortuintjes you walk past also give a nice atmosphere

Lights

A lot of seasonal experiences when you walk often, for example the Christmas lights, orange leaves, these are all fun!

A walk in the dark

A well-lit route is important. If it feels safe, it can be nice. Especially when it is quiet, it is nice for thinking, and it can feel faster, more smooth
With a friend transforms it into a different experience, great for talking open-heartedly.
When it is busy with other people, at certain times or if it is just a well-used route, it can still feel safe. When it gets dark early and a route is still lively, or when it is later but there's still a few dog walkers etc. Overall, when there's more people walking, it will actually get safer, not more unsafe (as with cars for example).
Seasonal lights, like Christmas lights add fun and feelings of safety. As do connections with people behind windows, when sidewalks are close to houses.



Greenery.

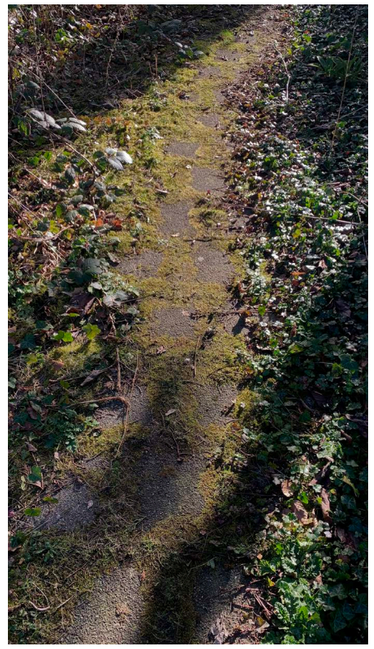
It is nice when the pedestrian area is next to the qualities of the street, for example a park. If this is not the case, people sometimes walk on the other side, not on the sidewalk, for example with their dogs

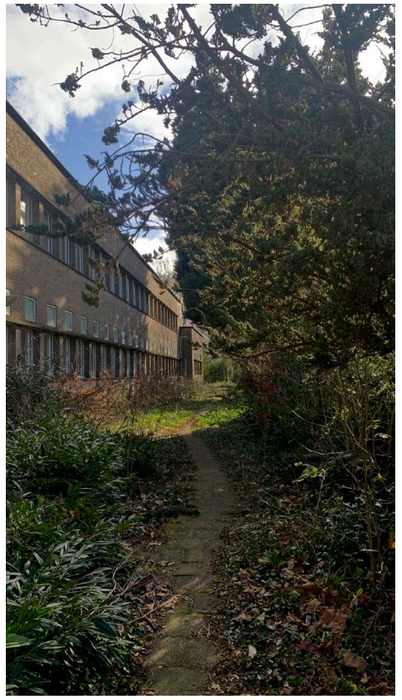
Detour on private terrain through the greenery is nice! It would be nice if this was possible in more places. This is a fun, adventurous path, in the middle of the city.

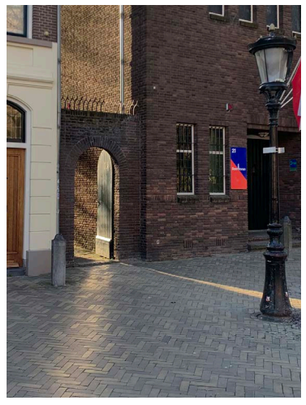
Accidental discoveries, such as a new path through greenery, a cute courtyard, an event at the city square, a market, a marching band or a rowing competition are great (the spice of life)

If you do a walk more often you start noticing where the local city wildlife comes. For example the flock of crows near BK and a the nest in a pillar of the canal in Apeldoorn (which also means that it is spring)

Figure 55 Human and non-human connection on a walk







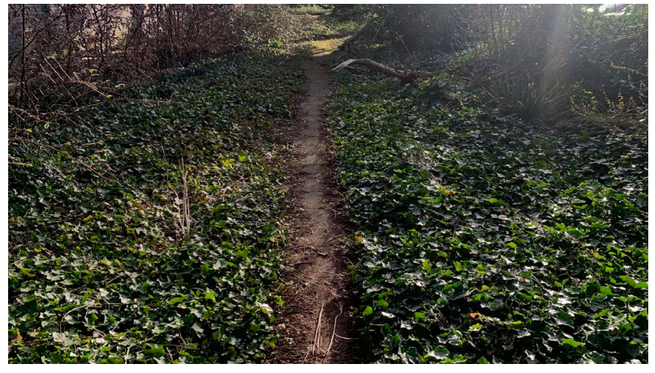


Figure 56 Collage of human and non-human connection on a walk

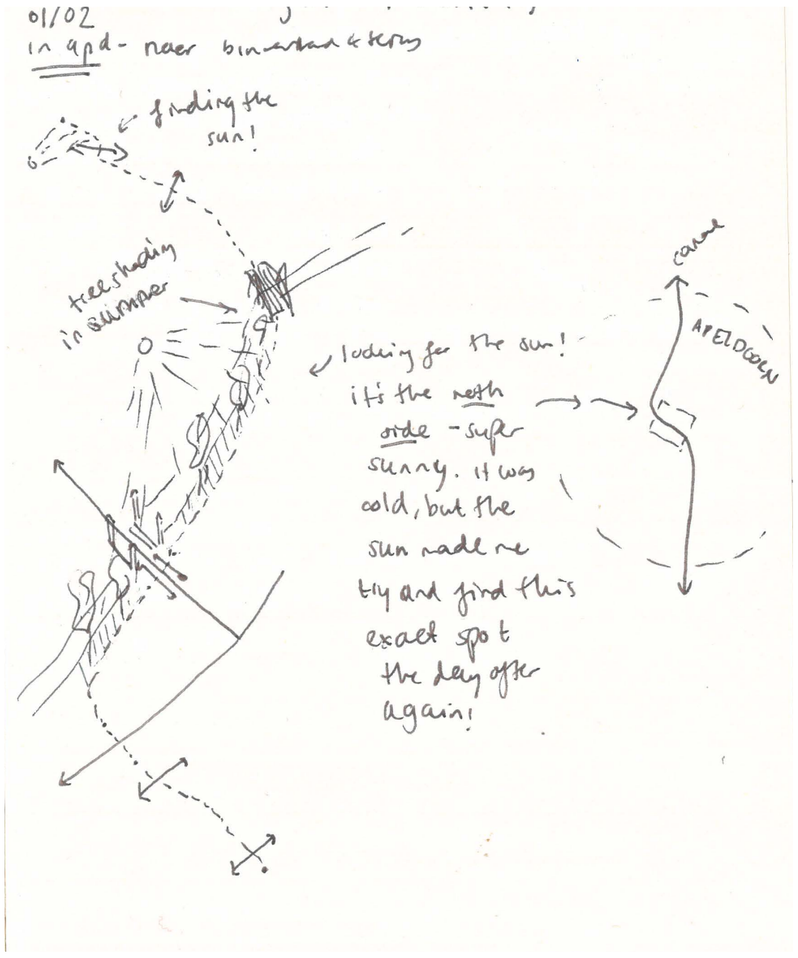


Figure 57 A walk and its orientation related to the sun

Follow the sun

Walking in winter means I am always looking for the sun, and walking on the sunny side. It's is a quality of walking that you don't have to take the sidewalk on the 'right' side! And when you want shade in summer, there will be leaves on the trees or the other side of the road to walk. Some streets are really well-oriented for sun.

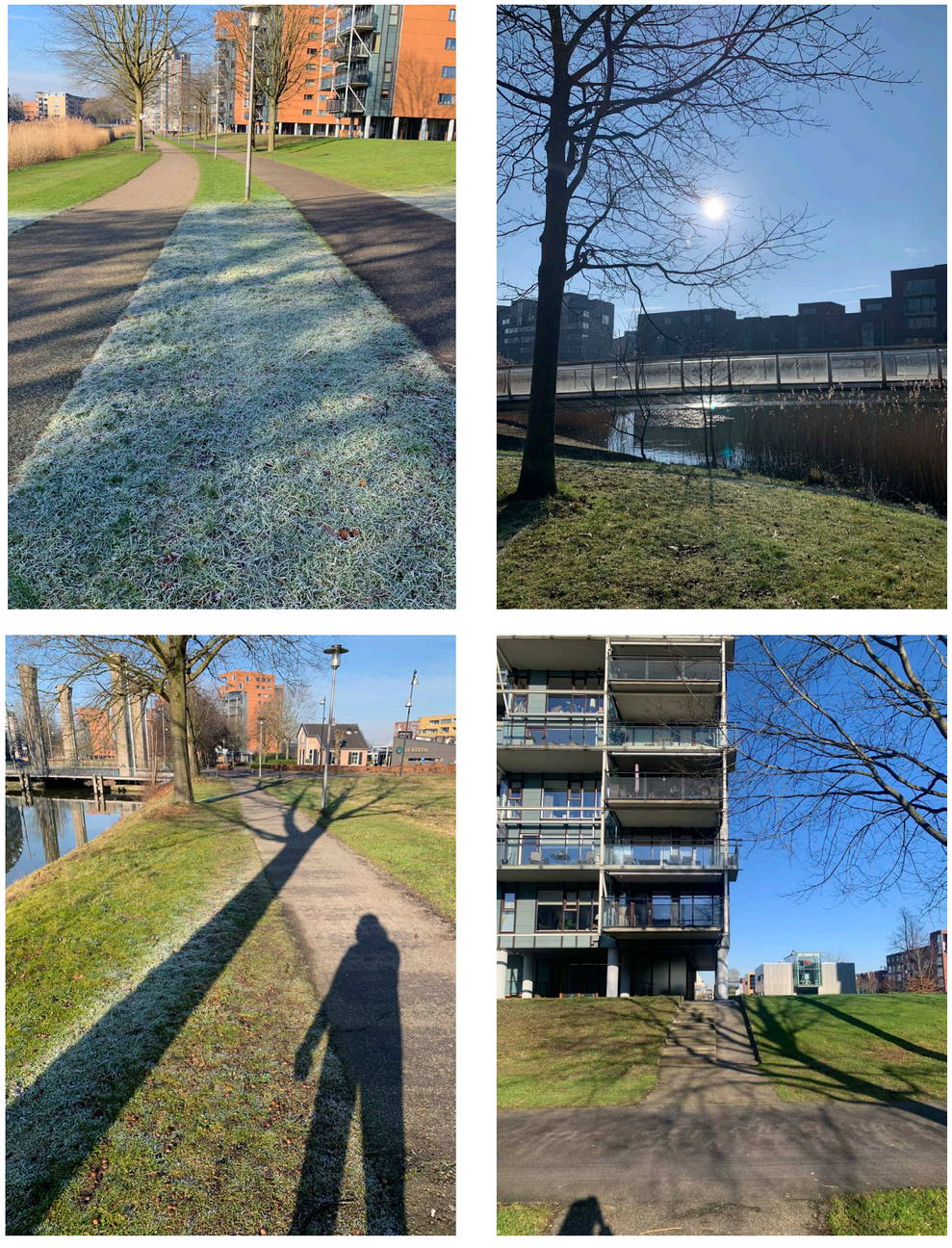


Figure 58 Collage of a walk in the sun

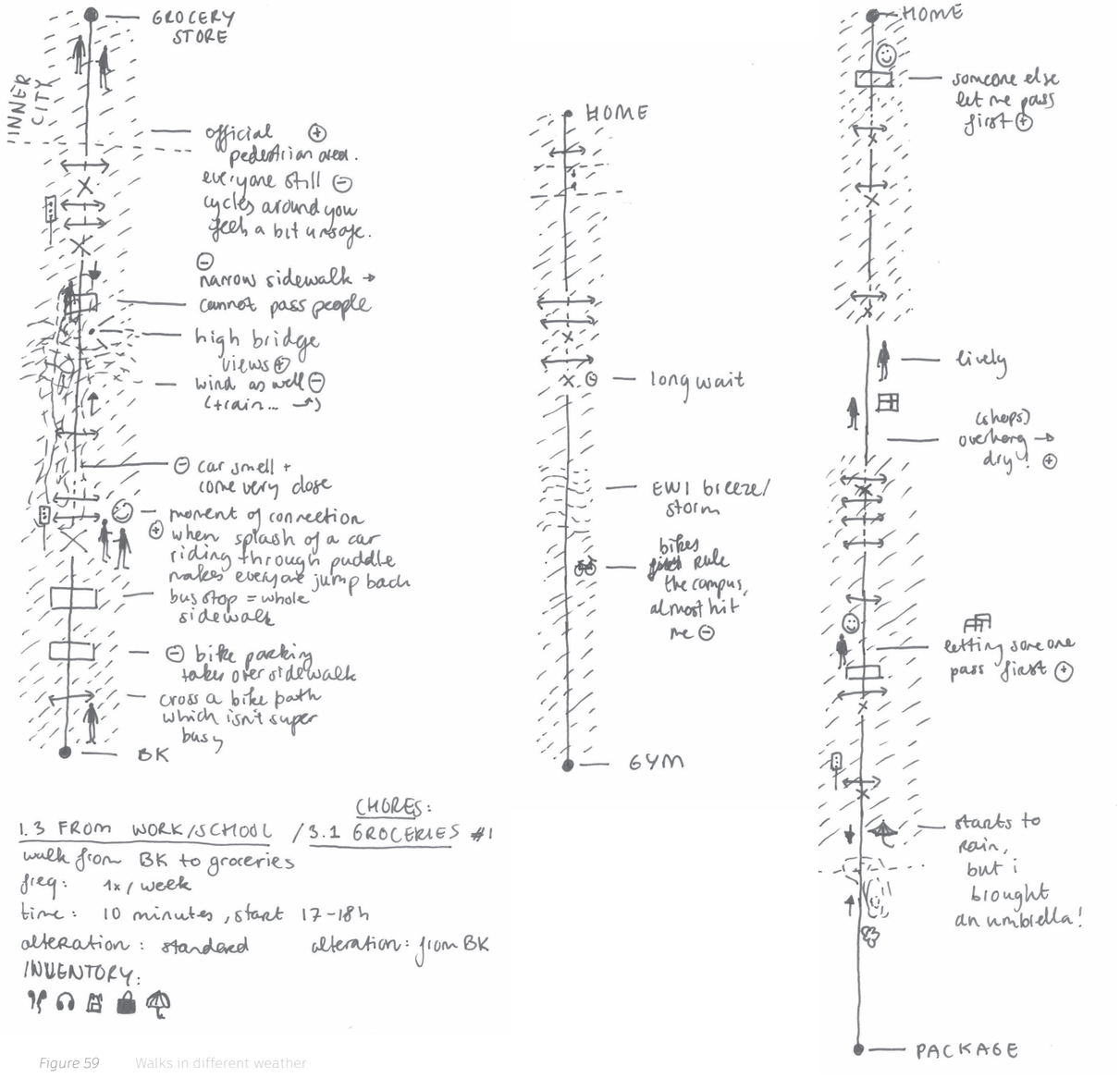


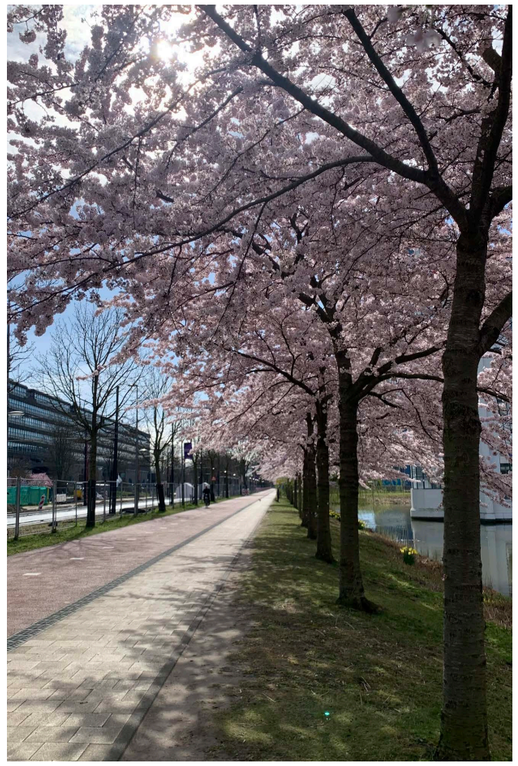
Figure 59 Walks in different weather

Rain

Rain is not as bad when you walk as when you cycle (then it hits you harder). Rain on a shorter walk, or when going homeward, I mind less. When you're walking already and it starts to rain, it is not as bad. But starting a walk while it is already raining is hard.
Overhangs from shops or public buildings are nice. Sometimes bigger buildings give shelter from rain or wind even without overhangs.

Wind

Cycling against the wind is annoying, it is less of a nuicance when you walk
Certain parts of the city, because of the streets & high buildings, really make a breeze into a storm. Opportunity to do 'uitwaaien' in the city?



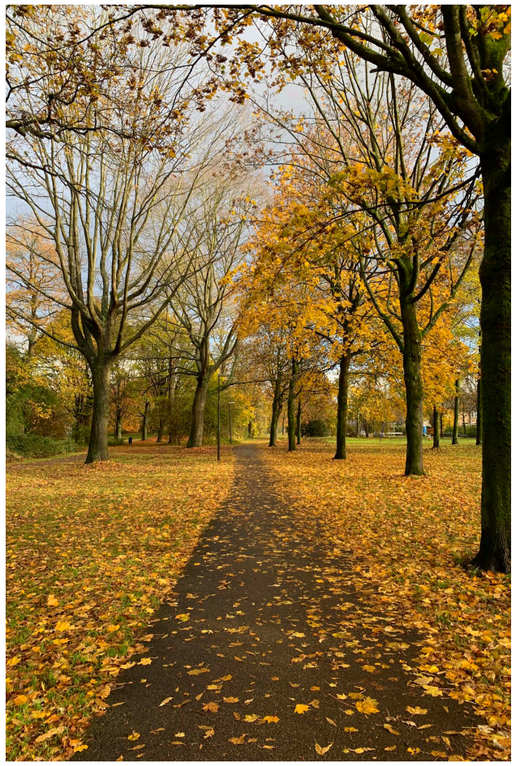


Figure 60 Collage of a walks in different seasons

Weathering

I started carry an umbrella with me at all times in winter, and chose more practical clothes, like a jacket which is rainproof and has a hood. These are the things you can provide for people for example at offices.
This November/December was like longest period without sun, with a lot of mist. I think by walking, I was more outside then I usually was. And it helped, the weather did not seem that bad. By being outside more, you get more of the 'bad' weather, but also more of the good weather. And in general, when you walk more you notice bad weather isn't that bad. You also get the good things of the 'bad weather', like the smell of rain, or a rainbow.
When winter turned to spring, all at once, everyone was outside.

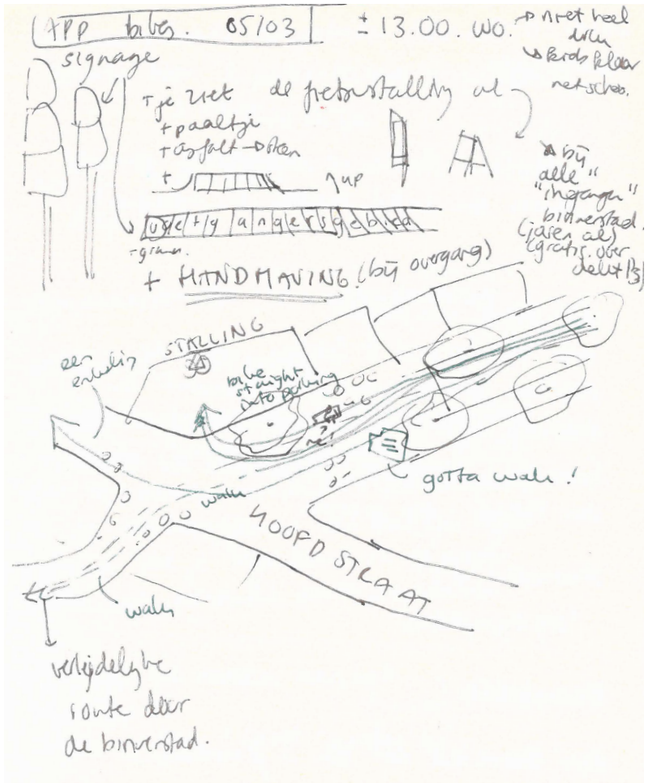


Figure 61 Observations of biking in a pedestrian area in Apeldoorn

Figure 62 Walking through a pedestrian area in Delft

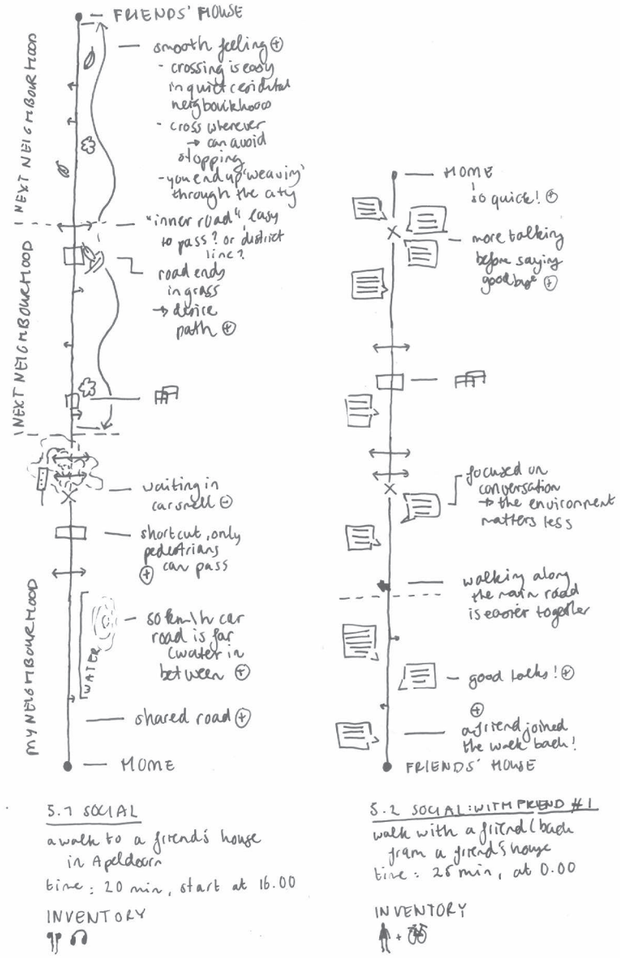


Figure 63 Walking alone and together

Feelings of safety

Darkness -> Christmas lights, other people walking as well (eyes on the street). But a quiet residential street, with houses and windows close to the sidewalk, also feels safe (also eyes on the street)
The darkness, as explained before, can bring feelings of unsafety. And then there is safety in traffic. In 'pedestrian areas' often cyclists are still allowed, but do not reduce their speed and kind of swerve around you, which does not feel nice. Bikes have a lot of audacity in that, also cycling on sidewalks etc. How to deal with that? A good example is how they got bikes out of the inner city in Apeldoorn, with a combination of inner city renewal, new indoor, free bike parking everywhere and police enforcement.

Busy pedestrian routes

The routes with are the busiest can be found by walking at 8-9am, 12-13.30, 17-18h. Then if it is dark, it is still lively, not scary, does not feel unsafe. For example the route to the station from schools. They have to meet different standards than a residential road.
Is a well-used pedestrian connection along a car road... green buffer? Good crossings. Along industry? Green buffer/voortuin. Or consider removing the car road. For quality! Easy way to give a lot of people a good walking experience.

Shared streets?

In the old city centre of delt, all roads are shared. It walks nice, but you do have to pay attention to bikes, especially in busier parts, meaning busier with walkers, for example where there are more shops. When you walk alone it goes smoothly, but walking with others makes me more stressed about being run over by a car or bike.

Alone or together?

Alone or with others you choose very different routes! What alone is smooth walking, together it means a lot of communication, so a clearer, continuous route, even along the car road, is nicer, especially if there is a wider footpath. A focus on the conversation also makes a more monotonous environment not a problem, whereas when you're alone, and looking around more, this might be boring. In a social walk I really notice my environment less (if I would, it would almost be multitasking)
Walking with three? Sidewalks are not made for that. The best is pedestrian areas, or quiet neighbourhoods where you can walk on the middle of the road.

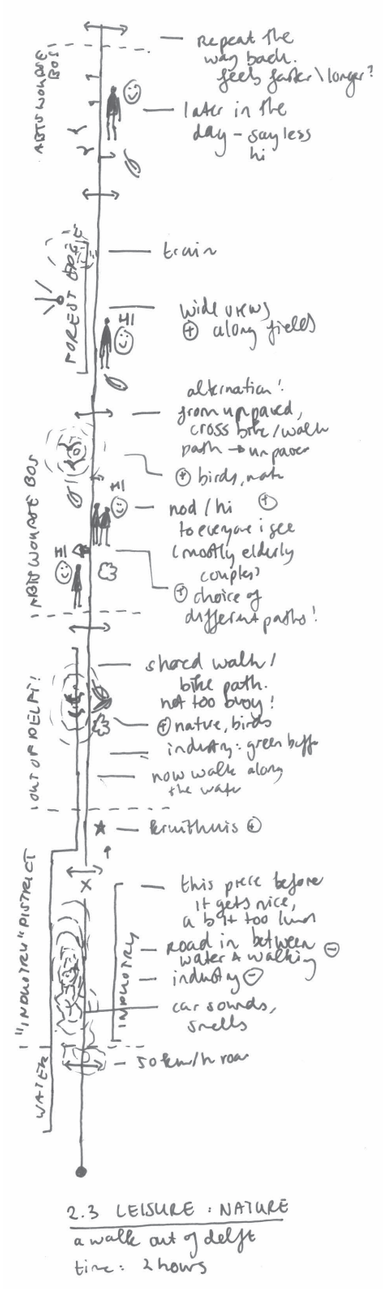


Figure 64
Sounds during a walk

Sounds

Old trees next to sidewalk give the sounds of leaves and birds. Diverse trees means diverse birds as well
An accelerating motorbike makes so much noise

Experiencing quality?

Some spaces can really use a quality boost. For example walking along or through car parks, along busy car roads. A lot of spaces related to cars actually.
If something takes over the focus of the walk, like a conversation with a companion, getting to a certain destination, or a heavy bag, these qualitative elements are noticed less. But once it is noticed, for example the sun shining, it can be enjoyed despite the focus of the walk not being the environment. There is also a difference between walk to and from the station, to and from the store in experience. But maybe you walk to the station, to be able to enjoy the walk back. Maybe the price of walking to the store is the walk back which is a bit more uncomfortable.

I'm willing to walk a bit to reach a nicer place to walk. Together more/further than alone!
Another barrier is too many crossings to reach a qualitative route (like walk along water),
A walk where there is nothing to see feels longer

All the senses

Often an experience is formed by a combination of the senses. Lively streets are shaped by the sounds of people, as well as seeing them. The experience of 'real' nature, includes bird sounds, wind through leaves and a fresh smell. A lively park is combination of lots of sounds (children, music), seeing people (sitting, running, walking, playing, working out), often feeling the sun on your face, and seeing greenery. For planning, this also means creating lots of entrances & exists

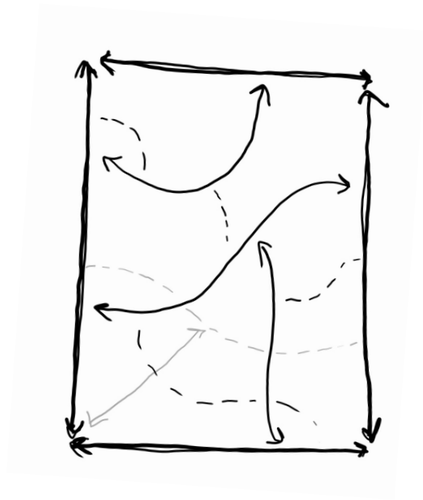


Figure 65 Mental map of routes in a park

Districts

When you have arrived in a new district, it can feel like you are already close to your destination, even when it is still a 10 min walk (for example with old city centre in Delft)
When it feels like you're crossing many different districts, a trip can feel a lot longer than it is. One official neighbourhood can feel like many different districts, when there are many barriers. However, diversity within a neighbourhood is also qualitatively more interesting. It is a balance. When a crossing is a big barrier it also feels like a new district, as when the architecture changes. There should be enough entrances and exits. Depending on the length of the walk, the size of possible districts also changes. A district can also be a park

Figure 66 Olifantenpaadje

Network

For walking, we use infrastructure in a different way, while we still plan for it in the same way – separated flows and 'efficiency', calling for a network with 'main routes'. With walking, you might use a main route the same way as maybe a street in a neighbourhood, you go the same speed for example, and roads seen as 'main' are not preferred per se, as they might not be more qualitative. A network can be way more defined by quality, not by speed or width. Main routes for walkers are the easy the recognise routes (which you then remember in your head). They could be next to water, on dyke, a clear boulevard etc.
Quickwin: a continuous network: if you have made a (qualitative) walking path, and a road separates it, make a proper crossing.
(example Apeldoorn – sketch / pic)
Some big barriers in the network can be lifted, like private terrains for sports, or industry terrains, or graveyards .
Missing links can be found while walking, often people have created their own desire paths ('olifantenpaadjes')
There should be a choice: of going for a main path, maybe shared with a bike, or a unpaved path, or along a main structure/edge, multiple possibilities should be there!

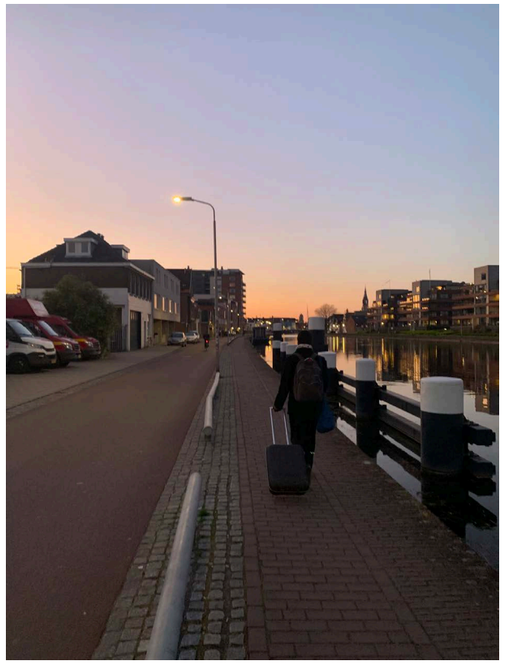


Figure 67 Situation of the walk with back pain to the station

Walking with pain

For one of my walking weeks I had a lot of back pain, which changed my daily walking experiences completely. Everything is a higher barrier to walking, things hurt which you wouldn't expect (for example getting off the sidewalk). You really notice how uneven sidewalks are, and how many elements are in the way. Which might be nice, adding to the experience, or not even a thought when you don't have pain. All of these experiences not only give more pain, but also stress.
Sometimes pedestrians are lead around, detoured. In a certain situation pedestrians had to take extra stairs, no way I'm doing that with pain, so then you have to walk a bit on the bike line. But with pain, not being able to react as quickly, I feel more vulnerable.
Try walking a route with a (rolling) suitcase, and you experience a lot more about the unevenness of the sidewalks.

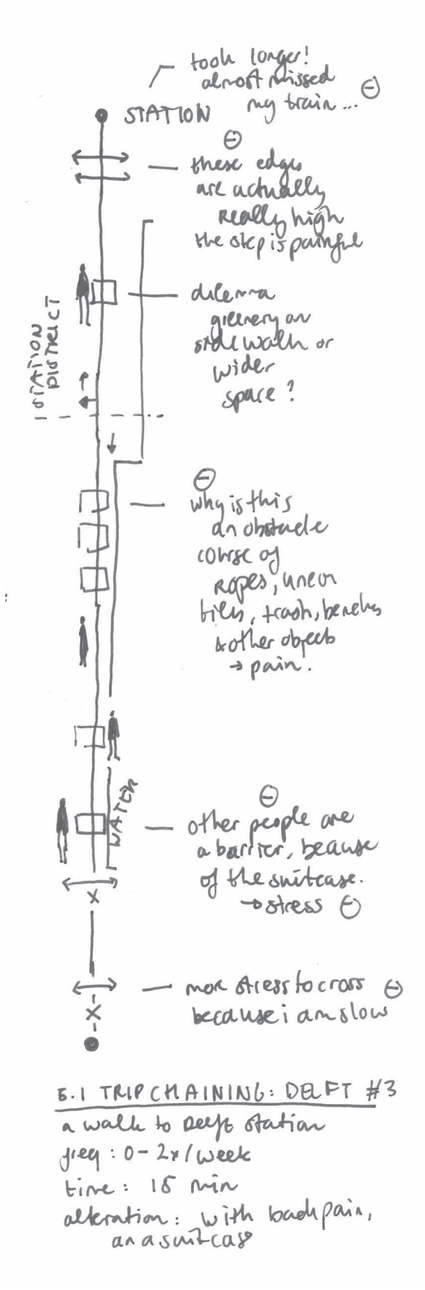
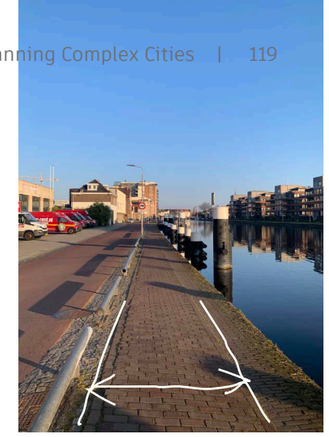
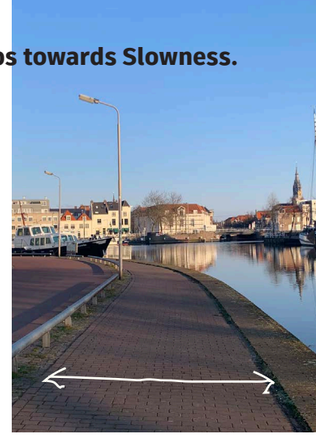
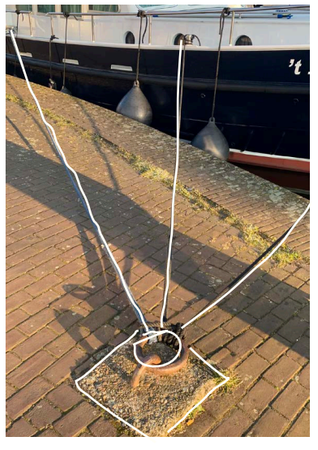
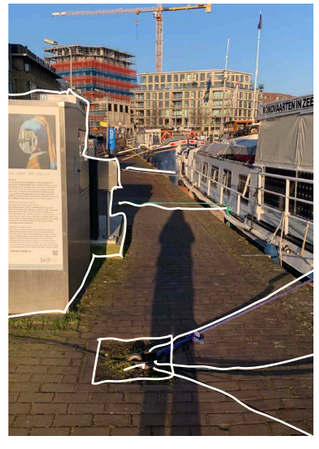
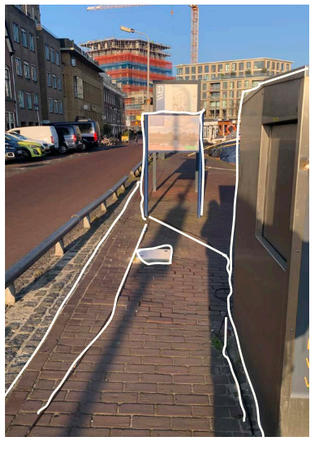
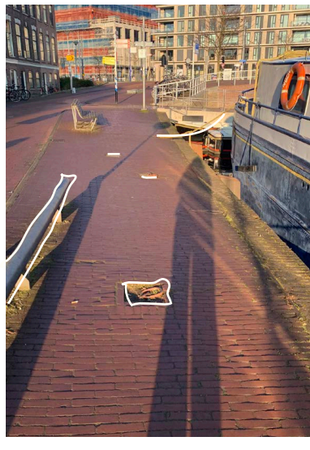
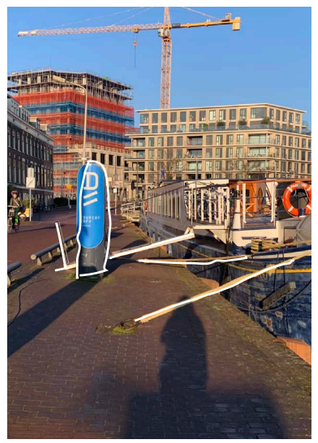
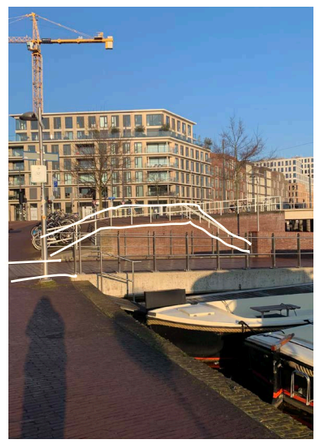
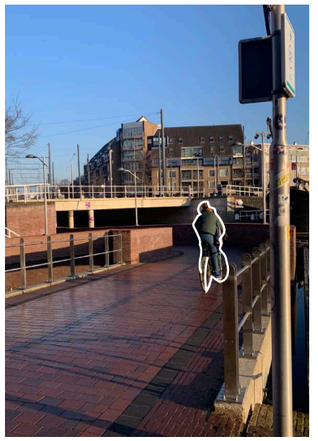
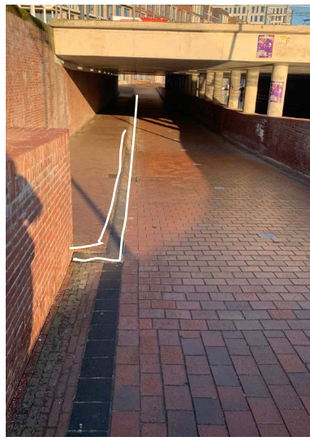
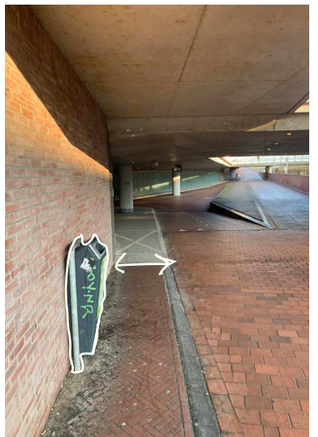
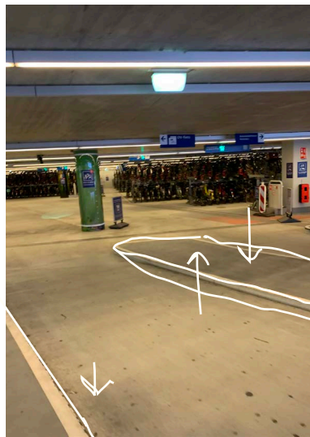


Figure 68 Observations of the walk with back pain to the station



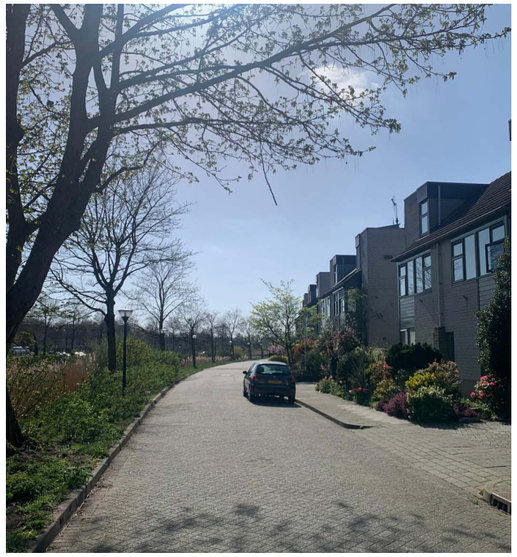


Figure 69 A sunny walk

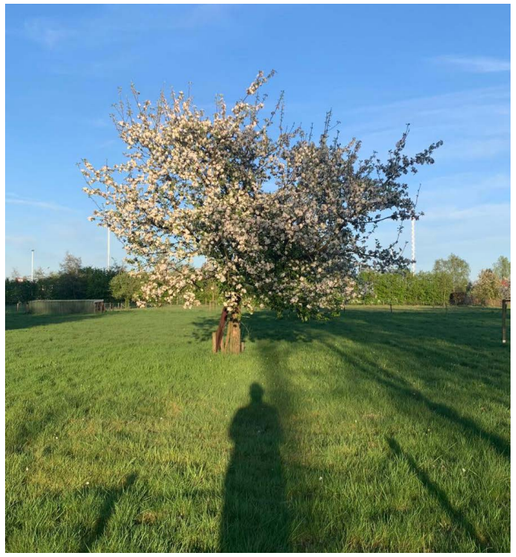


Figure 70 A spring walk

While walking, you notice....

- How nice it is to go outside, fresh air
- How free it is, being able to walk wherever, not just on the 'right' side of the road. Can even create your own paths (desire paths/olifantenpaadjes). And that within a planned, 'strict' daily life
- How flexible it is, taking a small detour is easy, the barrier to making your walk longer if you want is low
- How it is calming, relaxing and gives time to process the day. Easy way to crave that time out for yourself.
- How close everything actually is, and how fast walking actually is, you're out the door and gone. No need to walk to bike parking, car parking, unlock etc, straight out the door and you're on youre way
- How busyness or stopping is less annoying when you're walking (compared to for example cyling), as you're already going slower, so it feels less disruptive and annoying.
- How you can take anyone along, as with the bike where someone can sit on the back, with walking someone can walk beside you with their bike in their hand
- How you get to know your own local surroundings more, find the nice stops in it, start to recognize people who walk at the same time as you, start to notice the rhythms of local wildlife
- How it can surprise you, making accidental discoveries during you walk, such as a new path, a cute courtyard, an event you run into, people you run into (where you can also make someone's day better)
- How it can make the mundane, chores into enjoyable time, or me-time. That is really not wasting time.
- How it slows you down in many more ways, for example noticing I am stressed during a walk and slowing myself down (also in other aspects of life), shopping more local, etc
- How it makes me more curious

All these experiences are of course different for everyone, but you only feel all of this when you try and walk.

Am I building a habit?

To build the habit, a week of walking everywhere helped. It made me realize what I like and do not like, where to walk, how long things actually take. The only way to walk more is to start walking.

Walking to BK became the default very quickly. Walking feels like less effort, especially when it rains or there is a lot of wind. Also you can just go, no unlocking the bike etc. in general, what you are 'used to' feels like less effort than everything else!

I did mostly switch out the bike for walking, but also staying home became walking (for example from shopping online to going to stores, or instead of sitting at home, taking a walk). I also mind it less when I have to park my bike and then continue walking, for example in city centres, which felt very inefficient before.

I started walking in November, in the cold, dark, wet etc. I build a habit, and now, in spring, it is a real treat, an I am enjoying the good weather fully.

When I had pain, I only walked because it was already a habit. This is why it is so important, a habit has the power to lift barriers, also for example regarding weather.

Around me, I have noticed a couple of common walks already: lunch walks, evening walk around the block and a Sunday walk to the city centre (all these are social walks!)

Figure 71 An adventurous walk

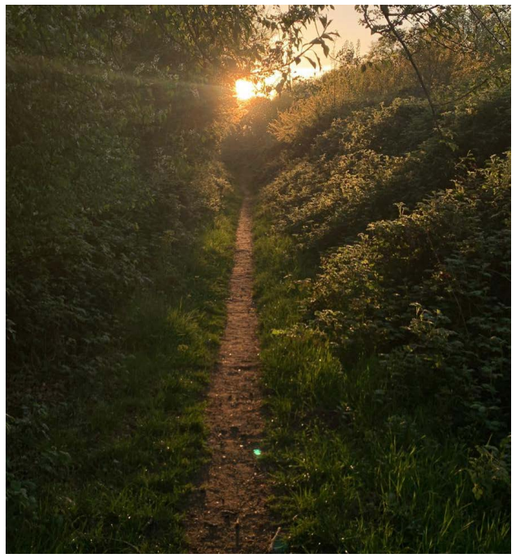


Figure 72 A sunset walk

What can we not influence?

Sometimes a walk feels stressed, hurried, for example when you have to catch a train. Walking fast is not always 'bad', sometimes it is a nice way to walk it off, a 'brisk' walk through the cold etc

Sometimes you might multitask too much during a walk, which makes it less relaxing (for example make a phone call, write down ideas in notes app, return a book to the library, all within a small walk), but it happens.

Sometimes the focus of a walk is to get to the train, or to do groceries, which can makes a walk not as enjoyable, as hurry or a heavy bag overpowers the experience.

Sometimes a walk takes so long, that that makes you stressed (we are too used to things going fast)

Sometimes a walk does not take away stress

Sometimes the weather really makes a walk unenjoyable, for example a combination of cold wind and rain

6. Change Points

6.1. Introduction
6.2. How do we spend our time?
6.3. Change points in daily life
6.4. What roles can walking have in life?

CHAPTER SUMMARY.

Viewing walking through the lens of change points reveals opportunities to initiate and sustain walking. In this, walking is not an extra activity to add to a full day, or a merely break, but an integrated practice, embedded into all dimensions of daily life. Key daily opportunities include commuting, walking integrated into work- or schooldays and lifting barriers to walking for chores, while walking fulfils social, fitness and self-realization goals. In a year, walking traditions and seasonal shifts present opportunities. Key moments in a life include when a child is born, starts to walk or goes to a new school and when someone moves, buys a car, gets a pet or starts a new job.

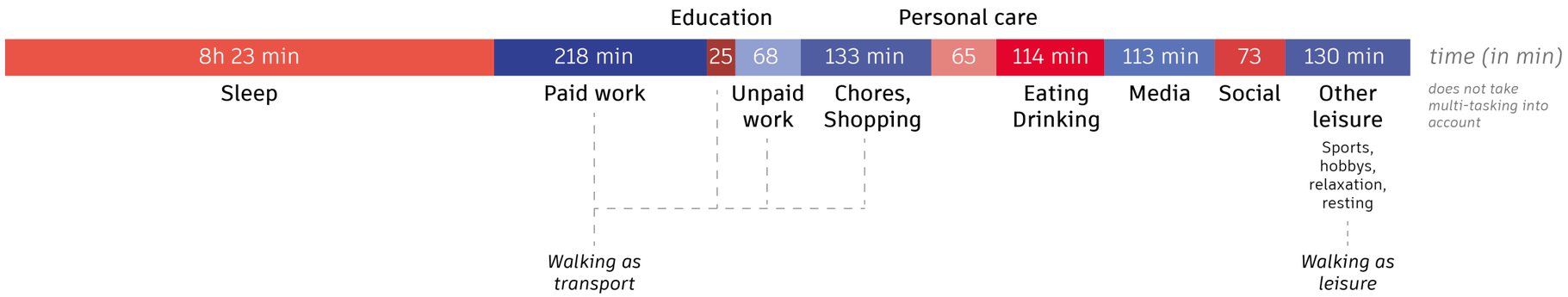


Figure 73

How we spend our time (aged 15-64). This data is based on time-dairy reports (Based on: https://ourworldindata.org/time-us, https://digitaal.scp.nl/eenweekinkaart2/een-week-in-vogelvlucht/, https://digitaal.scp.nl/eenweekinkaart2/vrije-tijd/)

6.1 Introduction

RQ2 part one: change points

This chapter investigates how walking can be embedded more meaningfully into life by identifying “change points”: the moments in everyday life where routes can shift (a concept of Practice Theory). These moment occur during a single day, but also during a year or lifetime. The research sets off with assessing how we spend our days in the Netherlands. Next, the analysis assesses opportunities for integrating walking into more aspects of daily routines, such as work, commuting or education. The benefits of walking, as assessed in the literature review, form a basis in identifying when and how we can walk. The chapter aims at discovering a society-wide perspective on promoting walking, focusing on the generalized context of ‘daily life’. Findings will be refined with input from RQs 3 and 4, where contextual diversity is more closely examined

6.2 How do we spend our time?

On average, a day in the Netherlands is spent working (both paid and unpaid), studying, sleeping, on personal care, housework and shopping, eating and drinking, media, seeing friends and family and ‘other leisure’ activities (Ortiz-Ospina et al., 2020). Other leisure activities include time spend on hobby’s, practicing sports, resting and relaxation (I&O Research, 2024; Roeters, 2019). The time-use in the figure about spans ages 15 to 64, which explains that less than 8 hours each day are spend on work or education, while for many this is the reality. Moreover, the graph does not take multitasking into account, which, especially in media use, plays a big role nowadays. It is a way to, seemingly, create more hours in the day. However, it is a good starting point to review how we spend our time.

In the Netherlands, walking is the leisure activities most people participate in, but, as we have seen in this research, walking is hard to put into only one of these leisure categories (Roeters, 2019). Moreover, it also is a part of the time we spent on transportation, which is classified in categories such as work and chores (Roeters & Vlasblom, 2019). These daily activities (work, school, personal care, chores, media consumption, social time and leisure such as hobbys, sports and relaxation) present an opportunity for change, where walking can become a part of daily life, adopting both a bigger and a broader role, beyond functional transportation and leisure walking in the traditional sense. Based on real-life examples, creative initiatives and traditions in walking across cultures and countries, we can propose different ways of walking in all daily activities.

In time-use studies, social differences are also evident, where groups different genders, ages have very different time-uses, tasks and availabilities. Finding a role and possibilities for walking in each of the separate daily activities is essential to give everyone access to integrating walking in their lives, be it during work, volunteering, chores, education personal care, social time or leisure.

6.3 Change points in daily life

(Un)paid work

Changes during work are impactful, as it is where we spent a big amount of the time we are awake and most of this time is spend sitting. Finding space to walk within this chunk of time (often eight hours a day, plus the average communing time of one hour), is an easy way to move more, improve your work and health (CBS, 2024).This is attractive for employees and employers alike, as happier and healthier employees are more productive: even moving for only 5 minutes creates a 60% increase in productivity (Oppezzo & Schwartz, 2014). Walking should become an essential part of the workflow, not an unpaid break.

Types of walks:

Commuting by foot transforms passive time into qualitative experience. On average, Dutch people travel 25 kilometres to work and travel 30 min (CBS, 2023b). In 30 minutes about 2,5 km can be covered by foot. For many, work is not that close. If it is, cycling still is a lot faster, which makes it an attractive choice. A commute by foot can also be part a chain trip: park your car further away or get off the bus, train or tram one stop earlier, and walk to work.

Walking for work, not during work, as it is not a ‘break’, but as an essential part of a

productive workflow, can have many forms (Pallotta, 2024).

A short, 5-10 minute, walk for example. It helps to have them at a fixed time during the day, for example at the end or start, which could be goal-setting or reflective walks, or at 11.00, when there is a coffee-break moment. Sometimes a 5-10 minute walk can even be made indoors, depending on the aim. Lunch walks, during the midday break, are becoming a habit in many becoming a habit in many workplaces. It is a refreshing, social break. These vary from hour long walks, to a 15 minute trip to the supermarket and back. 'Weetings' fully integrate walking with work, in the form of a having meeting with a small group while walking (de Vaan, 2021). These are especially suitable for brainstorming, support meetings, teambuilding or solving complex problems. Ideally, points on the agenda can correspond with points along the route that is walked (de Vaan, 2021; Stichting Wandelnet, 2025). Even videocalls can be transformed into weetings, where the participants put their headphones, and all walk their own route. Moreover, software like Microsoft teams has dictate functions, you should miss nothing. Job-specific walks should be prominent in a workday as well. They include site-visits for architects and engineers, inspiration walks for artists, nature walks for ecologists, and more.

Initiatives

Initiatives that invite and support walking for work are for example weeting routes, national days of walking, a 'wandelkast', step-count challenges, travel compensation funds:

- The Campus of the TU/e campus has several weeting routes, of different times, and provides the opportunity to book 'WorkWalks' as a meeting space, with designated startpoints.

- Wandel Tijdens Je Werkdag '25, at the 4th of April is an initiative of Wandelnet. Wandelnet gives tips to walking during the workday, creates engagement through social media (#wandeltijdensjewerkdag) and encourages employees to invite their colleagues to participate, and employers to activate their employees .

- Outdoor Office Day, 15th of June, is an initiative which not only encourages people to walk, but also work outside.

- 'Wandelkast' is an initiative, where a company provides a closet full of items that make it easy to have walking meetings, which all employees can take. The PostNL headquarters for example provide umbrellas, ponchos, pedometers and various suitable walking routes in their wandelkast.

- Weeting guides, which include tips for weetings, such as what to take, making

Figure 74 TU/e Workwalks (Retrieved from: https://www.tue.nl/universiteit/our-campus-landing-page/work-on-campus/workwalk)

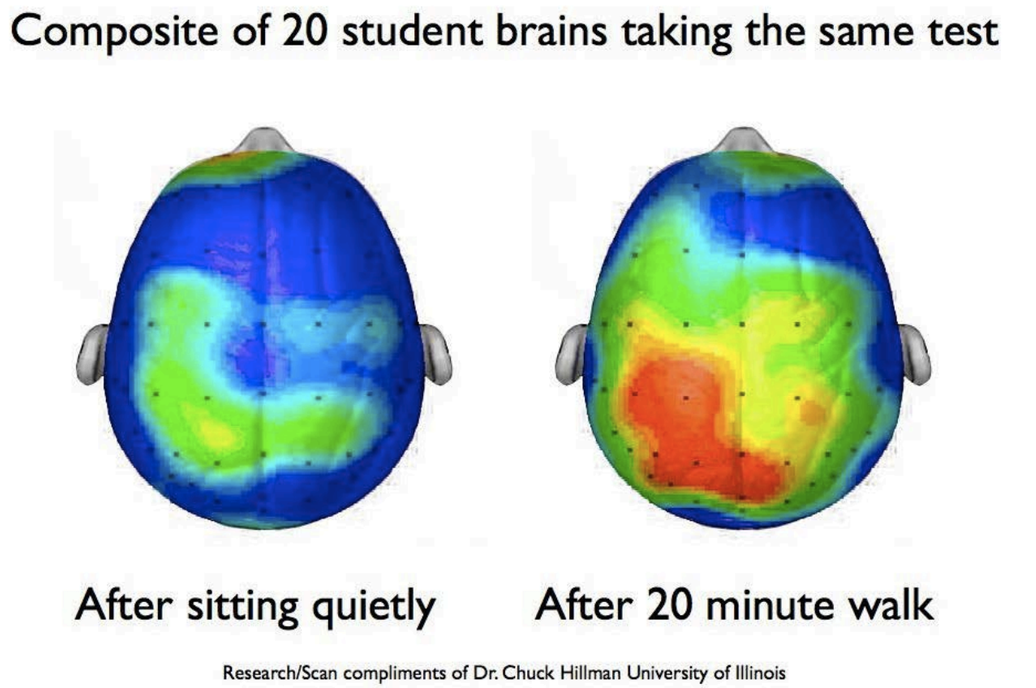


Figure 75 Effects of a 20 minute walk on the brain (Retrieved from: https://www.weeting.nl/wp-content/uploads/2015/06/brain-scan-e14334095115561.jpg)

'walking' an official place where you can go for a meeting, have set routes as a company etc.

- 'Kilometervergoeding' (compensation for travel to work) at ANWB 18 cents for each kilometre travelled by foot of bike, commuters who drive only receive 15 cent per kilometre.

Education.

Similar to the workplace, individuals spend significant time in school, where the cognitive, physical, and social benefits of walking align well with learning. More importantly, students, regardless of their age, are continually learning more about the world around them and about themselves, still developing their habits and preferences, making schools an ideal setting to introduce various walking experiences, and create good memories around walking.

Types of walks

Opportunities for walking during the school day mirror those in the workplace, including the transport to/from school, walking for learning, and lunchtime walks. Study walks are a key opportunity as well, where walking can be incorporating into the curriculum, such as science, nature, or history walks in relevant locations.

Initiatives

The Daily Mile is a 15-minute walk/run designed to support mental and physical wellbeing in schools. Currently, the initiative is implemented in primary schools, with many (about 700) across the Netherlands already participating. Tips for this initiative are to just try it for a week (as a teacher or school), and make use of the spaces around the schools, such as the schoolyard or a local park. And let the kids enjoy it!

Avond4daagse, is a yearly walk event, organized at the start of summer, mostly linked to primary schools. It is an initiative from the Royal Dutch walking association (KWbN). It has been a part of Dutch culture for multiple generations, which has been around since 1940 (Koninklijke Wandelbond

Figure 76 Avondvierdaags in 153 in Amsterdam (retrieved from: https://nl.wikipedia.org/wiki/Avondvierdaagse#/media/Bestand:Start_Avondvierdaagse_bij_RAI_gebouw_te_Amsterdam,_Bestanddeelnr_905-7865.jpg)

Nederland). At first it was mostly adults, a spin-off from the classic 'vierdaagse' of Nijmegen. Currently, it has transformed into a festive children's event, linked to primarily schools, where children walk 2.5 , 5, 7.5, 10 or 15 kilometre in the evening. Each year you partake, you get a medal.

The WOW – Walk to School Challenge encourages children to walk to school, at least once a week, in the UK. In England, schools participating in WOW have seen, on average, a 23% increase in walking rates (Living Streets, 2024). The walks are aimed to be engaging, with a theme around them each year. For 24/25, it is 'walk with imagination', challenging kids to imagine different ways to walk to school. The initiative is alos marketed to help reduce congestion. Participating primary schools saw a 30% reduction in car journeys to the school gate (Living Streets, 2024).

Led walks for uni students to explore local surroundings, allowing student to experience the benefits, done for example at Leeds university)

sCOOL2walk is a digital web application that allows parents or guardians to announce their child's route and discover others in the community who are planning a similar trip. Students can walk safely to and from school with a guardian on set days of the week.

A school nature trail, along the perimeter of a school in New York (about one kilometre in length), teaches primary school students about nature.

Language walks, 'taalwandelingen', for example in the municipality of Midden-Delfland, are an initiative for people who want to learn Dutch better and potential volunteers, to meet while walking. During the walks both groups can decide if they want to partake in giving or receiving lessons.

Chores & shopping

Daily chores take about two hours each day. Integrating walking into these activities can turn time that feels 'wasted' on chores to enjoyable, qualitative time, where something mandatory feels like leisure. Opportunities span from grocery shopping by foot, taking out the trash or picking up a package. For shopping specifically, it turns a global, online action into a real-life, local experience. A barrier might be carrying heavy groceries, however, when individuals shop for leisure, this is less of a barrier. Clothes' shopping with many bags on your arms is seen as desirable, and shopping at a farmers' market is a treat for many. As with walks for leisure and walks for transport in general, bringing values of shopping for leisure into shopping as a chore, can bring the necessary shift in mindset. Another shift can be seeing chores as the integral activity it is, integrating household tasks with a mental break, or sports. Walking for groceries is very close to the gym exercise of a 'farmers' carrier'.

Personal care

We spent one hour each day on personal care, the physical and mental upkeep of ourselves. The mental and bodily processes during walking can support ourselves in many ways. Walking is accessible, easy form of physical exercise. It is often not Walking before for example major decisions, before writing a stressful email or having a difficult conversation, makes these hard tasks easier. Viral trends such as the 'hot girl walk', 'mental health walk' or 'main character walk' stimulate personal growth. Meditation walks bring relaxation and mindfulness, with a modern pilgrimage being the longest form of meditation walk. The practice of Forest bathing, combines the mental benefits of a walk to the mental benefits of a specific place.

Social time

Walking is a great way to get social, as walking side by side, in similar stride fosters companionship, and makes talking easier. Walking also creates opportunities for interactions with strangers, and makes run-ins into small talks. There are inspiring social tradition of walking, especially on more southern countries: from flânerie on a boulevard, to passegiata on the Ramblas. While there is not a tradition of flânerie in the Netherlands, the 'avond4daagse' is a Dutch tradition of social walking, nowadays linked to children in primary schools, but this can be expanded further, building onto good childhood experiences.

A future of a warmer climate in the Netherlands, might support evening walks even more.

Leisure

Besides bringing more elements of enjoyment into all the beforementioned categories, walks can bring many more forms of leisure. Leisure walking, 'wandelen', mostly done in nature, might be the first that comes to mind. In the Netherlands there are many nice routes to walk, from long distance walks (LAW), to a network of points you can combine into a walk yourself. The Netherlands does not offer the adventurous challenge of climbing a mountain, and the hiking culture is not as strong as in countries like England or Norway, where hiking is something of all ages and places. In England, hikers have protested for their 'right to roam', with as Mass Trespass in the peak district in 1932. This protest secured the rights of walking in the open country, in law (Ladenburg, 2020). The Scandinavian 'allemansretten' silimarly give citizens the right to enjoy nature, and enter private property to do so (on foot, on horseback, on skis…)(Ladenburg, 2020). The adventure of a hike in the mountains cannot be recreated in the Netherlands, however, there are other options, such as: tidal walks (wadlopen), bare feet paths (blotevoetenbad), orienteering, or finding adventure in wandering around and getting lost, to 'dérive' or 'andarre a Zonzo', both in cities and outside of them. Many countries with strong hiking cultures also have more traditions which are a part of hiking, such as the forest cafés where you stop to eat, only reachable by foot or ski's, or the snacks you bring along the way. Norway has 'hiking chocolate', with hiking etiquette and outdoor rules written on the wrapper.

Walking can also be combined with other hobby's, for example media. Listen to a podcast, music, or even a whole album (an 'albumwalk'). For some this might feel too much like multitasking, while for others it makes the walk even richer. It is also a way to softly transition from passive, indoor media practices, to a more active variant. Pokémon go and Geocashing add elements of gamification. A pub crawl creates more social and food-and-drinks related leisure. Similarly, one can go for walking wine or coffee tastings. There are walking book clubs one can join, listening to audio books and bringing book lovers together.

Figure 77 Hikers 1930 England (Retrieved from: https://britishonlinearchives.com/posts/category/articles/659/right-to-roam-the-kinder-mass-trespass-of-1932)

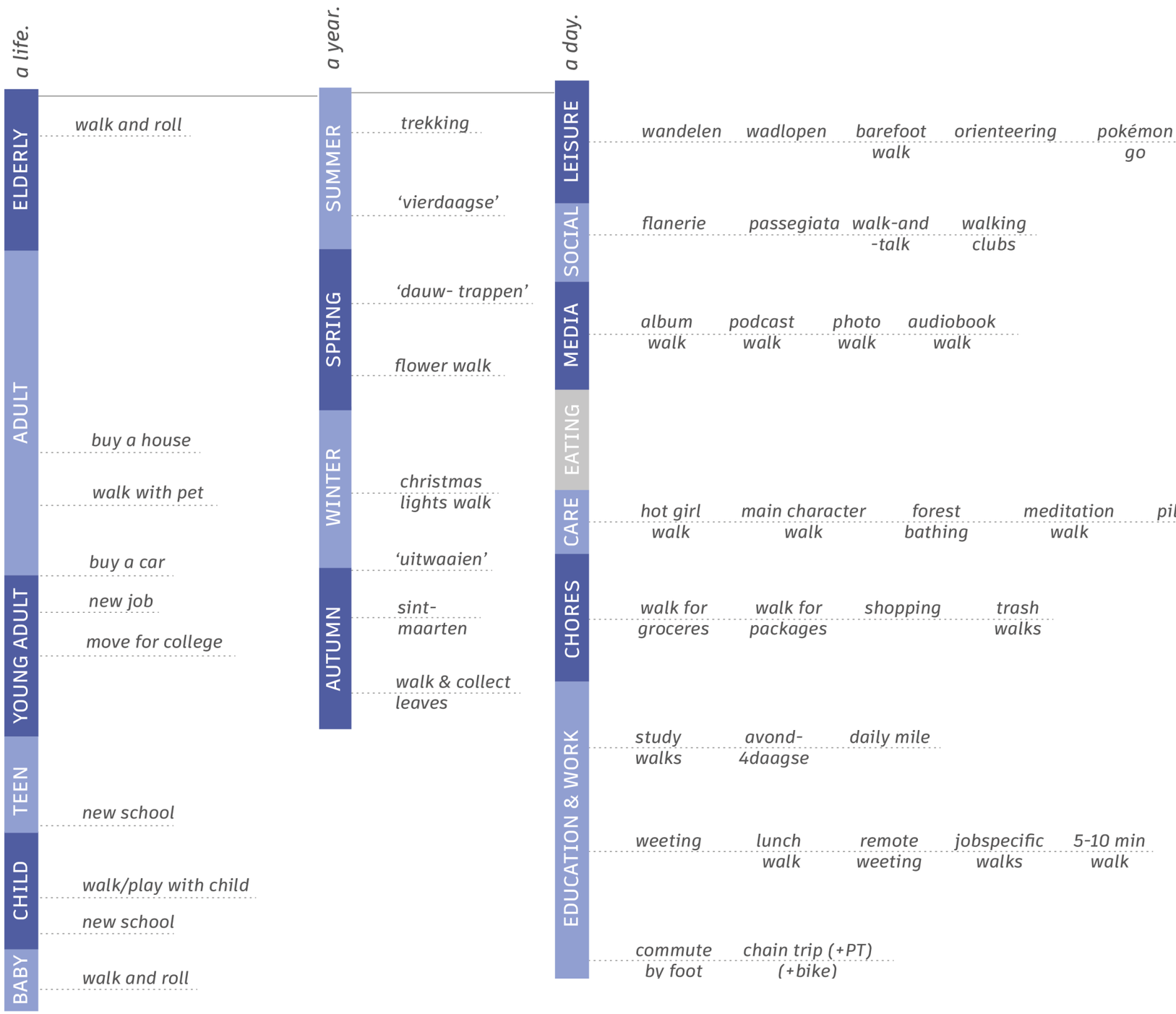


Figure 78 Change Points in a Life, Year and Day

Change points in a year, a life

Not only day-to-day life, but also life over the course of a year, or decades presents opportunities at change points. Incorporating walking throughout life moreover maintains existing practitioners, and supports normalizing a new role of walking in life, through generational change.

Change points during the year are for example the changing of the seasons, which give new walking opportunities, or change the whole experience, as leaves turn yellow, flowers bloom, Christmas lights are strung across town or a thick mist appears. This connection to the seasons also fosters slower living. Walks can be linked to certain holiday, such as 'dauwtrappen' in the Netherlands, which is walking or cycling at dawn during Ascention Day. Temporary walking routes ('vliegende wandelingen') also work with the seasonal changes, for example allowing people to walk on farmer's fields in winter, while cow are inside.

Change points throughout life are big changes such as moving, starting a new job, adopting a pet, when children are born or going to a new school. These happenings form breaking points in habits and a new environment or context requires building up new, slower habits. There are also certain expectations around the phases of life, for example the expectation of buying a car or becoming less mobile at a certain age. These normalized visions of the future should incorporate walking as well.

Figure 79 Motornomativity

6.4. What roles can walking have in life?

The overwhelming variety of types of walking shows how walking van become an integral part of daily life, throughout life. It can be more than transport, leisure or a 'break'. It is an opportunity to change the mundane into something healthier and more enjoyable. These changes require citizens to be critical of their own lives, questioning how they can find time for more qualitative experiences, win their daily life.

In integrating walking in life, we should be attentive to the fact that walking is a means, not the end goal. The goal is to be healthier, happier, more creative, built stronger relationships and so much more. Not every situation is suitable to achieve these valued goals with walking. We can integrate alternative, slow means which bring (part of) the benefits of walking in situations where walking cannot. In some situations, this can be encouraging cycling or provide seating outside.

The diversity in options presented in this chapter should appeal to broad groups of people, and bring enough possibilities for different types of spaces. This will inspire and be tested by envisioning walking futures for different sub-contexts, both personal and spatial, in chapter 10. Here, we will also explore how to normalize walking in all aspects of daily life and what type of desirable future comes with this.

7. Alternative Practices

7.1. Introduction
7.2. Status-quo
7.3. The rise of car-use and cycling
7.4. Practice intelligibility:
7.5. What can we learn from these alternative practices?
7.6. Conclusion

CHAPTER SUMMARY.

To increase walking, it must become the most logical, attractive choice at ‘Change Points’ in daily life. However, alternatives like driving or cycling are deeply embedded in routines and supported by values, infrastructure, and convenience. Promoting walking requires a reframing of these alternatives and their perceived advantages, such as freedom or time-saving. This requires questioning our assumptions of advantages, or what is ‘normal’. The histories of driving and biking in the Netherlands also reveal how the increase in these practices did not ‘just happen’, naturally, but instead, were stimulated and shaped by spatial planning, policy actions and social events, like trends and protests. This means a similar stimulation for walking (and discouragement of its alternatives, mostly driving) is possible as well.

7.1. Introduction

RQ2 part two: alternative practices

At all the change points discussed in the previous chapter, walking then needs to become the most logical, normal, self-evident option. In these moments, it has fierce competition of everything we see as normal right now, the 'alternative practices', in the 'social site'.

Many of these practices have been normalized in the course of centuries, but how? And what can we learn from these big practices, and use in the process of promoting walking? Moreover, how can walking 'compete' with this status-quo?

This chapter is focused on car use and cycling, and identifying their underlying social and spatial appeal. An explorative research of the rise of car and bike use in the Netherlands aids both in finding their material and immaterial context (their practice intelligibility), and in understanding how practices become widely adopted, which could inspire the process walking becoming a widespread habit. The chapter aims at discovering a society-wide perspective on promoting walking, focusing on the generalized context of 'daily life'. Findings will be refined with input from RQs 3 and 4, where contextual diversity is more closely examined

7.2. Status-quo

The data around car-use and cycling points out that despite the internationally famous cycling culture, the Netherlands is, similar to many other countries, very much a country of cars. In time travelled and percentage of trips, walking and cycling are close. This points towards already existing walking practices.

Driving:

Practice performance:

- 45% of all trips are done by car (as a driver or passenger) (CBS, 2023a)
- 43% of time travelled is done by car (CBS, 2023a)
- 70% of distance travelled is done by car (CBS, 2023a)

Cycling

Practice performance:

- On average, 3,0 km is biked every day in the Netherlands (de Haas & Kolkowski, 2023)
- 21% of time travelled is done by bike (CBS, 2023a)
- 28% of trips are done by bike (including a growing 8% by e-bike) (CBS, 2023a)
- 5% of distance travelled is done by bike, 3% by e-bike (CBS, 2023a)
- 1 in 3 cyclists in the city makes a chain trip! (te Brömmelstroet & Verkade, 2020)

7.3. The rise of car-use and cycling

Driving:

Internationally, the rise of the car seemed to be accepted as the natural way-of-going, of progress. This is why the government the encouraged the transition towards mass car ownership (Gemeente Amsterdam, 2019). Marketing for the car was powerful. Different kinds of cars were made appealing for different kinds of people. It also embedded a car into our views of a good life, a desirable future, where values such as freedom and comfort, and goals such as status, were met.

Spatially, these developments were supported by a broader international trend during the 50s, 60s and 1970s towards car-centric city planning. Developments in the Netherlands took a slightly different turn.

Dutch planners initially regarded the car as a democratic force and planning for it as a necessity (Verlaan, 2019). However, early on, Dutch planning agencies and advisory bodies expressed concerns about the rise in car ownership and its negative consequences. For instance, in 1953, urban planner Willem Valderpoort warned about humanities' struggles to cope with the pace of its own technological inventions, citing the car as a

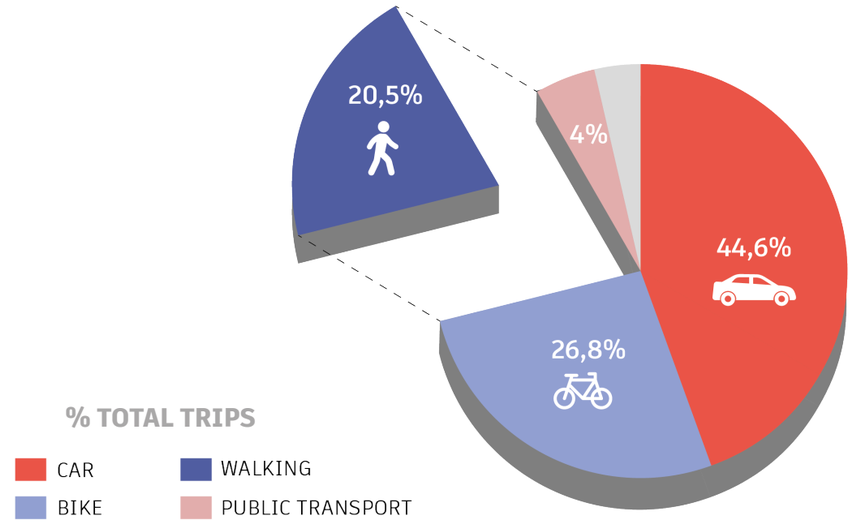


Figure 80 Trip time and % Trips in NL (based on: https://www.cbs.nl/nl-nl/visualisaties/verkeer-en-vervoer/personen/hoeveel-reisden-inwoners-van-nederland-en-hoe-)

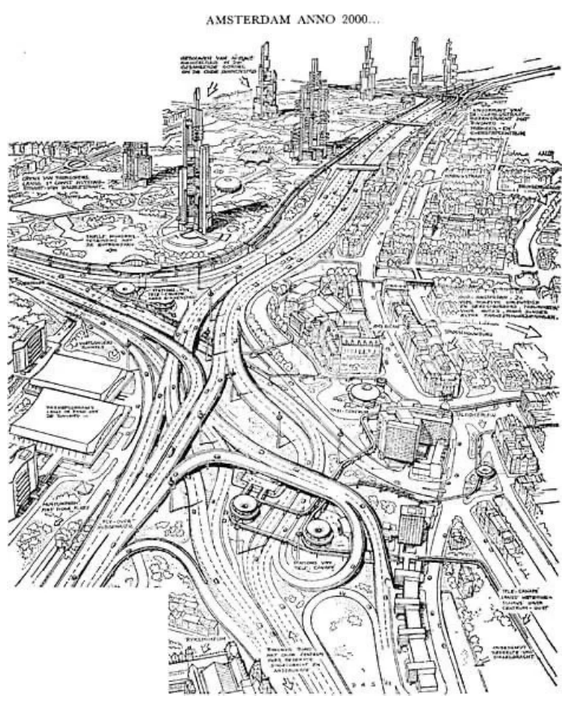


Figure 81

D.A. Jokinen: Geef de stad een kans, Stichting Weg, Roosendaal, 1968 (Retrieved from: https://www.skyscrapercity.com/threads/jokinen-plan.2412643/)

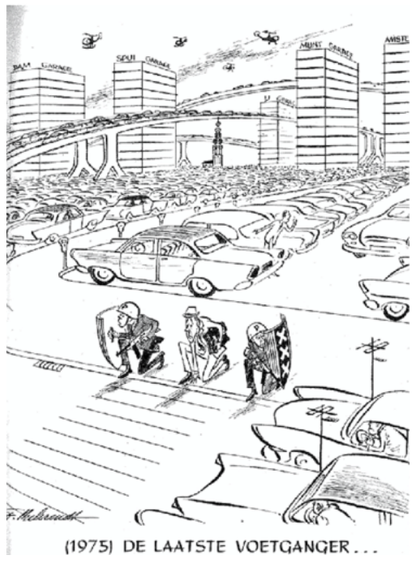


Figure 82

Fritz Behrendt, "De Laatste Voetganger," De Telegraaf, date unknown, 1965. (Retrieved from: https://www.researchgate.net/figure/The-1965-comic-drawing-of-how-Amsterdams-city-center-might-look-like-in-the-year-1975-if_fig2_336195269)

The rise of the car and bike in the Netherlands....

100%
80%
60%
40%
20%
0%
modal share walking/biking/driving

1890
1900
1910
1920
1930
1940
1950
1960
1970
1980
1990
2000
2010
2020

25 000 000
20 000 000
15 000 000
10 000 000
5 000 000
0
amount of bikes
amount of people
amount of cars
amount of cars/bikes/people in NL

ANWB (W = 'wielrijders', cyclists), bringing guidebooks & shift recreative cycling to functional as well

1901: money from the state dedicated to cycling infrastructure (3000 gulden, 55 000 EUR now)

1906: Motor- en Rijwielwet (rights of cycliststs)

Regional groups who worked on cycling infrastructure ('Rijwielpad-verenigingen')

1919: first 'ANWB-paddenstoelen' People gained more free time, to also ride more for leisure .

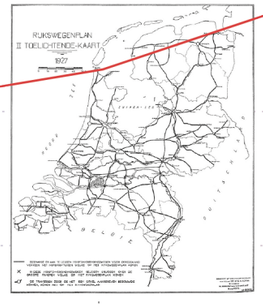
'Fietsland' – as described by visitors

"A traveller is not in danger from avalanches in the Netherlands, (...) but on the streets of Amsterdam one can be ran over by hundreds of cyclists at all times"

1885: Maliebaan Utrecht: first cycling road in the Netherlands

1900: 200 cars in NL: First cars are not well received, municipalities banned them, they were seen as a hobby for the rich and everyone questioned how fast they were allowed to go

1903: national postal service by car



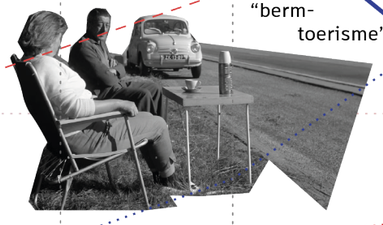
1927: Rijkswegenplan: Roads were adjusted for the efficiency of cars, first highways were constructed.

1935: 90.000 cars in the Netherlands

1935: further rise of the car endangered pedestrians. Pedestrians were officially mode 'road users' and were only allowed to walk on sidewalks.

1936: royal engagement photos on a tandem

During WOII, cylcing illigal for a while, to cycle was a small protest



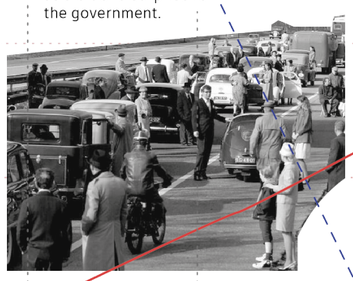
"berm-toerisme"

With mass-production, the car becomes affordable.

Globally, the car becomes a symbol of status, and individual freedom.

Most people get a car for leisure (day) trips.

1955: first traffic jam, when the Randstad escaped the city simultaneously. This came as a bit of a surprise for the government.



More spatial developments center around (commuting by) the car. We built highways, cities grow into metropoles and are radically changed in favour of cars

Bike infrastructure became secondary, less (functional) cycling. This happened in many European countries.

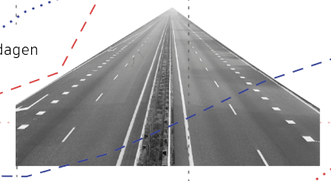
ENWB ('Echte Nederlandse Wielrijders Bond', now de Fietsersbond) stood up for the rights of cyclists

Protests for safety:

"Stop de Kindermoord"

1972: 3200 road deaths, of which 400 were children and 70,000 injuries, of which 43% were cyclists.

1973: autovrije-zondagen (oil crisis)



Policies disencouraging car use: Efforts to keep shops inside cities, stricter parking rules, one way streets, seat belt become mandatory,, speed limits are enforced, speed bumps built

MENTINK: WIE WIL HOBBEL IN STRAAT?

'Hobbelpot' Rotterdam (1975)

amount of people

2003: Start OV fietsen (fietsersbond)

2013: first 'NK Tegenwindfietsen'

trip share cars

trip share biking (Amsterdam)

1990: 'Masterplan Fiets':

"... for short distances, up to 5 or 10 kilometres, the bike should be the designated transport mode"

different bikes, different subcultures: omafiets, kratfiets, e-bike, racefiets, bakfiets

trip share walking

Figure 83

The rise of the car and bike in the Netherlands (Based on: ANWB; ANWB; Bruno et al., 2021; CBS, 2023c; de Haas & Kolkowski, 2023; de la Bruheze, 2000; Fietsersbond; Fietsersbond; Gemeente Amsterdam, 2019; IsGeschiedenis; IsGeschiedenis; Kennisinstituut voor Mobiliteitsbeleid, 2024; Ministerie van Verkeer en Waterstaat, 1998; NPO, 2023; Ruimte Voor Lopen, 2024; te Brömmelstroet & Verkade, 2020), Images retrieved from: https://www.postnl.nl/over-postnl/over-ons/ons-bedrijf/onze-geschiedenis/ + https://www.fietsersbond.nl/nieuws/paddenstoel-bestaat-100-jaar/ + https://nl.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rijkswegenplan#/media/Bestand:Rijkswegenplan_1927.jpg + https://www.fietsen123.nl/pagina/koninklijk-fietsen + https://www.nporadio1.nl/nieuws/geschiedenis/20e33b4f-190d-4e76-8251-8d9556fb6b76/terug-naar-1955-de-eerste-file-en-brand-in-bussum + https://www.schoolbank.nl/toenennu/bermtoerisme + https://nl.pinterest.com/pin/294211788139909234/ + https://www.fietsersbond.nl/ons-werk/de-geschiedenis-van-de-fietsersbond/ + https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?curid=37790994 + https://www.nrc.nl/nieuws/2019/04/04/op-ov-fietsen-komt-alleen-kritiek-als-ze-allemaal-zijn-uitgeleend-a3955654 + https://www.omroepwest.nl/nieuws/4774130/nk-tegenwindfietsen-dankzij-storm-ciaran-om-de-beurt-op-kop + https://www.babboe.nl/bakfiets-3-kinderen + https://commons.m.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Pressiegroep_Stop_de_kindermoord_brengt_bezoek_aan_Tweede_Kamer,_kinderen_in_de_Beständdeelnr_925-9453.jpg + https://ejatlas.org/media/conflict/stop-de-kindermoord-stop-the-child-murder-protest-for-children-deaths-caused-by-motor-vehicles/

prime example (Schot et al., 2003).

During the 1960s, while other countries, such as Germany, the UK and US, prioritized more car-centric planning during this period, Dutch planners were still discussing. These considerations laid the groundwork for car-discouraging policies of the 1970s (Verlaan, 2019). Following the 1973 Oil Crisis and the Club of Rome's Limits to Growth report, Dutch national planners recognised the need for alternative measures to manage increasing car traffic. Consequently, the Ministry of Physical Planning concluded that major physical interventions in city centres should cease. As Marshall Berman famously stated: "All through the 1960s, the question had been whether they should or they shouldn't; now, in the 1970s, the answer was that they simply couldn't " (Berman, 1983, p. 332). Plans such as the "Plan Jokinen" (1967), resembling utopian modern future views, were not put into practice.

During these years, protests around cycling and road safety also reached a boiling point. Ultimately, planners reached a compromise with the car by creating pedestrian-friendly zones, diverting traffic to city fringes, and prioritising cyclists and pedestrians.

Although these measures yielded relatively positive results, their focus remained primarily on inner cities, while ring roads and city connections continued to be designed for cars. Policies and funding also encouraged car commuting, including the widespread use of company cars. This legacy largely explains why nearly 50% of trips are still made by car today. The ongoing support for car use, sustained through decades of financing and policy backing, is rooted in arguments emphasizing time-saving and efficiency.

However, historically, going faster does not lead to saving time. The last century, where faster and faster transport became available, we have not started to make shorter trips, but longer ones. Travel times are a constant length of about an hour. This is called "Marchetti's constant", which has been found both internationally and in the Netherlands (Szalai, 1972; te Brömmelstroet, 2022; Verkade, 2020).

The result of this constant travel time? We go faster, but live further away from work and other functions. This has been encouraged in the last 70 years by lifting spatial and bureaucratic barriers to faster travel (Verkade, 2020). According to Marchetti's constant, opposite actions – lowering driving speeds, abolishing company-issued travel allowances, introduce mortgage allowances for people moving close to their work, increase parking prices or stop allowing it altogether - will result in proximity of daily activities (Walker & Brömmelstroet, 2025).

Moreover, if we continue as we have for the past century, we will hit the limits of our country literally, as there is not enough space. For example if we built the 1 million homes, with the current parking norm of 1,7, this means we need 17 million m2 new parking space (te Brömmelstroet, 2022). Electric cars take up the same amount of space, and call for making about 2 billion new cars. Additionally, to power these cars, the Netherlands would need to be filled to the brim with new solar panels, windmills and networks connections for electricity. There simply is not enough space.

Cycling:

Dutch cycling culture has survived many transitions, such as the rise of the car, which ended cycling practices in many European countries. The re-rise of cycling in the Netherlands in the 70s was influenced by a combination of policies and social movement. As seen before, doubts about car-centric planning aided the re-rise of biking. Social movements were based in arguments of children's safety. The wide support they received, for example even from the royal family, made the still-existing commitment to cycling of the general public evident. This was built in over half a century of both leisure and functional cycling, and international recognition as a cycling country. This was a piece of social infrastructure the re-rise of cycling in the 70s could built onto (Shove, 2014). After social movements, long-term political commitment followed, of for example investing in bike infrastructure (Shove, 2014). Nowadays, the Dutch cycling culture still has the capacity to absorb transitions (Curtis, 2020). Influenced by local and global cultures, biking subcultures appear, around for example cargo bikes, race bikes and e-bikes.

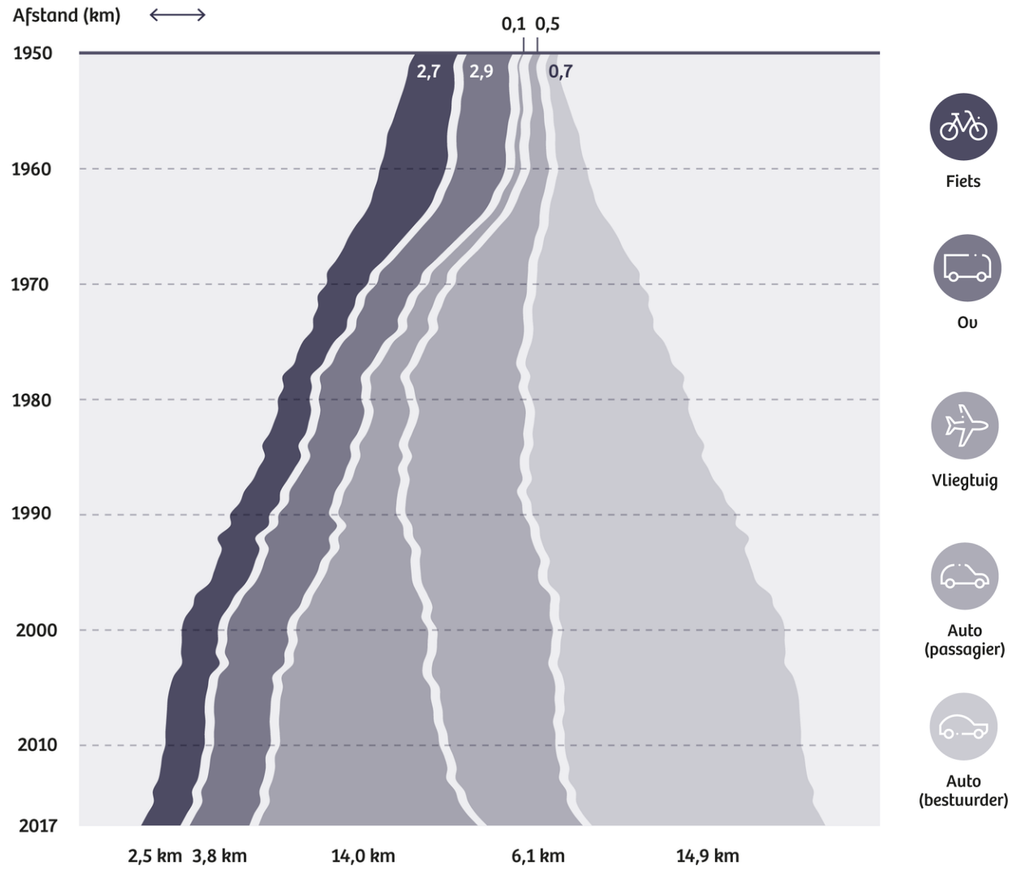


Figure 84 Machetti's constante (Verkade, T. (2020). Retrieved from https://decorrespondent.nl/11399/we-reizen-steeds-sneller-maar-komen-geen-seconde-eerder-thuis/8359deff-e1e7-0316-0f91-7b1e762000bb)

The results of the first national plan for cycling, 'Masterplan Fiets' of 1990, and the following "With The Bicycle Less Congestion" teach to not merely focus your efforts on gaining new practitioners, such as trying to shift users from cars to bikes, but to aim at maintaining existing practitioners, especially throughout their whole life cycle (Bruno & Nikolaeva, 2020).

E-bikes are on average 4% faster, but are used to travel distances which are a third bigger than 'normal bikes'. In the growing use of e-bikes we see again that if we can go faster, we take further trips, not shorter ones (Kennisinstituut voor Mobiliteitsbeleid, 2024; Verkade, 2020).

7.4. Practice intelligibility

The last century of driving and cycling lead to the following immaterial and material infrastructures around these practices:

Driving:

Immaterial context:

- Car is a symbol for safety, speed (efficiency), comfort, freedom, status, practicality (Rijkadviseurs, 2020)
- 'Motonormativity': bias, where we judge car mobility differently than other comparable topics (Heisserer & Rau, 2015; Walker & Brömmelstroet, 2025). 'Pluralistic ignorance': we assume that everyone else prefers cars (Walker & Brömmelstroet, 2025)

- Financing is secured in laws, as are norms such as for parking
- In 2018, about 30 billion euros were spent on car roads in the Netherlands, which translates to 950 euros/sec (for traffic congestion control, maintenance, accidents, environmental costs and the local road network) (Verkade, 2018)

Material context:

- For each car, there 3 parking spaces in the Netherlands. In total, there is more space dedicated to parking than dwelling (te Brömmelstroet, 2022)
- There are 8 million cars in the Netherlands (Gemeente Amsterdam, 2019). In Amsterdam there are 1200 cars/km2 (Gemeente Amsterdam, 2019)
- System of highways, car roads, parking spaces, gas stations, mechanics, car dealerships. All strictly organized, for speed. 'Mechanic approach' (Rijkadviseurs, 2020). MIRT research: in 2030, there should be 1000km new car lanes/roads built (Rijksoverheid, 2018)
- Urban sprawl (car roads for efficiently moving between separated living and working places) and local functions disappeared (faster connections allow companies to scale-up)

Cycling:

Immaterial context:

- Bike culture: biking is.. practical, a part of social life (children taken to school by bike, you are allowed to transport others on your 'bagagedrager'), safe (cars also used to cyclists), normal ('gewoon', everyone does it) and habitual
- Of the state's 7,5 billion euros for mobility in neighbourhoods (2022), 780 million euros are dedicated to bikes (for 'doorfietsroutes' (continuous, fast routes), bike parking for public transport)(Rijksoverheid, 2022). Local municipalities add to this number, making the total investments for 1,1 billion euros. To compare, the budget for the car is 2,7 billion to begin with, with an additional 1,1 billion to ensure free flowing traffic on highways (Rijksoverheid, 2022).

Material context:

- There are 22,8 billion bikes in the Netherlands (Fietsersbond)
- Bike highways, 'doorfietsroutes': flows are separated, no conflicts
- System of bike lanes, bike routes, bike parking
- A small, flat country
- On Dutch bikes, one sits actively upright, with good views of all the traffic
- Bikes are becoming faster and faster and different types of bikes arise (e-bike, race bike, OV-fiets, cargobikes)

7.5. What can we learn from these alternative practices?

Recognizing the heavy car use as competitive practice, and discouraging it. Besides environmental and health reasoning, spatial scarcity is a powerful argument in for abolishing cars. Simultaneously we should be striving for a symbiosis between walking and biking. While feeding and promoting bike culture, dealing with the bike-superiority and recognizing while we are already walking similar amounts of time as cycling, it not (yet) publicly viewed as equally important (socially and culturally). The efficiency-approach has also seeped into how we plan for bikes, for example by make cycling highways. In turn, this leads to similar problems as the car: it makes crossing harder for pedestrians, especially young ones (te Brömmelstroet & Verkade, 2020)

As learned in RQ1, there is already a wandel-culture in the Netherlands, which is a great starting point. Car started as for leisure too. Bike started as functional. Either way you can get there. Moreover, learning from cycling and car policies, strategies focussed on maintaining practitioners are important. The importance of chain trips for cycling could mean the same for walking.

We generally support (socially, financially, by both the public and government) wat is seen as the (inevitable) natural, way-of-going, of progress, the logical and desirable future, even the life we individually wish for, which fulfils our values. This was a future of cars, of technological advancement.

We need a new narrative for the future, a more desirable alternative. This will not merely reframe our transportation, but more habits and values in daily life, such as siting and media consumption.

The future will be desirable when it meets values such as safety and comfort, to, over time, become normalized. A quality-driven narrative will be powerful here, as our goals and values are actually not achieved through efficiency, as time-saving efforts are a myth and we are actually losing freedom instead of gaining it. Setting this twisted dialogue straight, shifts planning form blatantly promoting 'mobility' to creating 'accessibility'.

This calls for enabling people to live where they want to be, not where they can leave as fast and efficient as possible. Where they want to be, is where they can do what they want. It makes public space not traffic space, but space for the public to be, questioning the efficiency-driven separation of flows.

In assessing alternatives which are transport and mobility related, the chapter focussed on mostly on moving, on traffic. The word 'verkeer', which is dutch for 'traffic', got it's modern-day meaning of the coming and going of vehicles recently, around mid-19th century (te Brömmelstroet & Verkade, 2020). In Dutch is also still has its original meaning of interacting with each other ('met elkaar omgaan'), in the verb 'verkeren', which can also mean 'to change' or 'to be in'. The noun 'verkering' means to have a romantic relationships, while the state of 'goed verkeren' means to fare well, to be in good health even.

Overall, this chapter turns attention to how we should go from a narrative ecentering 'verkeer', to the aim of 'goed verkeren', because, 'het kan verkeren'. Things can change.

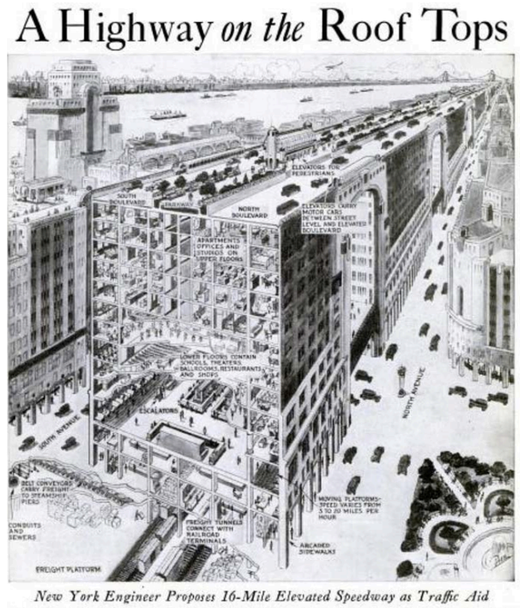


Figure 85

1927 Popular Science article (Retrieved from: https://viewing.nyc/untapped-cities-uncovers-1920s-plan-to-run-a-highway-over-manhattan-rooftops/)

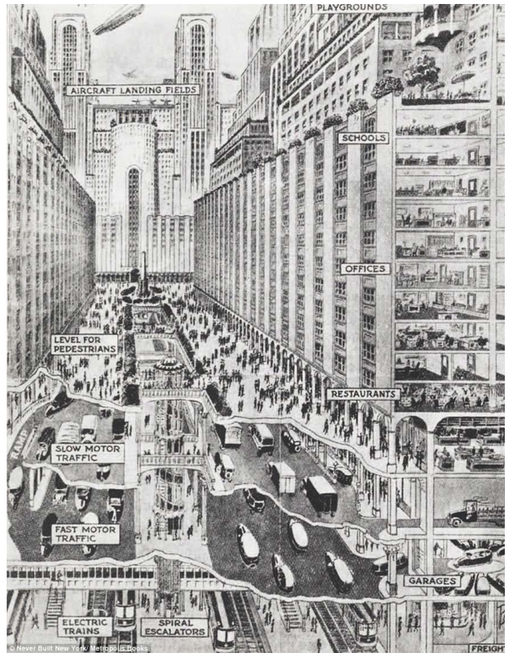


Figure 86

Illustration from the January 1928 issue of Popular Mechanics, visioning 1950 (Retrieved from: https://archive.org/details/sim_popular-mechanics_1928-01_49_1)

Figure 87 Change Points in a day, a year, a life

7.6. Conclusion

Reflecting on RQ2, "*What opportunities for encouraging walking arise at change points in daily life, and what challenges emerge, particularly in relation to competing alternatives?***", the following insights were gained:**

Viewing walking through the lens of change points reveals opportunities to initiate and sustain walking. In this, walking is not an extra activity to add to a full day, or a merely break, but an integrated practice, embedded into all dimensions of daily life. Key daily opportunities include commuting, walking integrated into work- or schooldays and lifting barriers to walking for chores, while walking fulfils social, fitness and self-realization goals. In a year, walking traditions and seasonal shifts present opportunities. Key moments in a life include when a child is born, starts to walk or goes to a new school and when someone moves, buys a car, gets a pet or starts a new job.

Moreover, to increase walking, it must become the most logical, attractive choice in these moments. However, alternatives like driving or cycling are deeply embedded in routines and supported by values, infrastructure, and convenience. Promoting walking requires a reframing of these alternatives and their perceived advantages, such as freedom or time-saving. This requires questioning our assumptions of advantages, or what is 'normal'. The histories of driving and biking in the Netherlands also reveal how the increase in these practices did not 'just happen', naturally, but instead, were stimulated and shaped by spatial planning, policy actions and social events, like trends and protests. This means a similar stimulation for walking (and discouragement of its alternatives, mostly driving) is possible as well.

These shifts in thinking inspired social, policy and spatial actions (patterns), which will be presented in the Approach (Chapter 9) and reviewed further in the case study (Chapter 10).

8. Walks and Talks

8.1. Introduction
8.2. Walks and Talks
8.3. Walking habits and preferences
8.4. Reflection

CHAPTER SUMMARY.

Findings from daily walks (Chapter 5) and Walks and Talks reveal a more nuanced understanding of walking than current planning and design paradigms allow. Established interpretations, often focused on 'walkable' distances, pedestrian networks, and one-sized-fits-all approaches, overlook the experiential and qualitative dimensions of walking.

A quality-centred approach emphasises elements such as the feeling of a length of a walk, contextual (rather than standardised) and real-use path widths, the creation of nodes (where directions are chosen) instead of mere crossings, microclimates shaped by wind, sun, and greenery and every day (physical) barriers (parked bicycles, overgrown vegetation, passing others). These insights, grounded in both personal experience and validated by literature on wayfinding and weathering, informed the development social, spatial and policy patterns, and a new set of "experience patterns". These patterns capture recurring qualities that contribute to (or detract from) enjoyable walks, and can be layered to create complete, diverse walking experiences. Each pattern is linked to broader social, spatial, and policy actions, enabling planners to integrate walking preferences from the outset.

Moreover, the analysis highlights the need to consider diverse walking types, whether alone or accompanied, in different weather conditions, for various purposes, throughout the day. A persona-based approach, reflecting distinct preferences and their daily route choices, aid in the practical application of these insights.

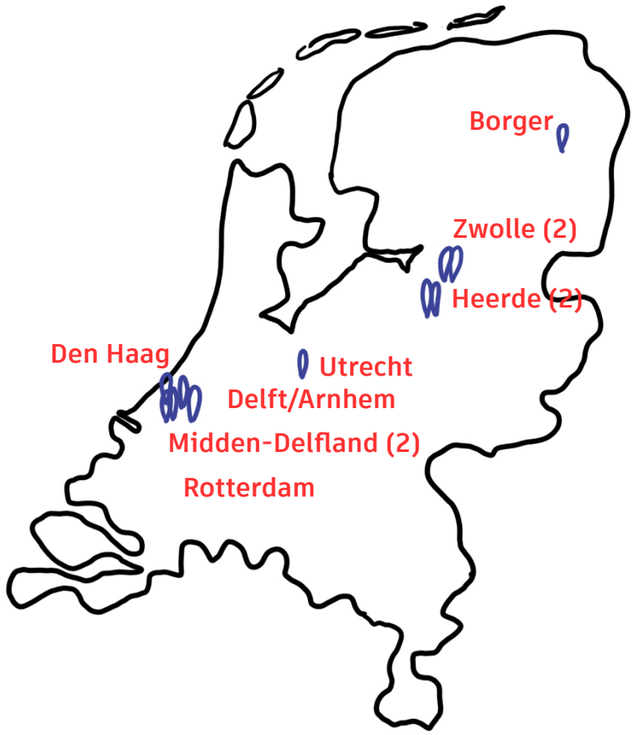


Figure 88

Places of the Walks and Talks

8.1. Introduction

RQ3 part 2: Walks and Talks

To deepen the understanding of diverse walking experiences and preferences, the 'Walks and Talks' incorporated the experiences of others, by conducting walks with participants.

I walked with participants both as professionals and residents, exploring both their professional views and experiences as inhabitants. The aim was to capture diverse perspectives and contexts, expanding beyond my own walking preferences.

The talks were informal, natural conversations, often related to places along the walking route. Participants showed me their neighbourhoods, discussed what they appreciated or disliked. Each of them was asked how, when, and why they walk (or choose not to). These habits and preferences are summarized at the end of the chapter. I took field notes and photographs during each walk and summarized the discussions afterward, sharing these summaries with participants for validation.

The insights from these walks directly influenced the evolving strategies and themes explored in the other research questions, forming part of an integrated research process, switching back and forth between real-world walking experiences and desk research.

8.2. Walks and Talks

Figure 89
The open landscape of Midden Delfland

Midden-Delftland 01

when: 28th of February 2025
12.30 - 15.00
who: with Wim van Dalen ‘bestuursadviseur’ Midden-Delfland)
(male, 50-65)

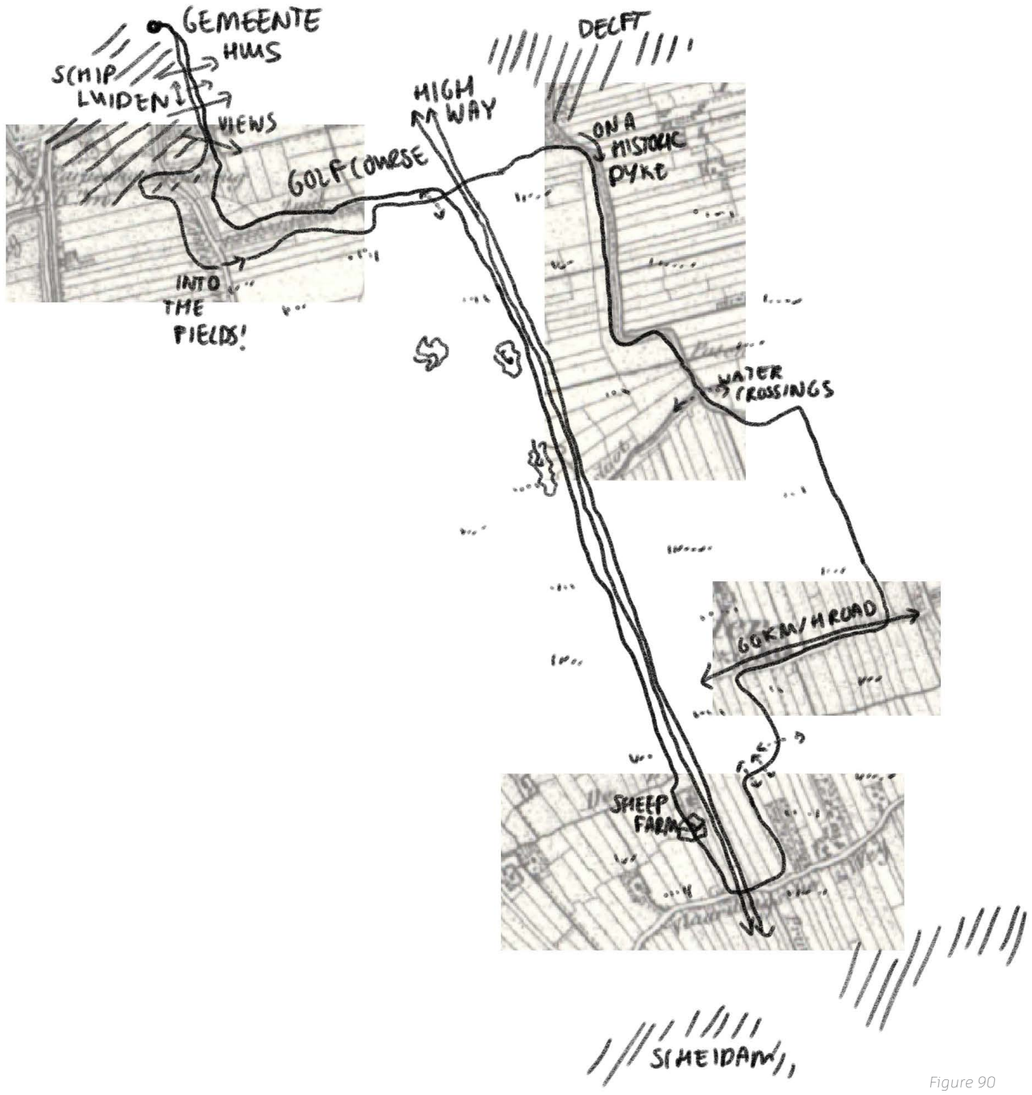


Figure 90
Walk in Midden Delfland

Midden-Delfland 01

when: 28th of February 2025
12.30 - 15.00
who: with Wim van Dalen ‘bestuursadviseur’ Midden-Delfland)

‘50 ommetjes’

Projects by the Midden Delfland association (volunteers): 50 ‘ommetjes’ Midden-Delfland (walks around the block), 14 walks of medium length, 15 day walks, 3 NS wandelingen and ‘boerenpaden’ (walks on land of farmers).

‘Gemeentefonds’

How do municipalities get funding? Comes from the state, the amount is in line with the amounts of inhabitants and building projects

‘Seasonal/temporary’

The route we walked (‘vliegende wandeling’) was temporary. Now, you cannot walk it anymore (the cows are outside now, and it is breeding season for the birds (weidevogels)). The farmers are compensated for the use of their land. The temporary character of the walk also means the watercrossings we use are make-shift, and sometimes not more than a wooden plank, which is fun and adventurous! There are more temporary, seasonal events in Midden-Delfland, such as a maze in a corn field of one of the farmers.

Figure 91 Highway in Midden Delfland

‘Cittaslow’

For the municipality, it is a philosophy, a way to make decisions, from a point of quality, to say yes to many initiatives that can contribute to more quality. It is about giving the place back to the community. It is not marketing, the landscape is the selling point already. Hospitality is also an important value. Benches along walking routes for example, and water points. Placing public toilets is harder to accomplish.

‘Cittalsow Metropolis’

A project in Turkey, in the City of Izmir (2-3 million inhabitants), to bring the Cittaslow philospophy to the big city. We can see individual neighborhoods as slow cities.

‘Green stops’

For public transport, to make leisure (routes) in nature easily accessible. Natuurmonumenten is working on this as well.

‘Normalizing’

The main tool to make more people walk is to normalize it, for example in a workday. This starts with inviting people to walk more, give them many opportunities to do so. But this takes a 1-2 generations, to make it normal. This makes a focus on today’s kids very important.

‘Entreegebieden’/ Poortontwikkeling’

Areas around the edges of cities and the open landscape as entrances to the landscape. This includes working with TOPs (touristic starting points), creating short walking routes through the area and many other types of routes, getting the word out (clear visual language, identity, folders), adding cafes or other gastronomy and designing the transitions from neighbourhood to entrance to landscape. The entrance areas are tailored to different types of inhabitants and visitors, depending on their place.

‘Fijnschalig’

A small change is done faster, a lot of little changes do more than trying a big project, which takes very long to implement. A ‘fijnschalige’ change, gives a feel of it fitting the place, where you move with the times, but stay true to your identity, which is what makes the place feel like home for people.

‘Storytelling’

In Eijsen-Margraten, inhabitants were asked to share, on video, which places they like most. Very often these were places which you can only reach by foot, and where you can stay a while, for example sitting down, with a nice view.

‘Central Park’

Midden-Delfland as the central park of MRDR? In the way that inhabitants care for it, use it, feel at home there, and see the necessity of the area.

‘Koppelkansen’

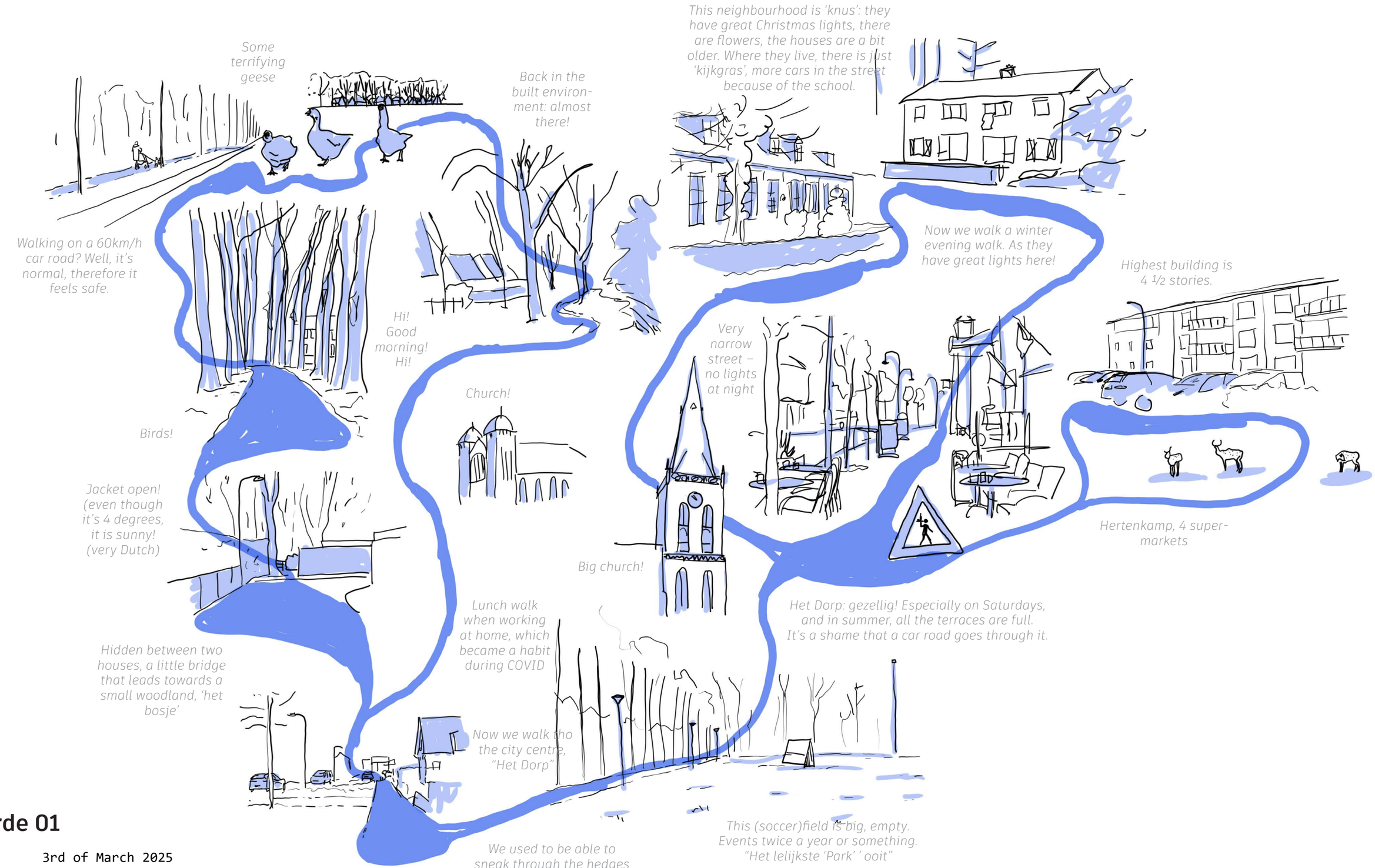
Chances to integrate walking with other developments, like creating more water surfaces. This means we need a new dyke. & On a dyke you can walk!

Figure 92 Temporary bridges

Figure 93 Heerde from afar

Heerde 01

when: 3rd of March 2025
09.00-11.30
who: with former inhabitant, who grew up in Heerde



Heerde 01

when: 3rd of March 2025
09.00-11.30
who: with former inhabitant, who grew up in Heerde

Figure 94 the walks in Heerde

Figure 95 Neighbourhood in Heerde

Park?

A big, empty field. Some events, like during Koningsdag.

Public parking lot

Used by the school, especially when there are performances in the theatre/music school. But people also park their 2nd, 3rd cars here. Now also the Saturday market, because they are doing construction work in the city centre.

'Het Bosje' (The Little Woodland)

My parents discovered the walking paths through the forest when I was born and they started walking with a stroller! They had already been living here for 8 years!

Ommetje!

3 parallel routes in 'Het Bosje' make it possible to walk a circle. But I prefer to walk through the neighbourhoods on the way back, to really walk an 'ommetje', a circle, and not have to walk the same way back.

'Echt wandelen' (Real Walking)

About 10kms, in 'Real Nature'

Shared roads

Walking on a 60km/h car road? Well, it's normal, therefore it feels safe. In neighbourhood streets (30km/h) sharing the streets works well. But we don't walk on the sidewalks, but in the middle of the road

Greeting

She greets everyone we run into. It's in her system to do so, it is normal. She even does it in bigger cities (where she lives now). There are quite a lot of others walking, mostly elderly (vergrijzing?) and people who walk their dogs.

Churches

There are lots of them here. Big ones, small ones, ones that look like a house. They are

mostly visited by elderly. People do go by bikes to church.

Traffic lights, zebras

There are almost no traffic lights in Heerde, she loves it. Especially when biking it really disrupts the flow. When you're in a car it doesn't, because you don't have to put in effort to restart. As for zebras, it is nice that pedestrians can just go. Sometimes she lets bikes cross first, as she knows for them accelerating again is a lot of effort, and when walking it isn't. But it is nice to have the power, the freedom to choose. Also you stand still for mere seconds, while traffic lights feel endless.

Car road through the City centre

This is a shame. They also par everywhere. Parking is free. The only cap is time here, you can park for 1 hour. Sometimes near-accidents when cyclists don't pay attention. It would be 'gezellig' if there were no cars allowed here!

Figure 96 Estate in Heerde

Hurry to the bus!

She used to go to Apeldoorn each day, for high school. Sometimes by bike, sometimes by bus. I ask how often the bus went back to Heerde, as she told me she rushed there. Every quarter of an hour, so quite often. But the frequency didn't matter to her, she just found waiting horrible, even if it was only 5 minutes. Everything was tightly planned, and busy.

Evening walk

Some neighbourhoods always have nice Christmas lights. We love walking there. Some streets get really dark at night. Those we avoid. Not because of safety, bit is also just less nice.

Heerde: 'Lekker Dorp!' & 'Ons-kent-ons'

Lots of people she knows stayed in Heerde, she is more an exception for having left. It is however a bit far from diverse job opportunities. For example Apeldoorn is already far, an hour by bike.

Figure 97 The singel of Zwolle

Zwolle 01

when: 4th of March 2025
12.00-14.00
who: Emma Harbers, “beleidsadviseur mobiliteit” and inhabitant of Zwolle

Figure 98 The singel of Zwolle

Gemeente Zwolle and mobility

STOMP (Stappen, Trappen, Openbaar Vervoer, Mobility as a Service (MaaS) en Personenauto's, in english: Steps (pedestrians), Pedalling (bikes), Public Transport, Mobility as a Service (MaaS) and Personal Cars).
But only for cars there are clear norms (for width, for parking). Zwolle has been part of the City Deal of platform 'Ruimte voor Lopen' for the past 4 years, and is now part of 'Nationaal Masperplan Lopen'. The vision for public transport is to make one system, also on different scales, bringing together provincial busses (which are often empty), 'Doelgroepenvervoer' (aimed at vulnerable groups, on the municipality-level) and shared mobility (more on the city-level).

Renewing along the singel

They make the whole road 30 km/h (a part still needs to be updated), asphalt became stone, and they removed the traffic light. It takes some getting used to, to have to give right of way again. The road is also quieter now, as cars choose a different route, as this one has become slower. Time is a powerful arguement.

Evening walk in summer vs winter

In summer, she walks on the 'green' side of the road, along the singel. Whereas in winter, during evening walks, it is already dark, and she walks on the other side, closer to the houses, which is more well-lit. This feels safer, and you also want to be able to see where you are going.

TOP

We walked past parking which was a TOP, a touristic starting point. The station of Zwolle is one as well, which they had to fight to keep. This brings the conversation to 'rustpunten' (resting points), where inhabitants open their homes to walkers & cyclists, for a coffee, tea or cake.

Map of walking times

Together with the department of Zwolle Marketing, to show that Zwolle is actually easily walkable. The inner city is very compact. They use google maps to estimate the walking times.

Car-free inner city?

First let visitors park their car outside of the singel. Later also inhabitants? Some resistance, and debate for how far the parking hubs should be (450m?250m?). It is also harder for elderly, with walking limitations but who are not eligible for disability parking. With 'Toegankelijk Zwolle' they work together on the accessibility of the city. It is mainly a spatial argument: the space cars take up could be used for greenery, or pedestrians. The same goes for the neighbourhood of Assendorp.

Zero-emissions

A zero emission zone in the inner city, meant to induce logistics without emissions. For this transshipment from trucks to smaller vehicles is necessary. Also adjust the hours logistics can enter the inner city?

Pedestrian Network

Which consists of the fundamental routes, which are between important destinations. These can be all sorts of things: routes between playgrounds, from elderly homes to shops. Fundamental routes also consist of green routes.

Zwolle

What she likes about Zwolle is that its inner city does not have one giant square with all the cafés, but that there are multiple, smaller squares. Zwolle is also a combination of greenery and history, such as along the singel. There are also lots of recreation, leisure options. It really is a city. Some parts of it do have their own character, when they were a village, which grew to be a part of Zwolle.

Figure 99 Park Wezenlanden

Figure 100 Hills of Borger-Odoorn

Borger-Odoorn

when: 6th of March 2025
10.30 - 15.00
who: with Zef Hemel, wandelprofessor

The slight hills in this part of the country make for great views. I love how Dutch people get excited at the slightest hill, call it a mountain, and enjoy the farway views.

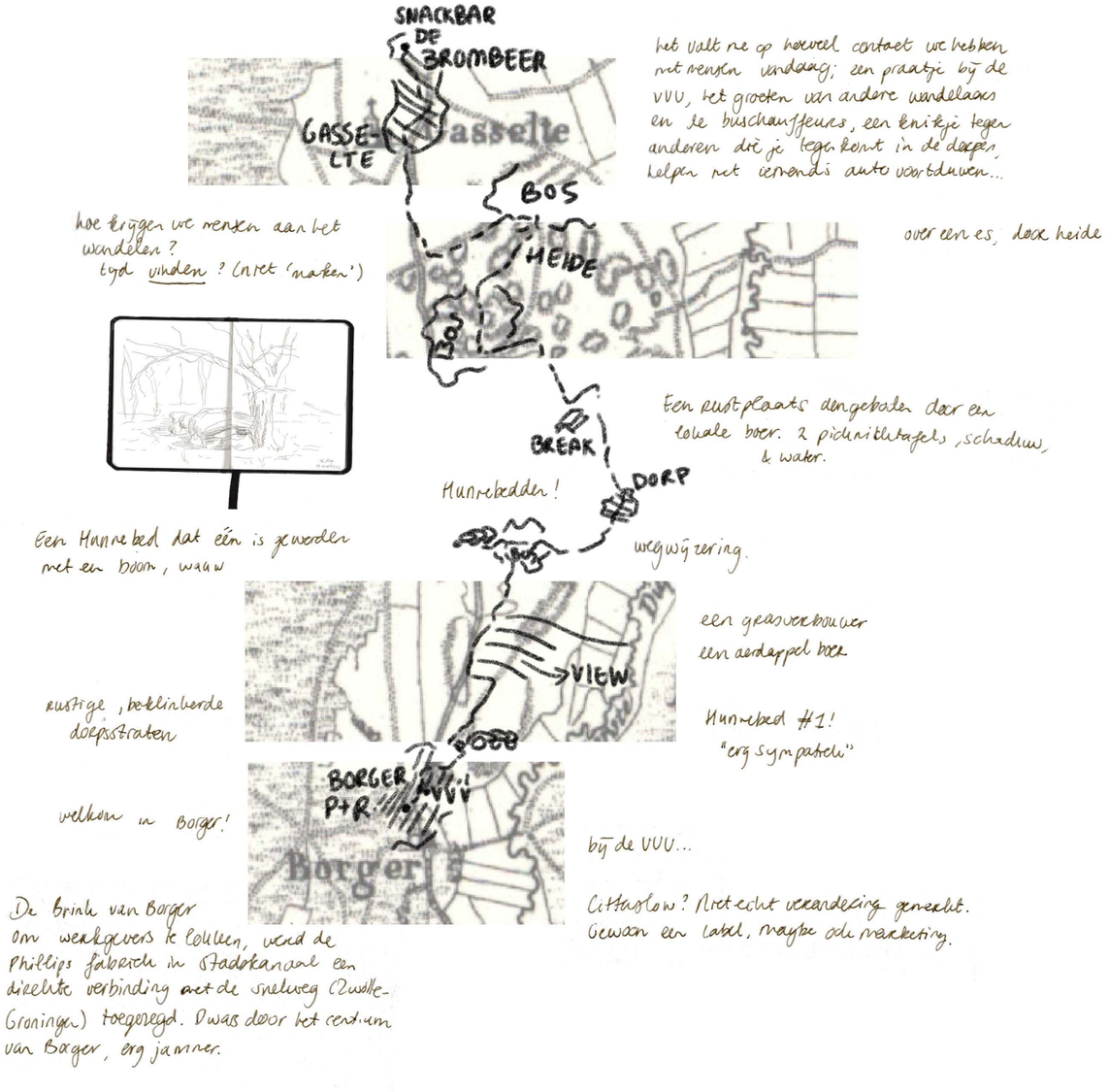


Figure 101 Walk through Borger-Odoorn

Borger-Odoorn

when: 6th of March 2025
10.30 - 15.00
who: with Zef Hemel, wandelprofessor

Figure 102
Heath

Figure 103
Hunnebed

Figure 104
Trekvaart in Midden-Delfland

Midden-Delfland 02

when: 11th of March 2025
12.00-13.30
who: Eugénie Klok, “beleidsadviseur landschap” and inhabitant of Midden-Delfland

Figure 105 Schipluiden

Municipality of Midden-Delfland

Has the task to protect the landscape. Westland about the glass, Midden-Delfland for the grass. Farmers are important, a lot has been done for ‘neutral’ farming.

Recreation and history

The path along the trekvaart, with info signs, was made in collaboration with multiple municipalities. It is a provincial ‘erfgoedlijn’ (heritage line), and makes history come alive.

Cittalsow?

It is a mark of quality, quality that the municipality already has. Mostly because of its authentic landscape of peat fields.

60 km/h roads through the fields

The road is a ‘sluiproute’, and can get quite busy. Lots of heavy machines for farming also use the road. If you make then wider, to accommodate for cyclists or walkers, you do take a piece of the landscape away. Be conscious of that. To make the whole road a cycling path, sometimes gets resistance from inhabitants. Double speed bumps to slow down traffic have also been tried. As a cyclist, you have to be alert to those as well.

Sharing the area

The area seems to get busier and busier. Paths are used by walkers, equestrians, skaters, dog-walkers and cyclists alike. In passing, people can get annoyed or even agitated. It is hard to balance it all, on narrow paths. Cyclists would like to cycle next to each other. Walkers could also choose unpaved paths. Or should we just treat each other better?

City-rural appreciation

Lots of space-demanding issues are moved from urban, to rural areas, such as storing water, climate adaption or energy production. They prefer to stick to the task of taking care

of the citizens, the people, by providing ‘rust en ruimte’ (quiet and room), focussing on recreation (although not everywhere). The aim should be to have citizens appreciate the landscape, and care for it.

Nine municipalities work together through the ‘Landschapstafel’. (Slow) city-country connections are important. No new paths across the fields, or through the nature though. But there can be temporary walks! Some destinations are also created, but they should fit the landscape (like the statue of Jongkind) and the target groups. Parents might to want to grab some ice cream with their kids.

Local produce

Local produce is also a way to enjoy and appreciate the rural area, without even entering. It fits the qualities of the landscape as well.

Figure 106 Trekvaart

Figure 107 Island in Overschie

Overschie

when: 12th of March 2025
14.00-15.30
who: Inhabitant of Overschie

Figure 108 Park in Overschie

A walk in the park

The park is big, has many paths, have not even explored them all. It is nice that the park is surrounded by clear roads, you can sometimes just try out a different path, and see where it leads you. It has both open and closed sections, it has a playground, soccer field, petting zoo with deer. Lots of families, especially on the weekends, come here. Many paths are wide, asphalted

Would also walk here in the dark (and privileged to do so), it is kind of nice, silent, alone

A walk on the island

There is only one exit/entrance. Only walkers, making a full loop around the island. Maybe some picknicks in summer? The path is narrow (about 20cm), very suitable for solidary walks. Would probably go here for contemplation. The nature here feels a bit unmaintained, the island feels adventurous, compared to a walk in the park. Would not walk here in the dark. The 'knooppunten' walks do have a route over the island. We say hi to people we pass. Surprisingly quiet, for how close for example the airport is.

Options

It is nice that there is the option to walk on the island, or in the park. Or towards the old city centre, also a unique part of Overschie. Something for every mood. Also have many routes in my head, that can be combined in the moment, that keeps it flexible. But often you also choose the most easy, logical route, automatically.

Walking or Running routes

Very different ways of choosing a route. When you run, or bike for that matter, going straight for a long time is not boring. A long, continuous route is nice.

Figure 109
a Stork

Figure 02
Zwolle 02

Zwolle 02

when: 18th of March 2025
12.00-13.30
who: Erna Jansen-van der Meer, “thematrekker actieve mobiliteit” and inhabitant of Zwolle

Figure 111 Koggellaan

Weeks and weekends

During the week, we walk on the right side of this cycling path, when we make ommetjes or do weetings. While in weekends, when we leisure walk, we walk on the left side!

Zwolle and activity mobility

She is an ambassador for active mobility within the municipality. Zwolle is 'Wereldfietsstad', the city in the Netherlands where people cycle the most. She wants Zwolle to become a 'Wereld Wandelstand' . STOMP is already embedded in the organization, and people also remind each other of it. However, what it means exactly, is sometimes still unsure. Does it mean having zebra crossings everywhere? Should we make sidewalks of asphalt for people with walking difficulties? And what do you do in which situations?

Right now, they are collecting how pedestrians are represented in policies in different fields, to find out and conclude what they want as Zwolle. Secondly, they are mapping the pedestrian network (which is complicated, as there are sidewalks almost everywhere), to see if it makes sense regarding the pedestrian flows, for different groups. For example kids walking from playground to playground, elderly walking to do groceries or to the pharmacy or find where the green routes are. All of this should bring a clear plan & strategies of action.

They are also part of the Citydeal and Masterplan Lopen. For example for Masterplan Lopen, Zwolle is working on the point of integrating walking in higher education. This includes bringing walking into more field than planning, for example physical therapy, and mental health care for students. Masterplan Lopen is not yet connected to subsidies. It is a nice network to experiment, ask questions and learn from each other. In the municipality, there is enough budget to do this research (but eventually making the (spatial) changes?).

Opportunities

"Ruimte voor de rivier" also brought new walking opportunities, on the floodscapes. Also the densification, 'inbereiden', offers opportunities for active mobility, as we can create proximity, which is especially for walking, essential.

Desire paths

In fields, but also in the snow, you see the desired paths. Sometimes people use this in planning, for example noticing the parked cars, how people cross squares or which widths of streets are used.

Engelenroute

Is an idea for a route from the centre of Zwolle to the Engelenburgt, or even further south to a new statue. The Paserelle is a part of it. It has been a goal for a long time, "komt er vanzelf wel!"

Weeting

Also promoting weetings at the municipality, for example by always doing her own meetings while walking, making a meetingpoint for weeting, and making that a location option in outlook calendars, and hopefully also creating weeting routes. Softly, changes like this will happen. It still has a bit the image of a break, of not working hard or efficiently, that idea around it still needs to shift.

"lekker aan het werk!?" zegt een glimlachende collega die langs onze weeting fietst....

"working hard!?" says a college who cycles past us, smiling. "You should actually have a cap that says 'I'm working hard I am in a Weeting' or something"."

Memories

Good memories of the avondvierdaagse, with kids and walking it herself. These childhood memories bring a good feeling to walking.

Figure 112 Fields around Zwolle

Figure 113 Fields around Zwolle

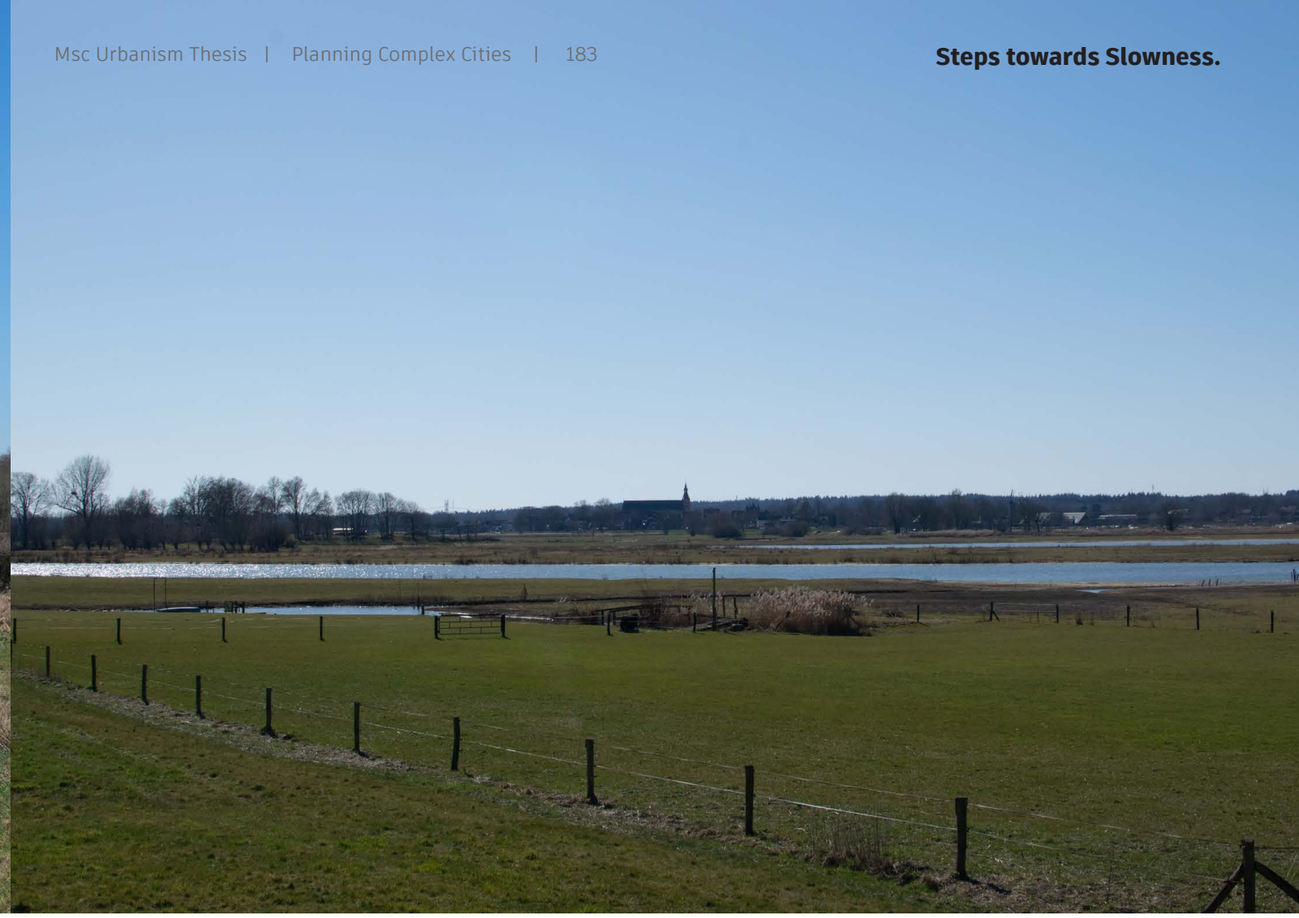


Figure 114 Hattum in the distance

Paths too narrow? Not continuous?

The unpaved walking path we are on is just wide enough for two people, when we pass others, and we do, many times, we rearrange ourselves, walk behind each other, or walk a bit on the grass. It is not a big issue. Later in the walk the sidewalk ends abruptly, and we have to cross the road 10 metres further. Also not really a big issue.

Walking speed and focus

It makes sense that you walk faster to get to a train. You would also cycle faster, and the walk has a really different function than a walk around the block.

Behaviour change

Learned from Annemarie Mars: You have to create commitment to walking. This has 4 phases, first denial, then resistance (while already knowing it might be better), then reflection (you want to, but where? How? When?) and then commitment. Most importantly, stop pushing people, instead focus on the positive benefits, set a good example and take people with you. Do not confuse walking for the endgoal, it is actually a way, a tool to get... a break, fresh air, movement etc etc. There is a problem (waardetekort), and the goal (waarde – like health, hapiness), and a tool to get there (certain behaviour). Role models and good examples are important, and be candid. Why do you like it?

Having a break outside, for example at a picknick bench, is also a way to get some of the benefits of walking during a break, and when you job involves standing or manual labour, and walking during a break is not really a break.

Some choices we can influence, for example by limiting car parking or restricting bike parking, for example not allowing it on sidewalks, some choices, towards active mobility, are made automatically.

New job – opportunity to change

Kind of a change point in life. She started a new habit of always taking the stairs when she started to work at the municipality

Benefits of walking

A great benefit of walking is that you discover new places. She walked a part of the ‘oude rijnpad’ recently. Walking into Utrecht, the city surprised her with its beauty.

Liveability

Our ideas of what is nice, desirable, or liveable change constantly. A century ago, a field with a lot of daffodils might have insinuated that the farmer was lazy. Now it’s viewed as great, it is nature-inclusive, biological farming!

Barriers

A main barrier to active mobility is the car-centric narrative, which is embedded in everything, it is how we are raised. Even legos sometimes don’t have a sidewalk. Car-centric planning has stimulated people to live further away. “Geen mobiliteit maar nabijheid”. Also there is the instant-society. Everything is within hand’s reach on the internet, and quick. It is all in line with overproduction and (too much) wealth.

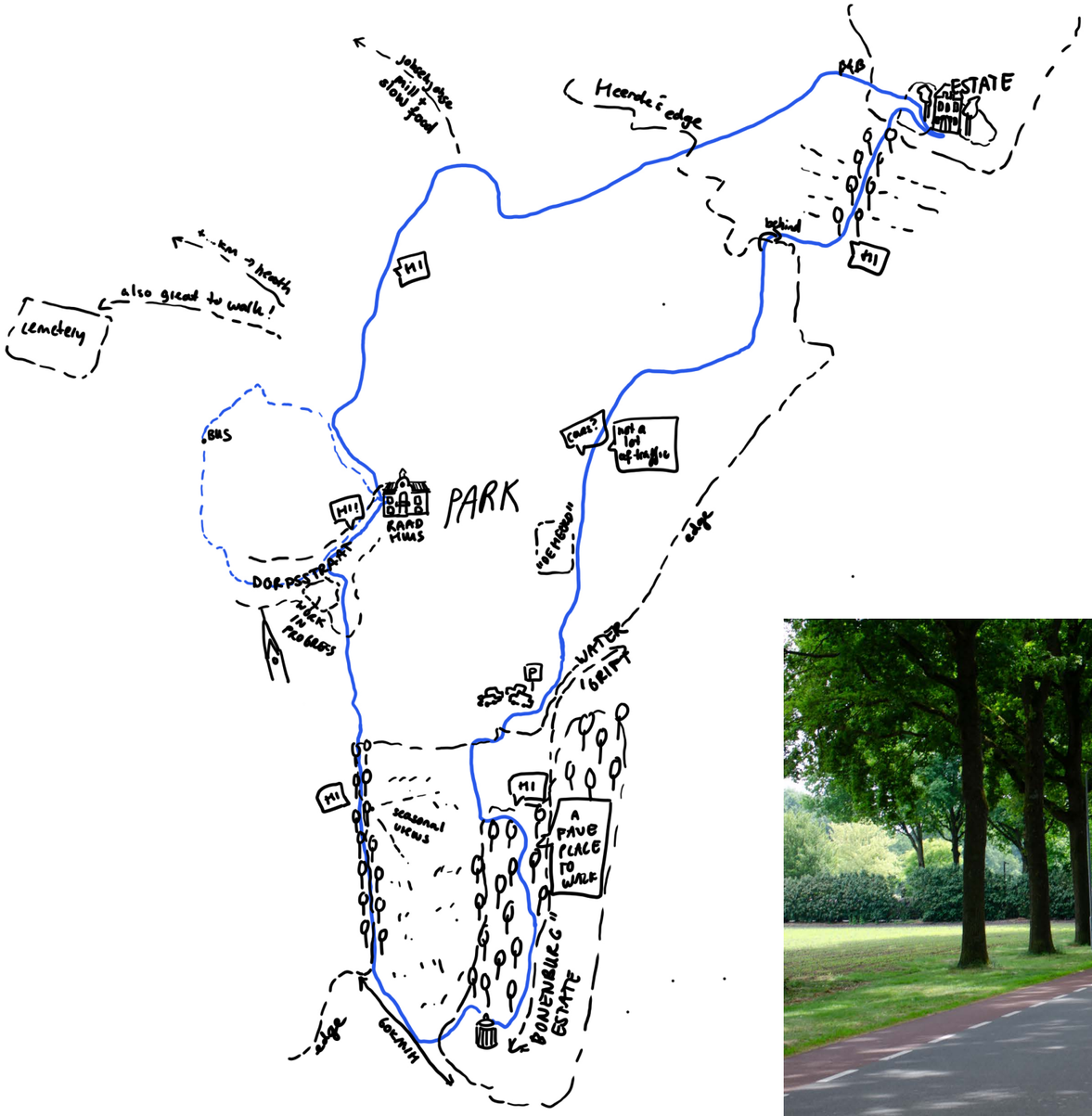
Tijdesbeleving

15 minutes might be much to get some bread, but for getting to work there is a different standard to measure time by. 3 minutes walking already feels long when there is nothing to see (dode plint).

Figure 115
The centre of Heerde

Heerde 02

when: 21st of May 2025
14.00-15.30
who: with Olaf Prinsen, the Mayor of Heerde



Heerde 02

when: 21st of May 2025
14.00-15.30
who: with Olaf Prinsen, the Mayor of Heerde

Figure 116
The walk in Heerde

Figure 117 Car-centric streets

Heerde's Qualities

One of Heerdes qualities is how quick you can be in an open landscape, and how diverse the landscapes around it are (from meadows, to forest, to river landscapes). Moreover, these landscapes don't bore, as they look different each walk, especially seasonally. Another interesting place to walk is the graveyard, its beautifully maintained and so quiet.

The community is also unique, many events in Heerde are organized by volunteers, for example the 'heerdelijk festival'. De Heerd is also an important place for this (a school, theatre, community hub and more).It's also a value of Cittaslow, the importance of community. Effort do needs to be made to conserve this connectedness. Moreover, it's important that the community realizes that the town, the public space is theirs, and to care about and for it.

These unique characteristics are important, but might be viewed or worked with differently by everyone. That is what we need to talk about. It is also a matter of perspective. A few weeds on the sidewalk might make it look messy to someone, while if you compare Heerde to a bigger cities, all the infrastructure is great. And especially thinking about how these qualities might develop in a lifetime, for example how we now plant the trees which will be big in decades. This is especially interesting for younger people to think about.

Developments

They are still in construction for a new building (at the dorpsstraat/bonenburgerstraat), where extra attention was put towards the quality of the building, instead of its looks being guided by calculations of costs and profits. This was possible with insurances and funds from the municipality. This adds quality to the dorpsstraat. If money is tight, it is relatively 'easy' to economize on 'gebiedsontwikkeling', but this often comes at a cost of the quality of the space which is creatied. Investments in quality – such as green spaces – can yield many benefits, including economic ones, like increased WOZ values or savings in public spending, for example on healthcare. Especially statistics about these savings can make people view the topic in a different way, but it might not be enough to persuade them, if their intuition tells them it might not work or it always has been done a certain way.

Developments also include more housing. The housing is aimed at keeping (younger) inhabitants in Heerde and sustaining the current amenities. The municipality is also involved with a new business park (H2O), together with more surrounding municipalities.

Role of the municipality

As the public sector, the public space is not ours to do with what we want, the public space belongs to the people. For us, it's a balance between steering towards and safeguarding what is good for the whole society (algemeen belang), and addressing local concerns. Having conversations about issues is important. Participatory processes are not easy, they take time, energy, and the outcomes are uncertain. However, for example the walks with inhabitants are actually fun, something to look forward to. It is also important to realize that most people, if their life is good and they are satisfied, do not speak up. Generally, people speak up more when it affects them ('not in my backyard').

Cars

Last summer, the Dorpsstraat was 'autoluw' (low in cars) temporarily, which was generally received well. However, a general narrative around the car is still its speed and ease: in 5 minutes from one side of the town to the other! Many come to work by car too. In Heerde, there is not that much traffic (other cars), something which slows you down in a bigger place, like Apeldoorn. In the policies around mobility the 'STOP' principle is included. Moreover, speed limits are changed, where 80 becomes 50 and 50, 30.

Slowness

Slowing down is sometimes challenging in daily life. For example in the evenings, when you come home and are tired from work, it feels easy to watch tv, instead of maybe listen to music on a record player, and do nothing else. At my last job, I created 'mijmeruren' (hours of contemplation) in the workday. It's a way for employers to give space in a day to slow down.

Figure 118 Car and walk & roll on asphalt

Delft-Arnhem

when: 28th of March 2025
12.30-14.00
who: Annemieke Molster, urbanist and inhabitant in Arnhem

She is walking an 'ommetje' in Arhnem, in park Ziependaal, while I walk along the Schie in Delft. We have a remote weeting, a phone call while walking.

I would walk to the supermarket, it is like 10 minutes. But if I'm in a hurry, I quickly go by bike. If I have to take a lot of things, that is also a barrier to choosing walking. I do always walk with a backpack. My family does actually prefer walking to the supermarket!

The train station is 2x as far as the supermarket. I actually almost never walk.

My work is 35 min away, if my tempo is up. My resolution is to do that 1x a week. It is actually really nice, feels a bit like a luxury. About half of it is walking through a park.

In a project, a former 'productiebos', there were a lot of straight, boring paths. We created smaller paths between them, where you cannot see the whole path ahead of you, even creating some trails with height differences. This is like!

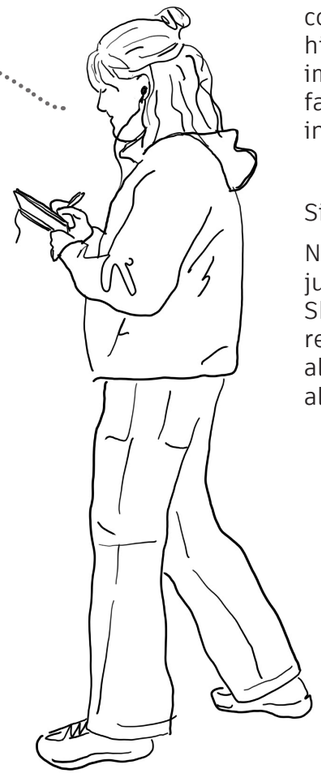
I heard the story of a man in Arnhem, who's bike broke, making him walk everywhere for a week. Arnhem has a couple of steep streets, which he actually found nicer to walk than bike. He liked that it was a moment to empty his head. It was some time to get ready for the workday, and also to process work. When he arrived home, he was immediately ready for home-life of kids, talking and everything, while before, he always needed a moment to compose himself. He kept walking after his bike was fixed.

I also walk for fun. And luchwalks a couple of ties a week. It is also nice, if I have a meeting in another location, to walk there.

In summer, I take evening walks too.

I did have the ommetje app for a while, but once I lost my streak, it was less fun.

Social walking is also important for me. And if the space forces you to walk in line, your conversation stalls. I also don't like the assumption that pedestrians will be able to pass, whatever is happening on the sidewalk. Not everyone can!



A city, a town

In a small town, the way you can walk is totally different. In a few minutes you're in the non-urban countryside. It makes sense that walking is than closer linked to recreation. Also there is like one main street, so a 'network' might work differently. A lot of cities just started with their walking policies. They all have different approaches, which makes sense, as they have different priorities and urban fabrics. Every neighbourhood type also brings different challenges.

Working with networks: Arnhem

She is working on the walking policies of the municipality of Arnhem, looking into 2 types of networks. The green-leisure network, which prioritizes a quiet experience, where it is clear where to go, so it not necessary to pay attention to traffic. Loose ends are tied together, to make sure people have quick access to green, and there is a humansized ('fijnmazige') network ('dooradering'). All kinds of lengths of walks should be possible.

And a "hoofdloopnetwerk", which prioritizes the shortest connections of functions, and might call for change if what should be the main walkway, is now a car connection. Often, as a town historically grew, the most important destinations are in fact along car roads. This is interesting to rethink.

Signage?

Not too much signs, that is just distracting. Sometimes She also doesn't feel like reading another sign, pff... already getting enough info all the time in life.

Bloemkoolwijken

She excepted it to be difficult to walk a straight route in a 'Bloemkoolwijk'. However, in the one where she walked, there seemed to be one straight route, connecting one side to the other, with even one line of clinkers on the ground, indicating the route. Which is great for wayfinding as well (without signs!).

Map with walking times

A way to show how 'walkable' a place actually is. It is not for navigation, but more promotion. As a city you say: here we walk! And look how doable, easy it is! Pontevedra in Spain started with this, and placed these maps in the city ("Metrominuto").

How does someone choose to walk?

Often the choice to not walk has been made before someone even considers their physical environment. Then if you walk, do you walk again next time, or not? Often the way you move around is a habit, which is hard to change. However, starting at a young age helps. When municipalities sent parents information about primary schools, maybe walking routes can be included. The tone you take is important, for the amount of resistance you will meet. Not demanding that people have to do something. It is more important that the change is accessible. People in power setting the example, for example company bosses walking their BiLa's, and not seeing walking as a break, as lost time.

There are already lots of people walking everywhere, even distances that you might think no one would walk, through a whole city. Only neighbourhood-scale attempts at walkability are not enough.

Public toilets!

A project in Germany/Austria gave stickers to gastronomy, that opened their toilets to the public, for free. "DieNetteToiletten" also had an app with a map. In rural areas maybe compost-based toilets?

Utrecht, ‘Nationaal Masterplan Lopen’ project day

when: 20st of March 2025
15.00-16.00
who: Participating parties of the NML

Figure 119 NML project day

Figure 120 PBL in the Hague

What is already going well?

In inner cities, walking is often nice already. These areas are often pedestrian-focused, and car-free. It is also the part you visit as a tourist.

Ambitions are high! In municipalities, etc.

Lower parking norms can really help (but that is often now how conversations start)

Good example: in Vienna a new neighbourhood was built, and they built the amenities, shops and public transport stops first. Than a new habit is easily built.

Initiative in Overijssel: a road was adjusted (N337), and they gave inhabitants 500 euros to get an e-bike

What isn’t?

The connections between suburbs and inner towns, in a way that makes walking pleasant. Often a walking route is just parallel to a car road.

People do not see walking as an actual option.

It should be more interdisciplinary. Work with psychologists, sociologists (behavioural change?), with people form logistics (where time = money), and more

It is now mostly bigger cities taking initiative. Where are the smaller towns?

What should we do?

Use traffic models for walking? No, because walking works differently. It is more experience-based, mental. Stories are more important. In the car, we treat people as drivers, almost as a part of the machine. Whereas while walking, we are humans.

STOMP assumes we will leave. It assumes mobility. There should be an extra letter in front of the S, for staying (verblijven). Urbanism isn’t mapping car infrastructure.

Clear examples of what STOMP means in practice are also necessary. Especially in ‘unclear’ areas, which do not have a typical or workable density, or block size.

Den Haag

when: 4th of April 2025
13.00-14.30
who: with Arjan Harbers and Siene Swinkels, spatial researchers at PBL

PBL’s approach

Research based on typologies, looking at the destinations (bestemminingen) and the space (eye-level). It is reversed in a pre-war neighbourhood, vs post-war (suburbs). In older inner cities tiny sidewalks, but a lot of amenities close. Often also shared streets, or streets that become shared as the 1m sidewalks are used as frontyards. In a typical suburb, there is space, good infra, but no close by destinations. The eye-level, they might research with Lidar data, which can even detect uneven sidewalk tiles. This makes it possible to see both the ‘bruto’ & ‘netto’ sidewalk space: the official width, and the width when you account for overgrowing bushes, streetlights, heigh differences, trees, voorstoepjes, electricity houses, parked bikes, dixi’s, we’ve seen it all. Maintenance is important!

Conflicts with greening?

Pedestrian and green space are kind of fighting for the left-over space. Mabe also because all the other functions have clear norms, not just guidelines. A norm for greenery is coming (EU-wide). Some new projects do have norms for walking. Depends on the municipality.

Easy to build a new habit, when you are at a new place, or at a new job…

When I lived in Madrid, I walked everywhere. For sure everything which was less than 30 min walk away. I also started walking more during covid, like so many others.

Wayfinding

A town in Cuba re-built their whole town into a non-grid city, to ensure pirates who raided the city got lost!

Crossings

The road at the edge of the Haagse Bos is hard to cross. You could live 10m away, but would not let your kids go to the park by themselves. In a situation like this, an easy, cheap solution is a zebra. But it might be hard to actually get that done, as it disrupts the flow of cars.

If a residential street is full of parked cars, between sidewalk and road, it can be really hard to find a space where you can cross between the cars. You also can see less. If then voorstoepjes also take over the sidewalk from the house-side, pedestrians are kind of stuck.

In the park we run into a 6-way pedestrian crossing, and if you count the waterway, 8-way! All the paths have rhododendrons at both sides and feel adventurous.

Haagse bos + Landgoed Clingendael vs. Hoekse bosjes

We walk here in these parks, in the middle of the city. The sun is out, it feels like nature! He talks about a similar forest-park close to the city in Hoek van Holland. It also has some historic dunes, and old trees. But there you see the industrial pipes in the distance, you smell the oil, it is a totally different experience!

9.3. Walking habits and preferences

Covid made me walk more, creating standard walking routes. There's no schedule, standard times to walk, it is nice to stay flexible. There's already enough things set in a day! But I do have a streak of 70 days doing 10.000 steps, that gamification makes me walk. Cycling is also counted as steps, I cycle from Rotterdam to Delft for work.

Proffessor at TU Delft

Would say hi more often when walking with someone else, you're already in a social mood.

It is nice to have options. Something for every mood. Also have many routes in my head, that can be combined in the moment, that keeps it flexible. But often you also choose the most easy, logical route, automatically.

But mostly, I love to hiking and the mountains. If the Netherlands had mountains, I would spent all my time in the Dutch alps!

I have good memories of the avond4daagse, with my own kids and walking it myself. These childhood memories bring a good feeling to walking.

Inhabitant and municipality employee in Zwolle

I cycle to work, it is about 1 km. Often more practical, because I often go grocery shopping straight after work. Because of some health issues, I don't walk as easily as I cycle. I still like to walk, 10-12km every once in a while, and 'ommetjes' 3-4 times a week. Whether I cycle, drive or takes public transport to a longer hike, depends on the time I have. If you have to take many, or long busses to get somewhere, is a big barrier. I plan my walks with Komoot.

You see different things, you see more while walking. If I can, I walk. But for example having to get a lot of groceries, is easier by car. But daily destinations are walkable, every town as a supermarket. And cycling or walking in the dark is also not nice. After-dinner and lunch walks are great! Cars do take a lot of space, for every car in the Netherlands, there are 3 parking spaces.

Inhabitant and municipality employee in Midden-Delfland

Proffessor at TU Delft

When I have a functional walk, from A to B, I still choose the nicer route. It makes it feel less long. I also choose to not go the same way back, for a nice, varied walk. Sometimes I choose the faster way to go 'back'.

Walking became more of a habit during COVID, when me and my roommates were battling on the app 'Ommetje', to keep our streaks and steps.

I walk about 20-30km each day. I plan for that to happen, where for example my meetings are, or if I can do them while walking.

I often walk to the supermarket. Less often to catch the train, because of the time pressure. However, if I have to pay to park my bike (for a longer time), I will walk. Bike parking where you can cycle straight in also makes me choose the bike (like at the station in Utrecht).

I like uneven paths, with interesting twists and turns.

Inhabitant and municipality employee in Zwolle

9.3. Walking habits and preferences

I walk often, on average 9000 steps a day, especially thanks to walks with my dog. Looking back, getting a dog was also a moment where walking became more a regular habit, embedded in my daily life. But also, the walks I took with my dog were nice, so then I walked a little longer and more.

'Wandelen' is also something I like, I am for example part of the committee overseeing the 'Pieterpad'. Moreover, I walk with residents ('wandelen met de burgemeester'). This is a low barrier and easy way of talking, you have really different conversations and sensitive issues can be discussed, but it never escalates (like it might in an indoor, seated meeting). Conversations to reflect back on the year I also have while walking.

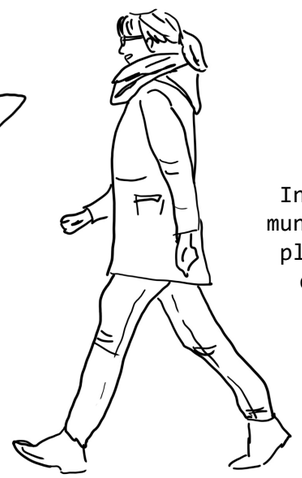
Inhabitant and Mayor of Heerde

Lunchwalks! To the Albert Heijn & back. I mostly walk with others. I like it for the fresh air.

I prefer cycling, though, I especially love cycling on my race bike. Walking can be a bit boring. Because of the speed in cycling, you see more. To work is about a 4 minute cycling trip. I do sometimes make it a bit longer, to cycle a road which is more fun.

The areas outside cities do seem to get busier and busier, and sometimes people get agitated. The paved paths are narrow, and I like to cycle next to my husband, but that is not always possible. Sometimes walkers also have the choice of walking on an unpaved path. Is it hard to balance everything, or should we just treat each other better?

I do not use a car on daily basis. For meetings in Rotterdam, I take the train (from Delft), or cycle there, also kind of making a statement to my colleagues: do not take the car!



Inhabitant and municipality employee in Midden-Delfland

I am a bit too busy to walk, but sometimes I go for an evening walk with my mother.

More often, in the weekends we go for 'Real Walks', of about 10km, often taking the car to the starting point. It is quite far, 3km, to for example the forest on the other side of Heerde. But there are two 'klompenpaden' close to home.

I remembers 'autumn walks' in primary school, that was fun.

High schooler living in Heerde

I do walk in Apeldoorn (where I go to high school). After school, I hurry to get to the bus stop, and not have to wait ("horrible!") and waste my 'free time'. Not so much in a hurry on the way to school, if I am late, I am not wasting my own time.

I prefer to walk an 'ommetje', a circle, with no repeat-paths. During the day, I would rather walk in nature than through a neighbourhood.

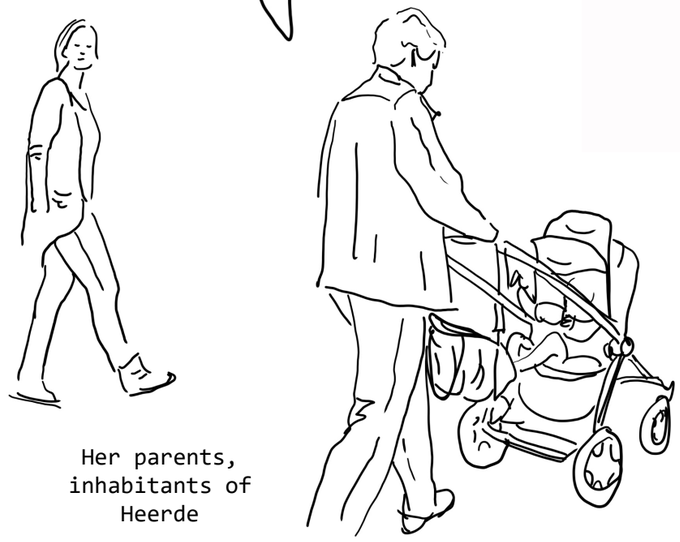
She's happy she's walking with me now, "Heerlijk, fresh air, being outside, on a normal Monday morning!"

When working at home I go for lunchwalks, through a small woodland ('Het Bosje'). Which started during covid. We discovered 'Het Bosje', when our first child was born and we started walking with a stroller.

Every Saturday, I used to walk with the stroller, and then with our child, to the bakery. But now I cycle.

Commute? For work I go by ca to Raalte, crossing the IJssel by boat, and then I take the train to Almelo, where I work. If the weather is nice, I cycle to Zwolle, and then take the train from there. We have two cars.

Evening walks in winter are great, especially to enjoy the Chrismas lights.



Her parents, inhabitants of Heerde

9.4. Conclusion

Reflecting on RQ3, "*How can insights from personal and collective walking experiences in varied environments inform fostering enjoyable, diverse walking experiences*?" the following insights were gained:

Findings from daily walks (Chapter 5) and Walks and Talks reveal a more nuanced understanding of walking than current planning and design paradigms allow. Established interpretations, often focused on 'walkable' distances, pedestrian networks, and one-sized-fits-all approaches, overlook the experiential and qualitative dimensions of walking.

A quality-centred approach emphasises elements such as the feeling of a length of a walk, contextual (rather than standardised) and real-use path widths, the creation of nodes (where directions are chosen) instead of mere crossings, microclimates shaped by wind, sun, and greenery and every day (physical) barriers (parked bicycles, overgrown vegetation, passing others). These insights, grounded in both personal experience and validated by literature on wayfinding and weathering, informed the development social, spatial and policy patterns, and a new set of "experience patterns". These patterns capture recurring qualities that contribute to (or detract from) enjoyable walks, and can be layered to create complete, diverse walking experiences. Each pattern is linked to broader social, spatial, and policy actions, enabling planners to integrate walking preferences from the outset.

Moreover, the analysis highlights the need to consider diverse walking types, whether alone or accompanied, in different weather conditions, for various purposes, throughout the day. A persona-based approach, reflecting distinct preferences and their daily route choices, aid in the practical application of these insights. This approach will be tested in the case study design (Chapter 10). The role of walking within the design process will also be further examined.

9. Approach

9.1 Approach
9.2 Aims
9.3 Tools
9.4 Methods

Figure 121 Collage of bike culture throughout the years in the Netherlands
(images retrieved ffrom (left to right): https://www.fietsersbond.nl/nieuws/padden-stoel-bestaat-100-jaar/ + https://www.fietsen123.nl/pagina/koninklijk-fietsen + https://www.bnnvara.nl/varagids/artikelen/filmjury-verkiest-fietsscene-uit-turks-fruit-tot-beste-nederlandse-filmscene + https://x.com/Cycling_Embassy/status/1312648752247828481 + https://nos.nl/artikel/2178090-koning-opent-grootste-fietscongres-lang-geleden-die-terugtraprem.html + https://www.babboe.nl/bakfiets-3-kinderen)

9.1. Approach

Building upon the analysis and theoretical framework, an approach consisting of aims, methods and interventions for promoting walking in planning and design can be proposed. This chapter presents this approach. In the following chapters, the proposed approach will be tested by creating a design proposal in two case studies.

The approach answers the following questions:

How should we intervene to promote walking?

Drawing on practice theory, it becomes evident that human behaviour, spatial design, and societal values are deeply interconnected. Our choices, often made unconsciously, are shaped by the material and immaterial contexts of our daily lives. This means that interventions must extend beyond spatial design alone and additionally should also target social and policy dimensions. Without addressing these broader contexts, spatial changes risk being reinterpreted or absorbed into existing habits. The interdependence of these elements forms a vicious circle, a feedback loop in which intervening in one domain inevitably influences the others. Therefore, interventions can, and should, target any and all points in these loops, the immaterial and material contexts and social site. This multi-pronged approach has proven effective in the promotion of car use, where a combination of material and immaterial interventions (such as mobility-oriented housing development, extensive road networks, parking norms, company cars, travel allowances, and marketing campaigns linking car ownership to freedom, status, and success) has successfully shaped behaviours and societal norms.

A set of interrelated social, policy, and spatial actions (patterns) are proposed, which collectively promote walking. Moreover, viewing walking as a practice helps identify change points, moments in a day, a year, or a life where new habits can be introduced or reinforced. The interventions target these opportunities to make walking a natural, desirable, and valued part of everyday life.

How can we create lasting change?

Lasting change requires both long-term shifts in societal norms and the persistence of daily walking habits. Embedding walking within shared cultural values, such as freedom, flexibility and independence, helps foster long-lasting change. Walking should not be a rigid practice; instead, it must be able to evolve over time, acquiring different meanings and functions to suit varying needs, as practitioners adopt the practice and make it their own. As subcultures emerge, walking practices co-evolve with their contexts, embedding it as a long-term norm. For example, the cycling culture in the Netherlands demonstrates how a practice remains relevant over time, adapting to and influencing social trends. Over the years, dutch royal families have always biked, recreational biking has grown from wayfinding 'paddestoelen' to 'anwb-koppels' and families' daily biking has evolved from sitting on the back of bikes, to 'bakfietsmoders'.

For walking, experience is central to habit formation. People's preferences for walking experiences vary widely, underscoring the importance of avoiding a romanticized or idealized view of walking. Instead, we must recognize the nuanced, diverse, and often complex realities of walking, especially in everyday urban contexts. This includes attention to the lived experience: bodily sensations, eye-level perceptions, and the sensory, emotional, and practical dimensions that shape walking routines. Ultimately, walking should feel easy and enjoyable.

This focus on experience is fundamentally a design task, calling for the development of experience patterns, which, connected to the spatial, social and policy patterns, can guide interventions across scales.

How can we find the time and space to walk?

Promoting walking requires a critical examination of how we currently plan, both our spaces and our lives. The fast-paced values embedded in spatial planning—emphasizing efficiency, flow, and functional separation—often undermine opportunities for walking. We must shift from designing for "leaving" and "hurrying" to creating places to live, where you want to be and stay, not leave (as fast as possible). This involves questioning our assumptions about speed, efficiency, and convenience and critically evaluating the fast practices and immaterial and material context behind fast practices. These 'places to live' support slower, local lifestyles, focusing on quality and locality, creating the time and space for walking.

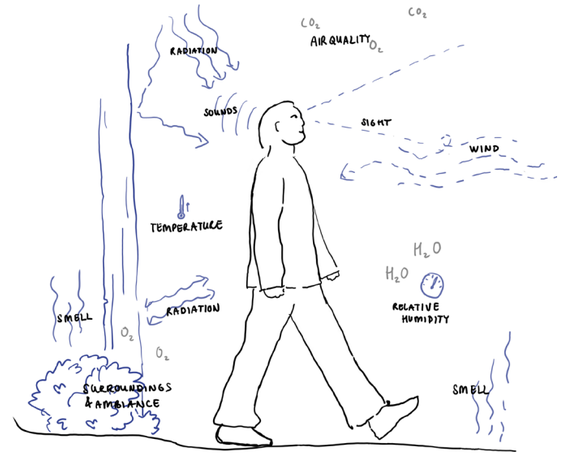


Figure 122
Experience of a walk

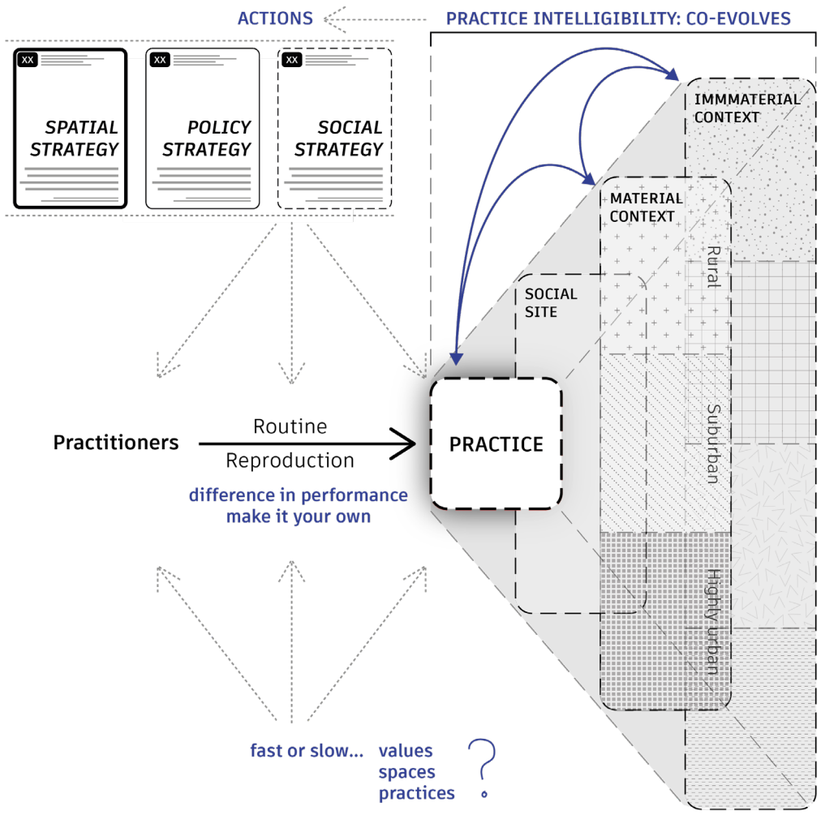


Figure 123 Practice Theory and the project approach

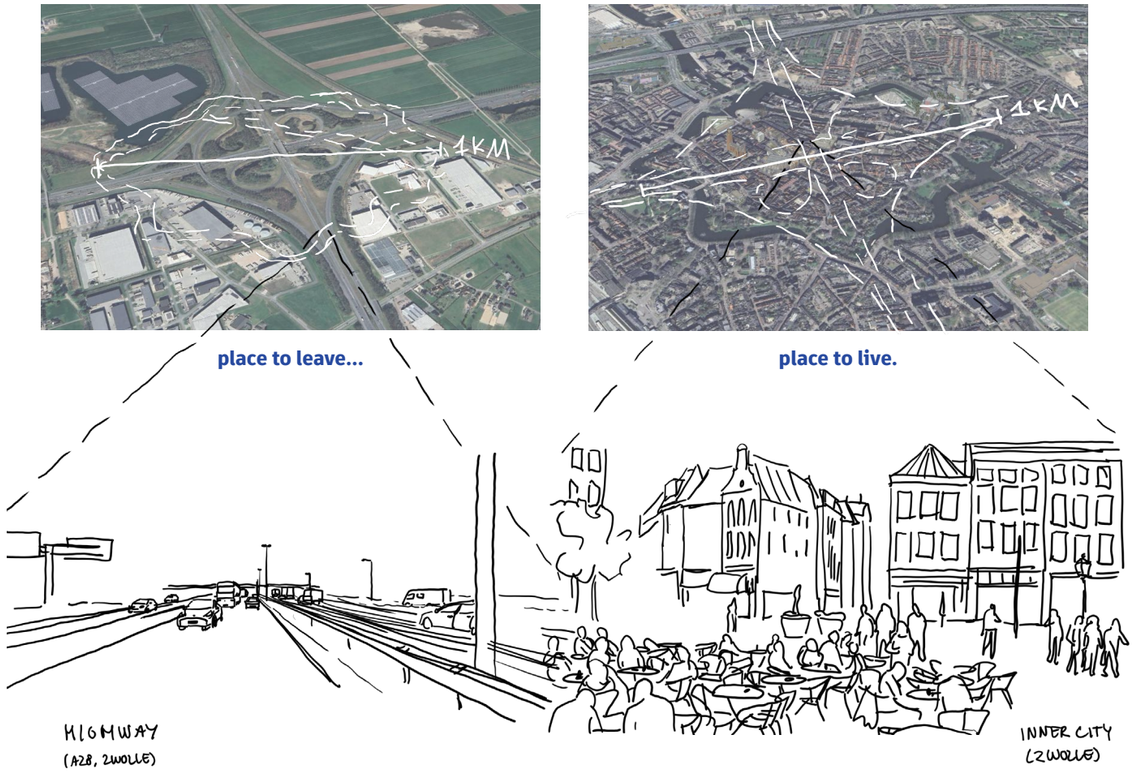


Figure 124 An example of car space and space to live in Zwolle

9.2. Aims

These questions and shifts propose 3 main aims which planning and designing to promote walking should achieve:

For people to...

1. Consider walking
2. Keep walking
3. Find time and space for walking

These aims are interdependent: without initial consideration, walking does not occur (1); without positive experiences, it does not continue (2); and without structural change in how we organize our space and time, walking remains constrained to an 'extra' leisure activity or sometimes-nice transport to nearby places such as the supermarket (3). Supporting all three is essential to making walking a desirable, integrated part of daily life across all contexts.

These aims are achieved through seven sub-aims:

A. Walking has many meanings in daily life

Walking is often framed narrowly as either leisure or transport. However, walking can serve many purposes: it can be for work, learning, socializing, play, or exploration. Whether a walk lasts ten minutes or several hours, whether it occurs in nature or in the city, whether it is done alone or with others, walking consistently offers benefits such as mood and energy boosts, stress reduction, and a sense of slowing down. Expanding the meanings of walking makes it more accessible and relevant to diverse groups.

The diverse possibilities of walking must be highlighted, through engaging campaigns, storytelling, and branding. These narratives should present walking not just as a movement or break, but as a playful, social, and productive activity. Everyday environments (workplaces, schools, shops, and community spaces) should adopt a key role in integrating walking into routines, offering accessible and meaningful opportunities for walking in daily life.

B. Walking is normal

The choice to walk or not is often made unconsciously. It reflects shared cultural values. Over time, these have framed walking as a less logical and desirable choice, especially compared to other options such as driving or sitting.

Shifting this perspective requires framing walking as part of values like freedom, comfort, and progress, which shape what is seen as a 'good life'. Promote values that prioritize quality over quantity. These include wellbeing, sustainability, community, and safety and reframe dominant ideals associated with the fast paced. Freedom can be reinterpreted not as car ownership or speed, but as the ability to move independently, safely, and enjoyably. The narrative around efficiency can also be re-examined through the lens of Marchetti's constant, revealing that, despite faster transport, daily travel time remains stable. This indicates that time has not been saved, but merely reallocated to longer journeys. These values will further expand the meanings of walking, aiding in making different forms of walking appealing to groups of people. New development can set the norm. Car-free developments, such as Merwede in Utrecht, represent a shift in values, towards local living, health, and sustainability.

Furthermore, normalize walking through everyday places where people spend time, their workplaces, schools, and shops. Lastly, because societal shifts takes time, it is important to engage with younger generations. In schools and youth-focused spaces, walking can be established as a normal, enjoyable, and valued part of life from an early age

C. Walking feels easy

Creating environments where walking feels easy means shifting from infrastructure designed for ‘verkeer’ (traffic) to spaces that support ‘verkeren’ (human interaction, connection, and well-being). Streets should encourage staying, meeting, wandering, and playing, not just moving.

Effective wayfinding is critical. It goes beyond signs and maps, encompassing spatial legibility, visual cues, and intuitive navigation. Spaces should feel compact, walkable, and connected, with clear landmarks and edges that embed themselves into people’s mental maps.

Finally, walking should be easy and inclusive for all pedestrians, including those who walk in adapted ways, who for example ‘walk & roll’: wheelchair users, people pushing strollers or walking with a suitcase, those guiding a child on roller skates, or walking alongside a bicycle.

D. Walking feels enjoyable

Walking enjoyment depends on many factors such as time of day, weather, other users, materials, and context. Design should allow for a diversity in experiences, guided by liveliness, greenery and weathering.

(Some) Streets should be vibrant, supporting a mix of uses, spontaneous interactions, and human presence. Such spaces are socially engaging and safer, fostering a positive feedback loop where more walkers create more lively streets, and in turn more walkers.

Nature enhances walking, whether through large parks or small interventions like street trees, flower beds, or facade planting. Nature’s sensory stimulation—sights, sounds, scents—supports wellbeing.

The weather conditions are integral to walking experiences. While we cannot control the weather, we can design for comfort across conditions, providing shade, shelter, and wind protection. Cultural attitudes towards weather also matter. Encouraging walking in all seasons fosters resilience and flexibility, especially in a future of increasingly unpredictable and extreme weather conditions.

E. Places to live, not leave

To shift beyond merely walking an extra walk around the block or 15-minute stroll to the supermarket, we need to find more time and space to walk. This shift involves creating a new, localized way of living that is more critical of how we spend both our time and space. It means making ‘places to live, not leave’.

A more localized lifestyle is key. The current system prioritizes speed and long-distance travel, with an average of 45 minutes per day spent commuting—time that is often unproductive and frustrating. Reducing the need for commuting frees up time and space for walking and local activities. For this, housing and job distribution needs critical reflection. New homes must be built where jobs already exist, not near highway exits. More jobs need to emerges in areas with significant housing. Existing mono-functional areas into vibrant, mixed-use places where people want to stay and walk around, s public spaces are enhanced with greenery and amenities.

Moreover, fast practices that encourage ‘leaving’ should be restricted. We can learn from the strategies that once promoted them and propose the opposite, such as limiting car use through reduced parking availability, ending subsidies, and halting road expansion.

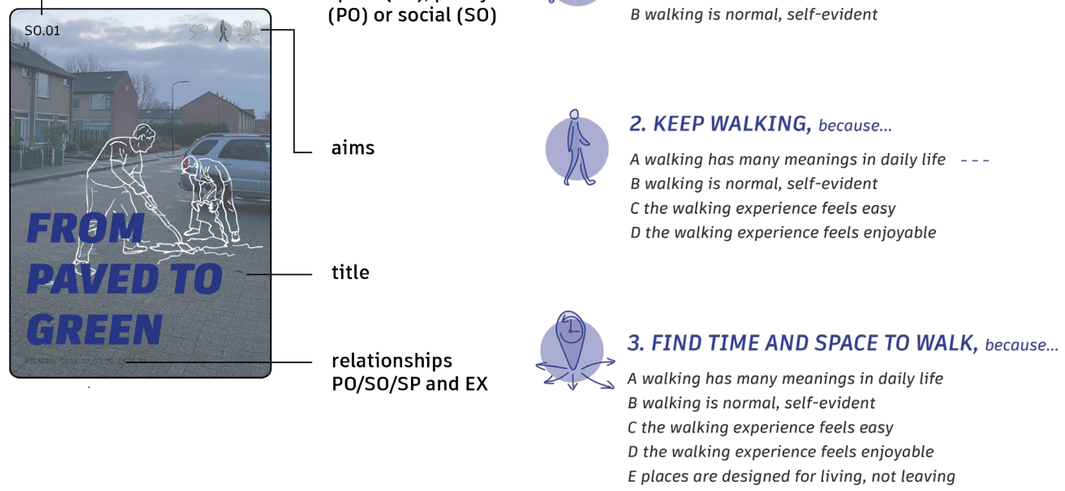


Figure 125

Set up of the spatial, social and policy patterns, linked to the project aims

9.3. Tools

To operationalise the aims, two interconnected pattern languages were developed, which can be systematically applied:

1. A set of policy, social, and spatial action patterns
2. A set of walking experience patterns that support the design of enjoyable and meaningful walking environments.

The patterns design and planning rules, solutions, actions or principles, based on theory, solo and shared walking experiences, analysis and design exercise. The ‘experience patterns’ can be layered to envision or evaluate walking experiences, whether assessing current conditions or analysing the outcomes of policy, social, and spatial interventions. Linking experience patterns to broader-scale actions ensures alignment between experiential quality and structural strategies for promoting walking.

The patterns also align with the methods. They can be applied during walks, in ‘Walks & Talks’ sessions with residents, municipalities, and other stakeholders, and when working with personas to imagine diverse walking needs and alternative futures.

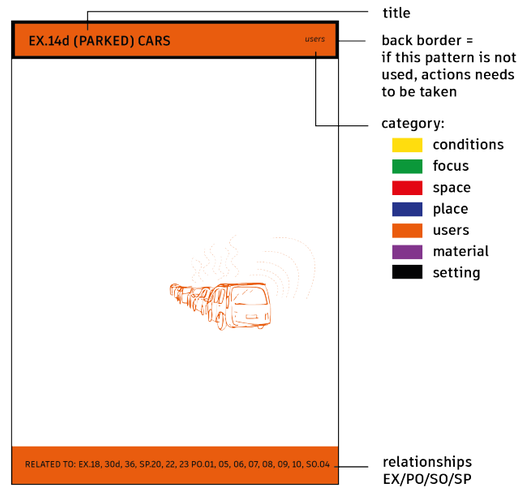


Figure 126

Set up of the experience patterns

9.3. Tools

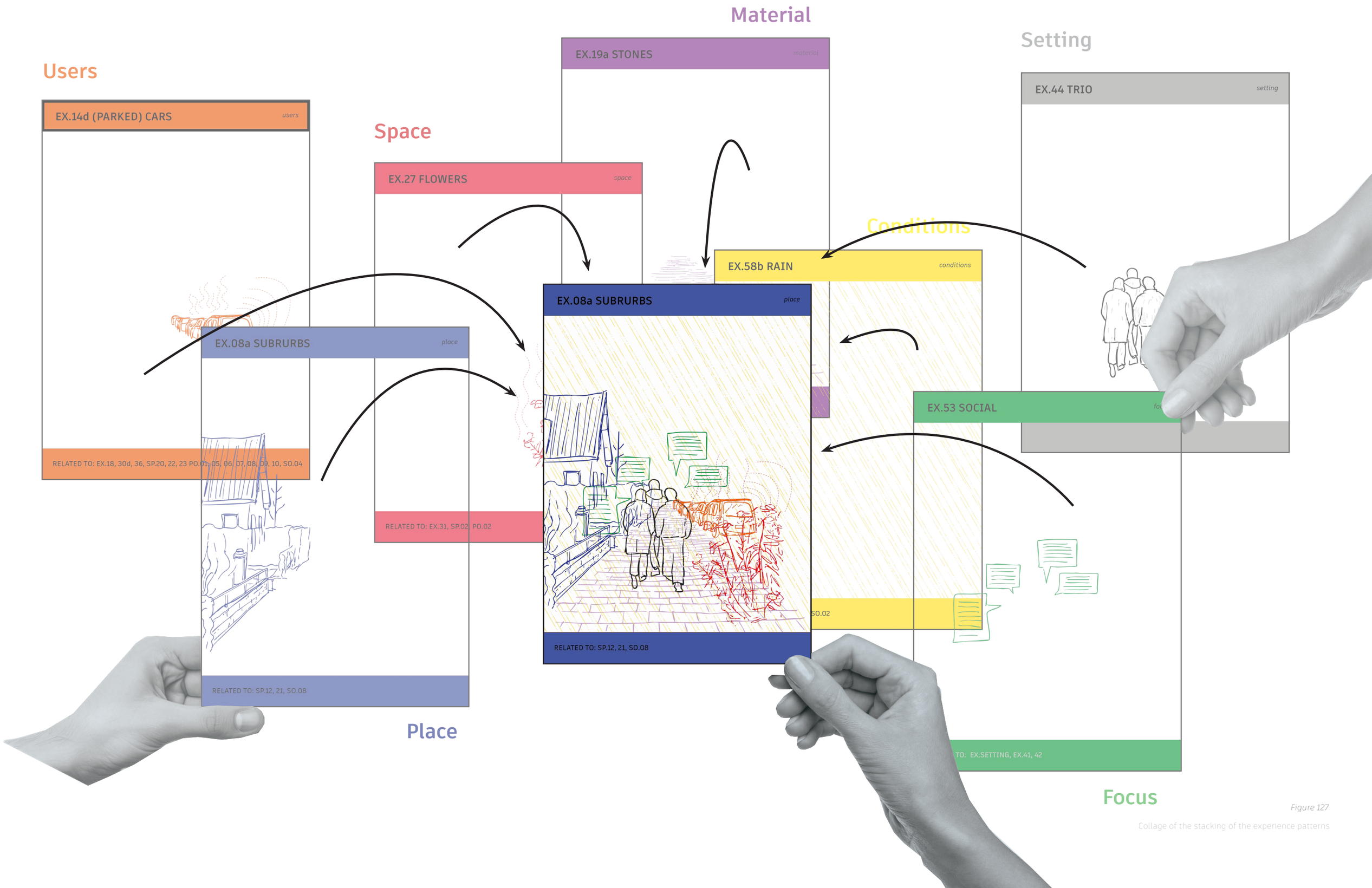


Figure 127

Collage of the stacking of the experience patterns

9.3. Tools

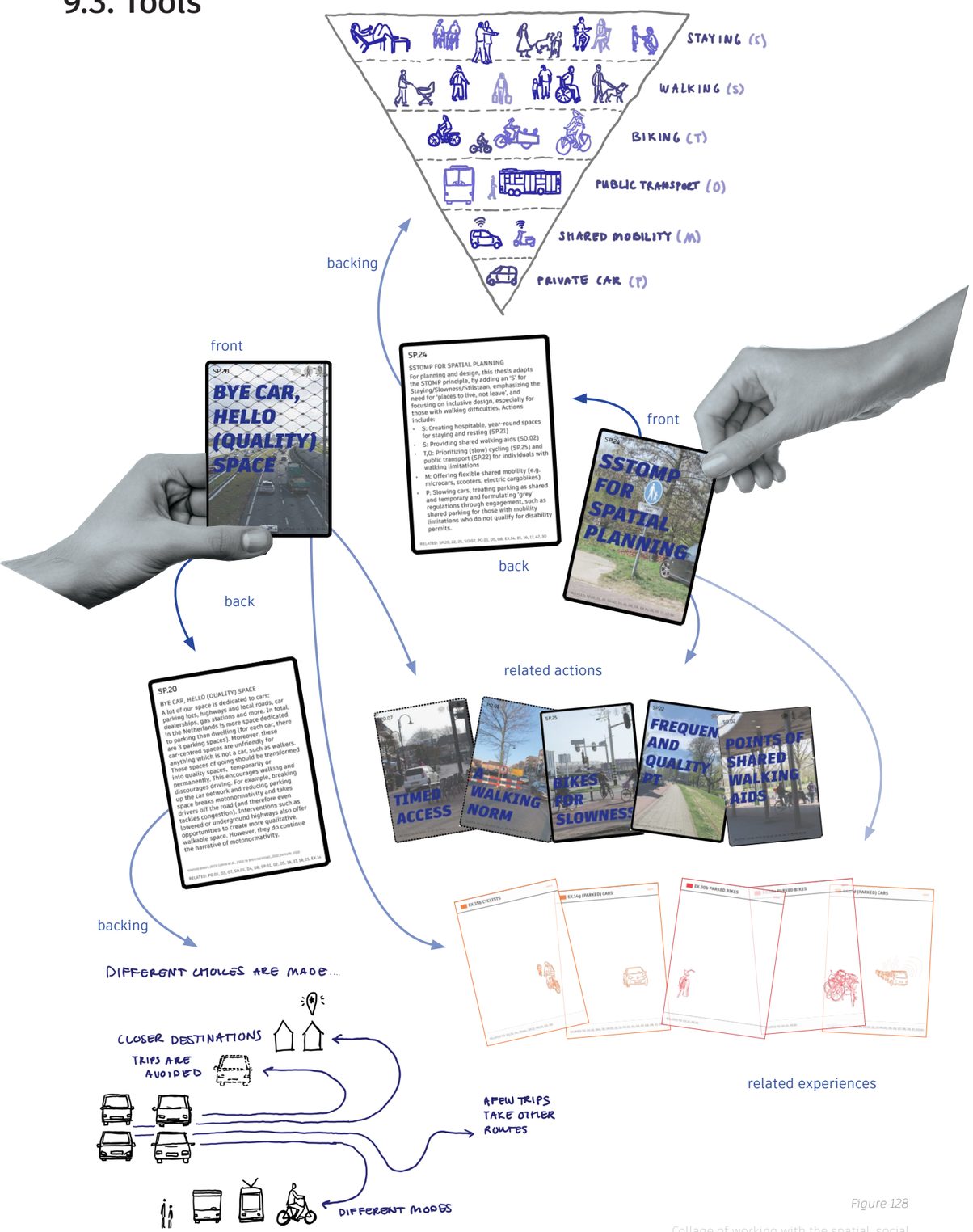


Figure 128

Collage of working with the spatial, social and policy patterns

deskwork

walking

Figure 129

Reflecting on the methods used in urbanism

9.4. Methods

Walking as a Method

Walking is not only the project subject, but also a research and design method. Walking as a designer, researcher, alone or in dialogue with others (Walks & Talks), provides direct, embodied knowledge. It fosters both reflection and collaborative engagement with residents, experts, and stakeholders. Walking as a method means prioritising experience over abstraction, moving beyond top-down mapping or remote observations. Moreover, it can bring moments of inspiration and enjoyment within the process.

Personas and Daily Routes

Walking experiences vary by individual, shaped by personal preferences, values, abilities, and specific everyday contexts, but also the specific time, place, setting and aim of the walk. Designing with a diversity of personas and their daily routes provides a practical but nuanced method to address diverse lives, preferences and needs in a design proposal. The personas can be grounded both in literature, for example representing different values, and local insights (e.g., Walks & Talks).

Backcasting

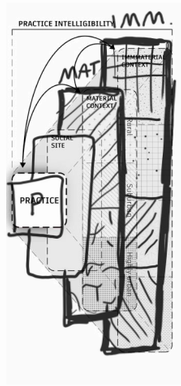
Finally, backcasting offers a way to radically reimagine a walkable future, one that embraces slowness, questions existing norms, and prioritises long-term wellbeing. What would a specific place look like if truly designed for a walkable, human-centred future? Working your way back from this vision of an alternative future aids in proposing the necessary steps and phases in the design.

10. Case study: Heerde-Zwolle.

10.1. Introduction
10.2. Personas
10.3. Heerde
10.4. Zwolle
10.5. A day in the life...
10.6. Reflection

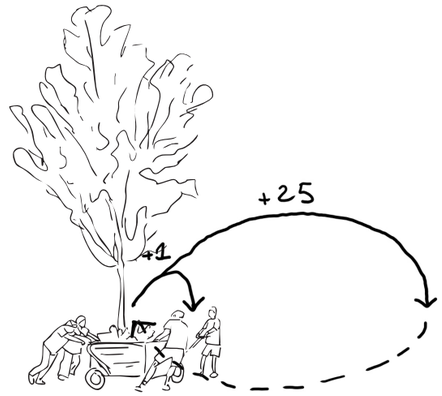
Walks & Talks

experts *inhabitants*



Subcontexts

heerde & zwolle *personas*



Visioning & Backcasting

+1 year? *+25 years?*

Figure 130 Methods of the case study

10.1. Introduction

In this chapter the proposed approach of aims, method and tools is applied and tested, in different subcontexts: two case study areas and four personas. Walking is employed as a research method, in both walks with experts and inhabitants (Walks & Talks in Chapter 9) and fieldwork walks. Lastly, two future scenarios are imagined, to envision what daily life in an alternative future of walking looks like and to explore how design can foster such a transformation.

In the following chapter, the insights are translated into a design proposal for two zoom-in areas of the case studies.

Subcontexts

The design process began with the creation of imagined personas, grounded in literature and BSR-type typologies as introduced in Chapter 4. These personas represent different lifestyles, values, and needs. For each of them, how they might find time to walk, what might bring them to consider walking, what their daily routes would be and what their preferred walking experiences might be was considered. In this process, both the previously developed experience cards and the social, spatial and policy actions were used. Moreover, the proposals were informed by insights in the diversity in walking habits and preferences of the Walks and Talks (Chapter 9).

These findings were spatialized by imagining their hypothetical daily routes in two case study areas: Heerde and Zwolle (as introduced in Chapter 5), exploring the differences between walking and promoting walking in such different subcontexts (an urban and rural area). Working with daily routes brought a focus on use, movement and flow of people, rather than fixed infrastructure (De Bruyn et al., 2014). These routes crossed multiple areas and each other, proposing interesting and diverse design challenges and opportunities. Moreso, designing with the persona's daily lives and routes grounds the proposal in reality, while revealing the possibilities of daily life in an alternative, desirable future. Working with their daily routes spatialized these challenges and possibilities, while upholding the human-, not infrastructure, centred approach.

Visioning & Backcasting

Two scenarios were explored:

+1 year: What interventions are possible in the short term? How can we create meaningful change with limited resources and within current constraints? And how can we already built towards take steps towards a slower future, in only a year?

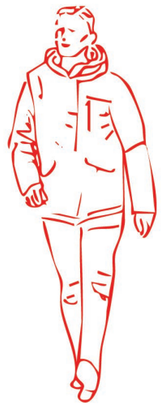
+25 years: What could a radically reimagined, walkable future look like, one that fully embraces slowness? In this scenario, daily destination such as jobs, housing and amenities are localized, and environments are mixed in use. Private car ownership is reduced to zero. This creates a lot of time, space and possibilities to walk.

For each scenario, the design combined the different walking preferences of the personas, and explored conflicts or trade-offs when combining these experiences.

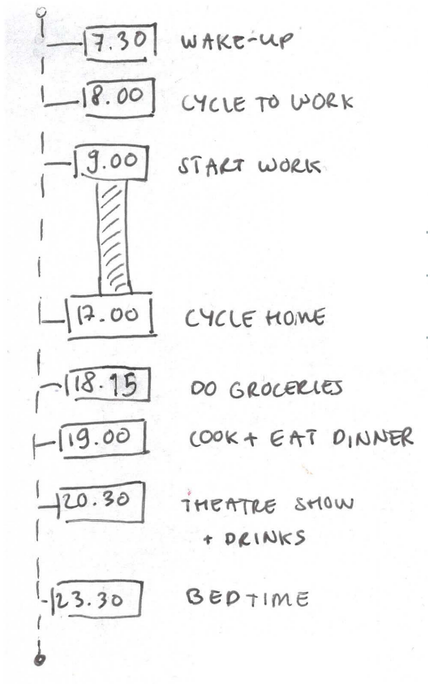
10.2. Personas

I value freedom, independence, and self-expression. I'm drawn to adventure, the unconventional, and anything that feels like a cultural experience—especially travel. For me, life is about exploring what's out there and trying something new. I tend to go with my gut, and I thrive in places that feel alive and full of possibility. I'll admit, my preferences change fast, but that's part of the ride

Hi there!
I'm Red!



My day used to look like...



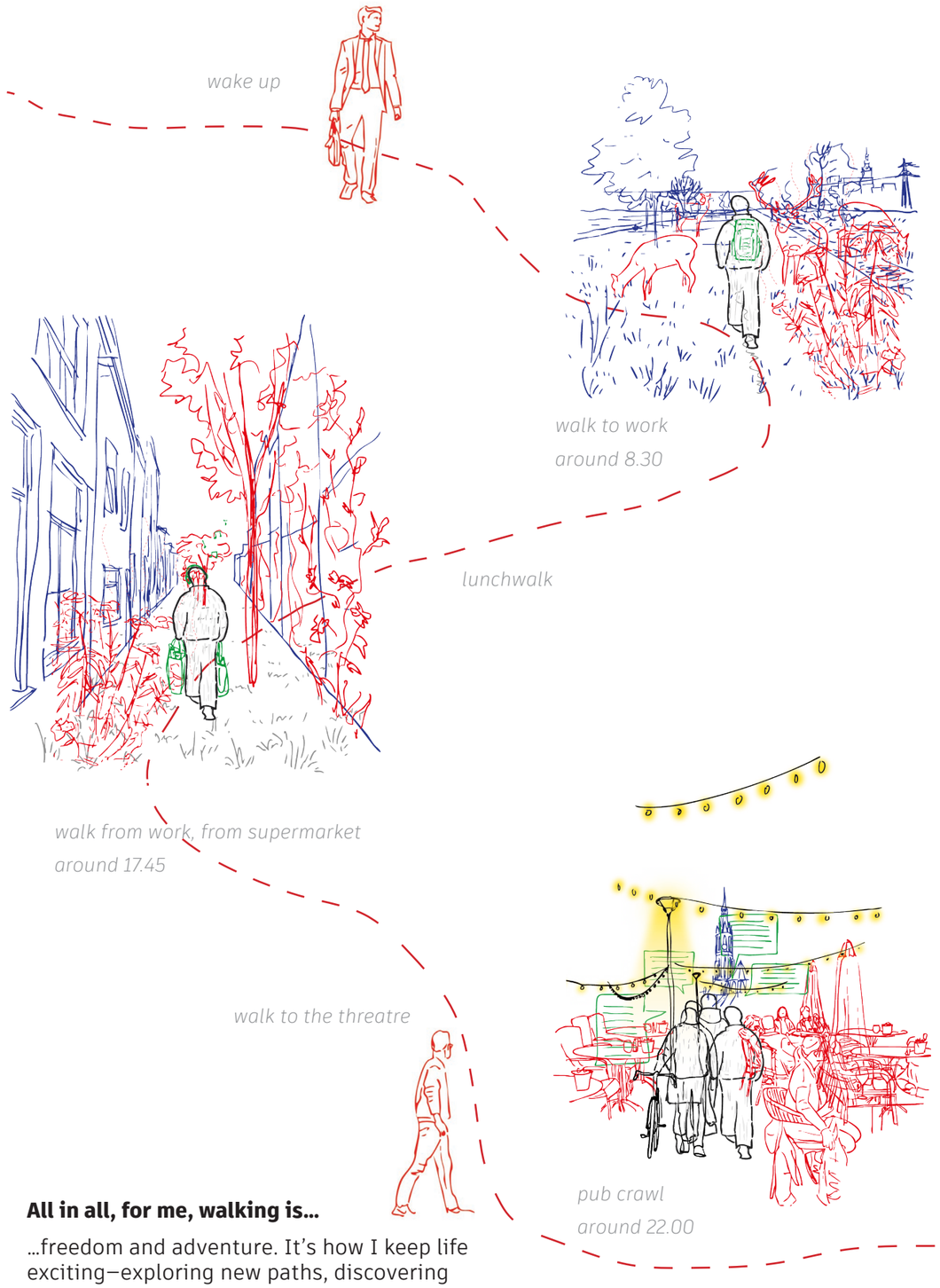
But now, a day in my life looks quite different...

Now, I walk in ways that feel spontaneous—unusual routes, hidden paths, desire lines, little adventures tucked into daily errands. I like art routes, and I'll go out of my way to explore a new spot. I try not to walk the same loop over and over. I keep it varied. Keeps it exciting.

I remember how it changed!

I used to bike everywhere, always on the go. It was my thing—until my bike broke down for a week. That's when walking started to sneak into my daily life. At first, it was just a necessity, but then I started noticing something. That unexpected break made me realize when I actually enjoy biking and when I'd rather walk. Walking felt calmer, and allowed me to go off the beaten tracks. Simultaneously, Temporary and artsy walking evens, made it seem like this new cool thing all my friends were into

Moreover, when I moved closer to my job, as this gave me a discount on my rent, two things happened. Firstly, I found I suddenly had more time in my day-to-day life, as I did not spend 1,5 hours commuting each day. Secondly, the Welcome Walks in my new neighborhood made getting around by foot an easy and logical habit.



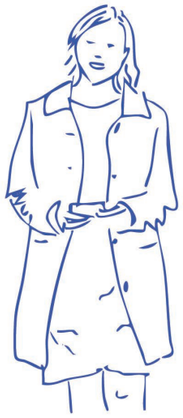
All in all, for me, walking is...

...freedom and adventure. It's how I keep life exciting—exploring new paths, discovering hidden spots, and making everyday moments feel spontaneous. It lets me break routines and stay curious. Walking isn't just transport—it's a creative, cultural experience.

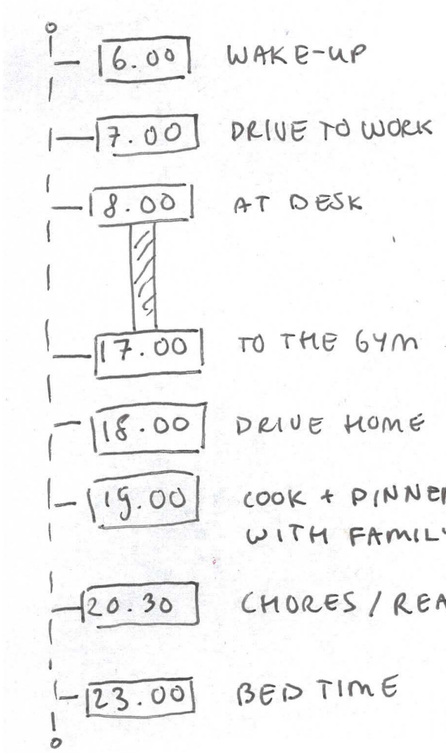
10.2. Personas

I value efficiency, quality, and results. I'm driven by progress, and I like having control over how I spend my time. I invest in what works: data, performance, proven outcomes. And sure, I care about image too. I aim to present myself in a way that reflects success and smart choices.

Hello,
I am Blue!



My day used to look like...



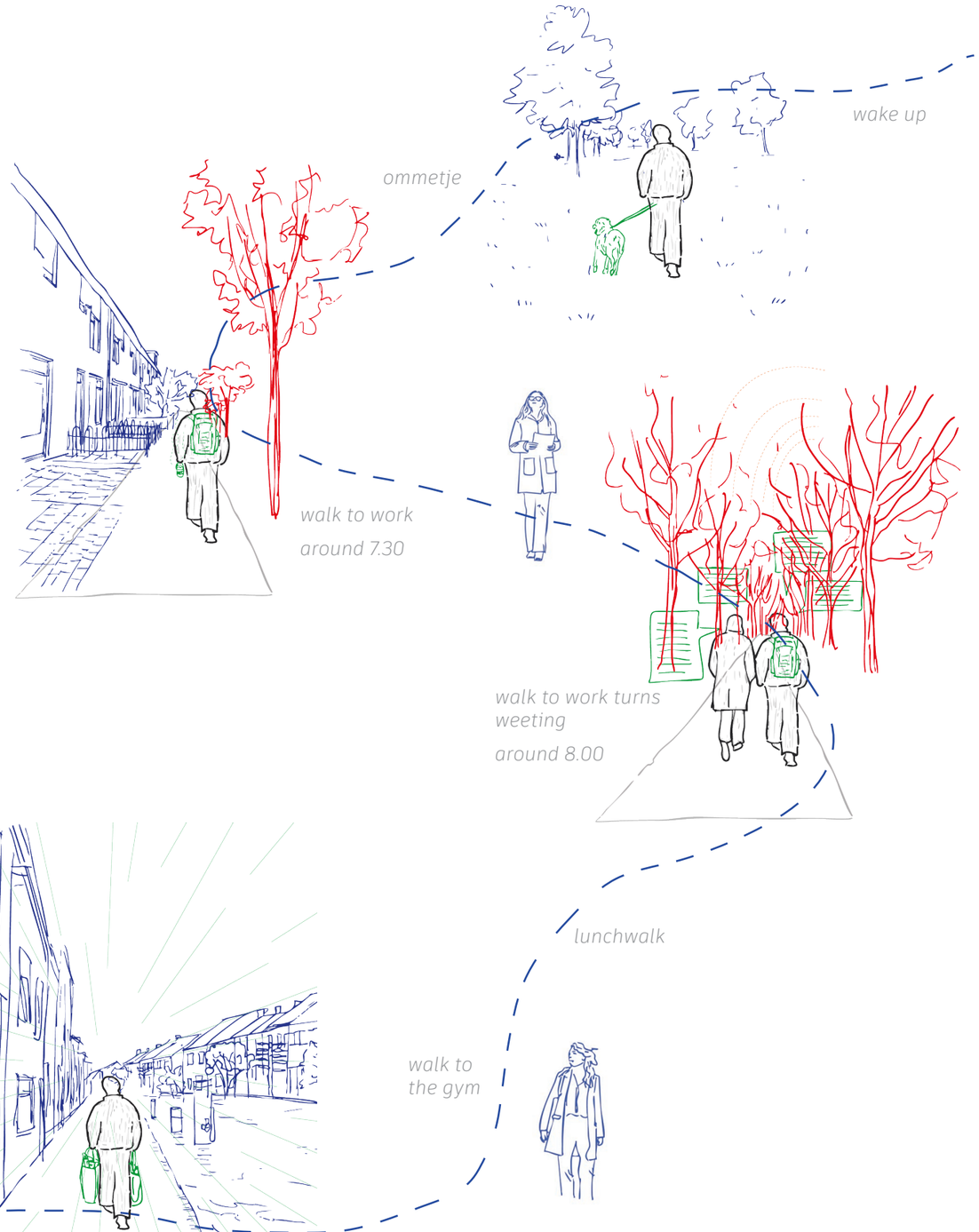
But now, a day in my life looks quite different.

Now, walking is built into my routine. Whether it's a walking meeting (weeting), a solo morning walk, or a lunchtime power stroll, it's all about integrating health, performance, and smart time use. The routes are clean, optimized, and I track everything.

I remember how it changed!

Back then, I drove everywhere. It was fast—until it wasn't. Traffic, fuel costs, delays... More and more, started to feel like a waste of time, sitting in my car, hoping to be out of it as fast as possible. I changed jobs, finding one closer to home, to cut down on that wasted travel time. It was a calculated move, offering a mortgage discount, and carving out more time in my day. Having more time feels like the luxury to strive for. I still like driving, but I've come to see time as a hobby, cruising around in my converted, electric cabrio.

My new job helped normalize walking. We had hard numbers showing it increased productivity, and it was made into challenge with a step count competition. We also exchange tips on the best walking gear. Walking became part of the work culture, and it just made sense.



All in all, for me, walking is...

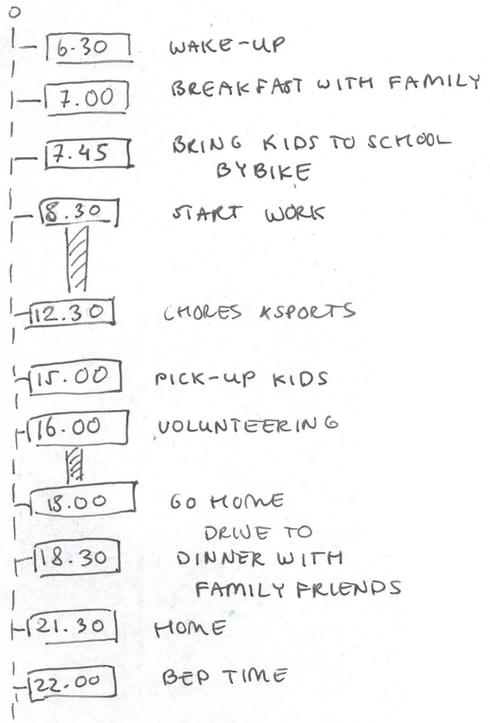
... a strategic choice. It's an efficient way to stay healthy and sharp. It fits into the bigger picture of how I want to live and work: long-term, smart, and sustainable.

10.2. Personas

I value my family and the people around me. I care about connection, togetherness, and creating a balanced life that feels warm and ‘gezellig’. I like keeping things simple and grounded, with an eye on what’s good for the planet and our community. To me, life’s best when it’s shared and real (“doe-maar-gewoon”).

Hi!
I’m Yellow!

My day used to look like...



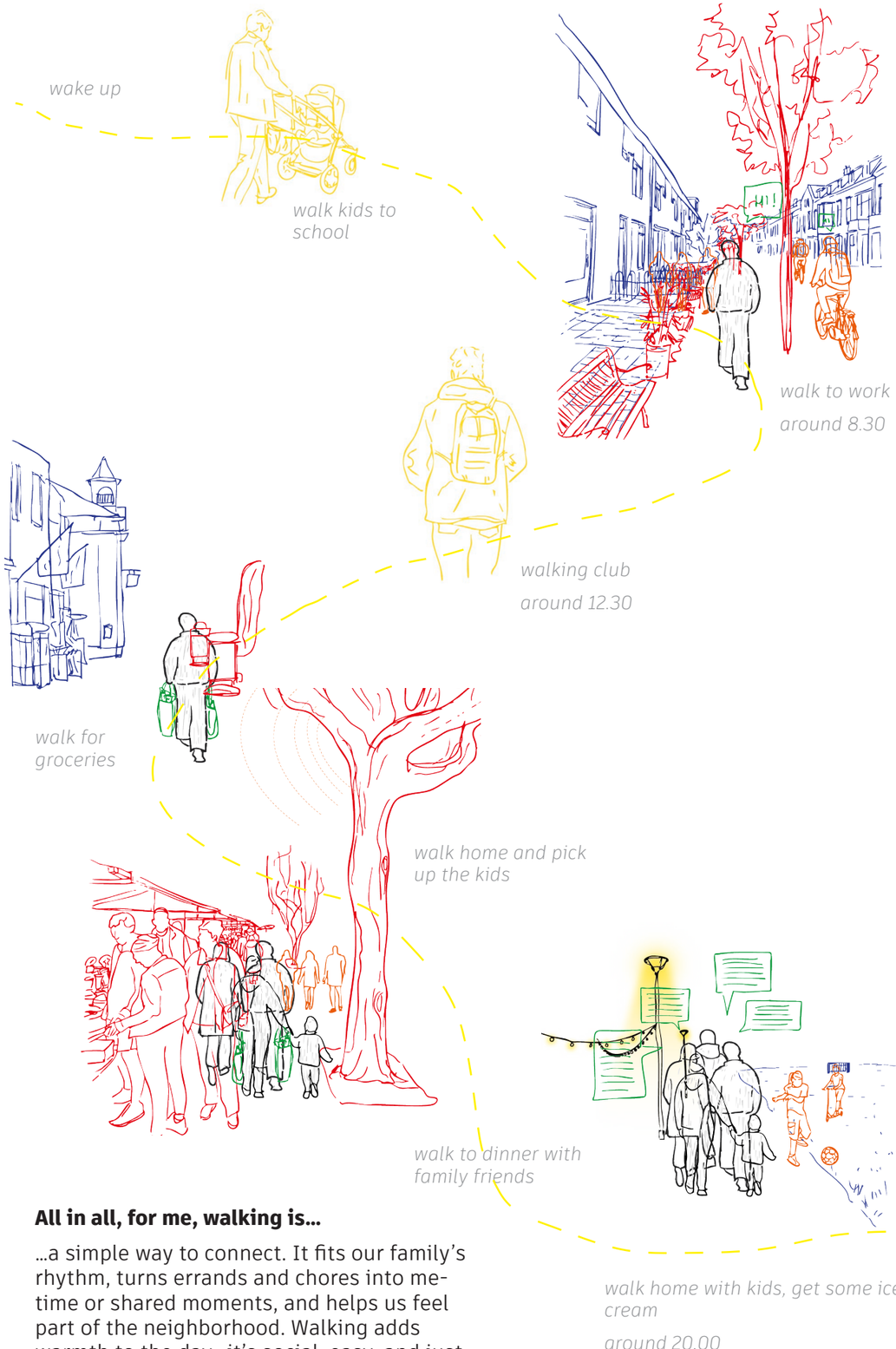
But now, a day in my life looks quite different.

Now, walking is something we do together. It’s part of how we move through the day. We look for routes that are clear, social, and feel good for the whole family. It’s not just about getting from A to B—it’s quality time.

I remember how it changed!

There was a time when walking wasn’t part of our routine. It was drive here, quickly cycle there, convenient but rushed. Until my oldest started walking more at school... and actually wanted to walk to school as well. When our second started school, we chose a nearby one, thanks to a folder from the municipality. It just made sense. Before we knew it, walking to school became a habit.

Then it spread. My book club started walking together, and more and more people around us were doing the same. We made it work: figured out how to carry groceries, noticed better signage and safer crossings, and our street got nicer too—a place where you could actually stay and hang out.



All in all, for me, walking is...

...a simple way to connect. It fits our family’s rhythm, turns errands and chores into me-time or shared moments, and helps us feel part of the neighborhood. Walking adds warmth to the day—it’s social, easy, and just feels right.

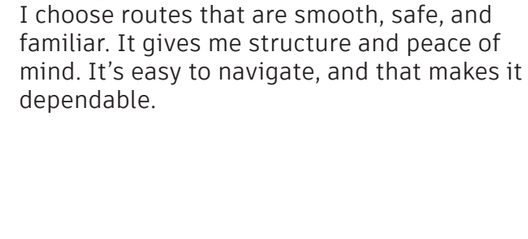
10.2. Personas

I value...

I value reliability, safety, and the kind of quality that lasts. I'm not big on jumping into trends—I prefer thoughtful changes that stand the test of time. My choices are based on trust and long-term benefits. I like knowing I've made a solid, sensible decision.

Hello,
I am Green!

My day used to look like...



Because now, a day in my life looks quite different.

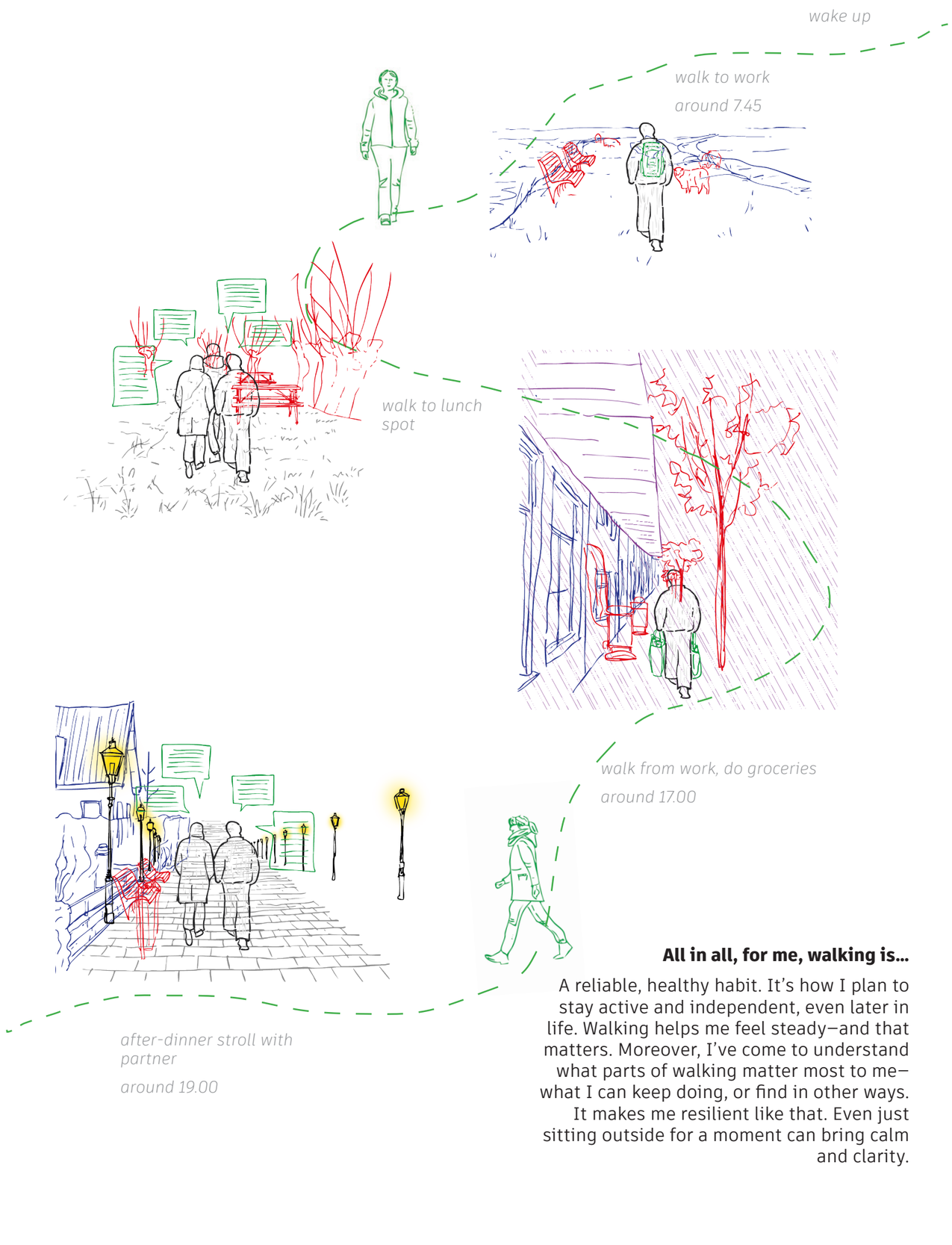
Walking is a built-in part of how I live now. I choose routes that are smooth, safe, and familiar. It gives me structure and peace of mind. It's easy to navigate, and that makes it dependable.

I remember how it changed!

It used to be more sedentary. But over time, my workplace started promoting walking—for health, balance, and well-being. At first, it was small, but it grew into something meaningful.

We had bi-monthly walking weeks with themes. We walked at sunrise, at night with lanterns, even in winter. Lunchtime walks became normal, whatever the weather. Our company doctor got involved, encouraging us to stretch and recharge. They even advised just getting outside, even to sit, for a balanced workday.

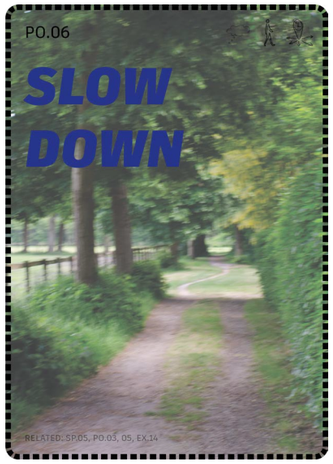
Around the same time, my neighborhood got an upgrade. Suddenly, walking to work felt enjoyable, even luxurious. Well-lit paths, safe crossings, and a visible sense of community made all the difference. I felt secure every step of the way.

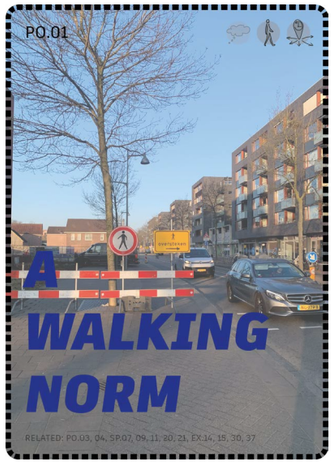


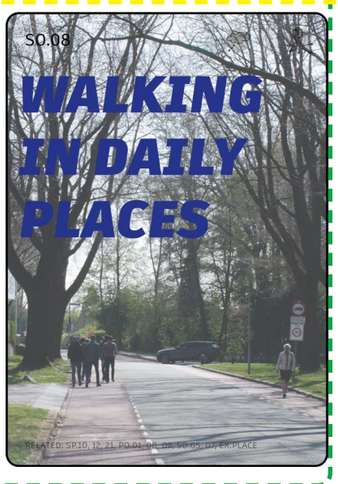
All in all, for me, walking is...

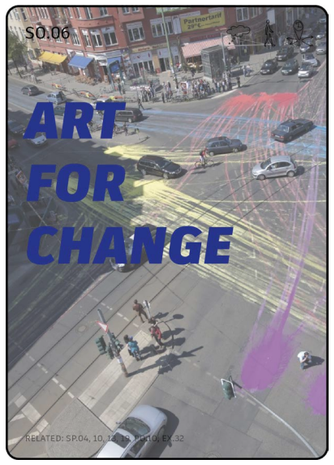
A reliable, healthy habit. It's how I plan to stay active and independent, even later in life. Walking helps me feel steady—and that matters. Moreover, I've come to understand what parts of walking matter most to me—what I can keep doing, or find in other ways. It makes me resilient like that. Even just sitting outside for a moment can bring calm and clarity.

10.2. Personas: consider walking, find time to walk









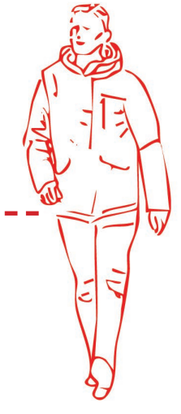
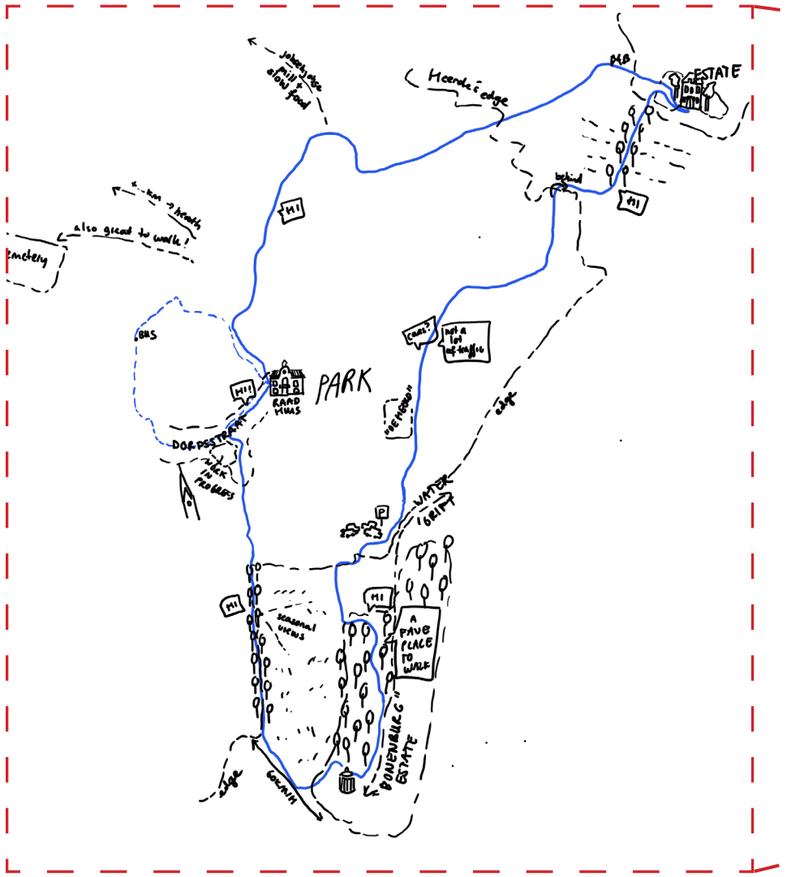


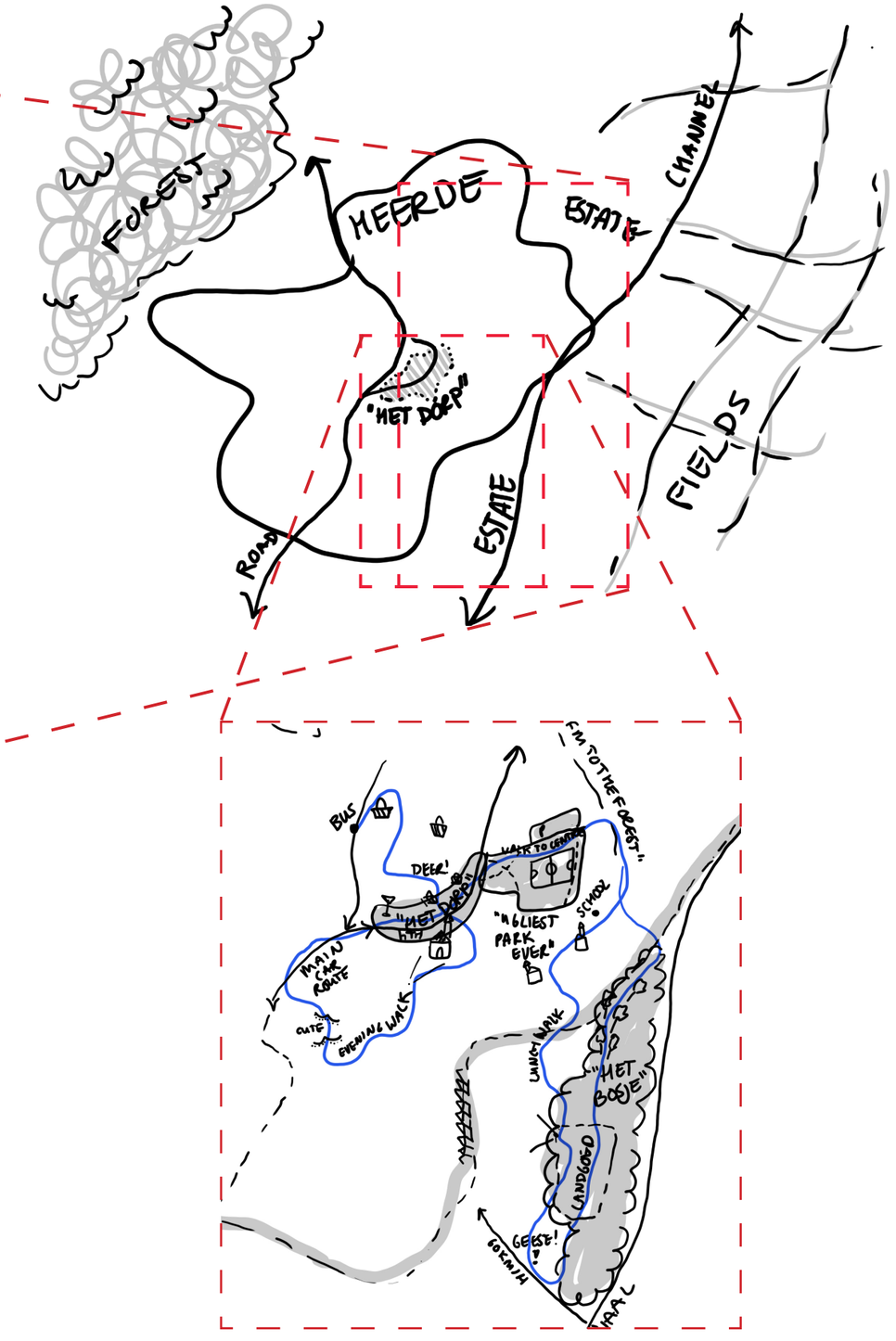
Figure 131 Personas and non-spatial actions

Heerde.

10.3. Heerde



walk 21/05/2025



walk 03/03/2025

Heerde is a town and municipality in Gelderland. The municipality is a part of the Cittaslow movement. This philosophy is mostly visible in a network of local businesses, which actively promote regional craftsmanship (Gemeente Heerde, 2023). Residents take pride in living in a place where others choose to spend their holidays (Gemeente Heerde, 2025). Surrounded by forests, fields, and several estates, Heerde offers plenty of scenic routes for walking and cycling. And even from the heart of the town, the fields and forest are never more than a 15 minute walk away.

During the summer and on Saturdays, the terraces in the town centre, known as 'Het Dorp', are bustling, mainly with cycling tourists enjoying a break. The town features many churches, with the central church being the tallest and most prominent, visible from nearly every part of Heerde.

Approximately 20,000 people live in the municipality, around 9,000 of whom reside in the town itself (CBS, 2025). Heerde's population is relatively older: about half are over 45, and nearly a quarter are aged 65 and above (CBS, 2025).Despite its small size, Heerde has a high number of cars relative to its population, though job opportunities are limited (Klerks, 2024). However, there are plenty of parking spaces, and parking is free throughout the town.

Figure 132
Collage of mental maps of Heerde

Heerde.

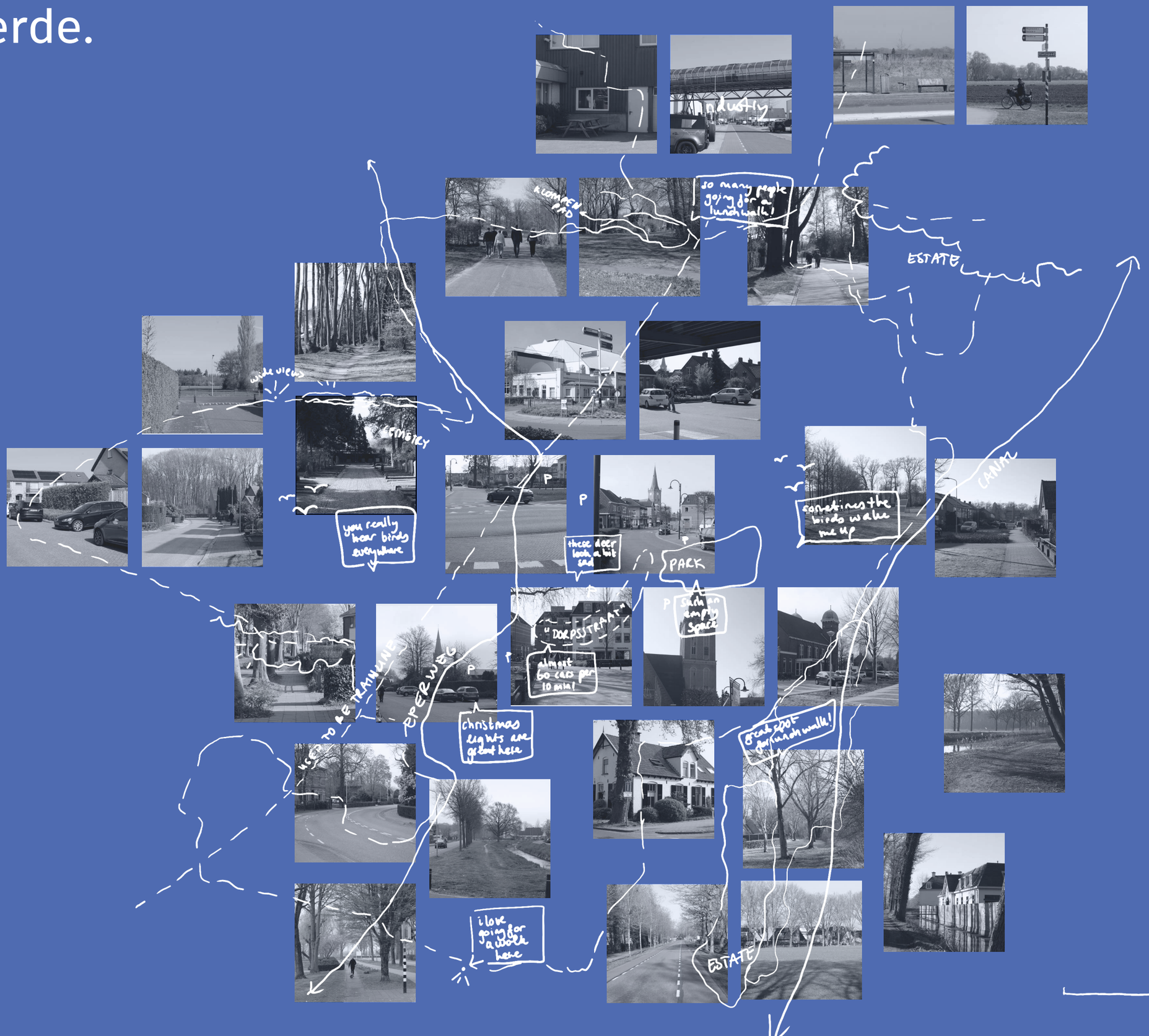


Figure 133
Mental map of Heerde

What if...
Red, Yellow, Green and Blue lived in Heerde?

Fieldwork: walking experiences of first proposal of their daily routes

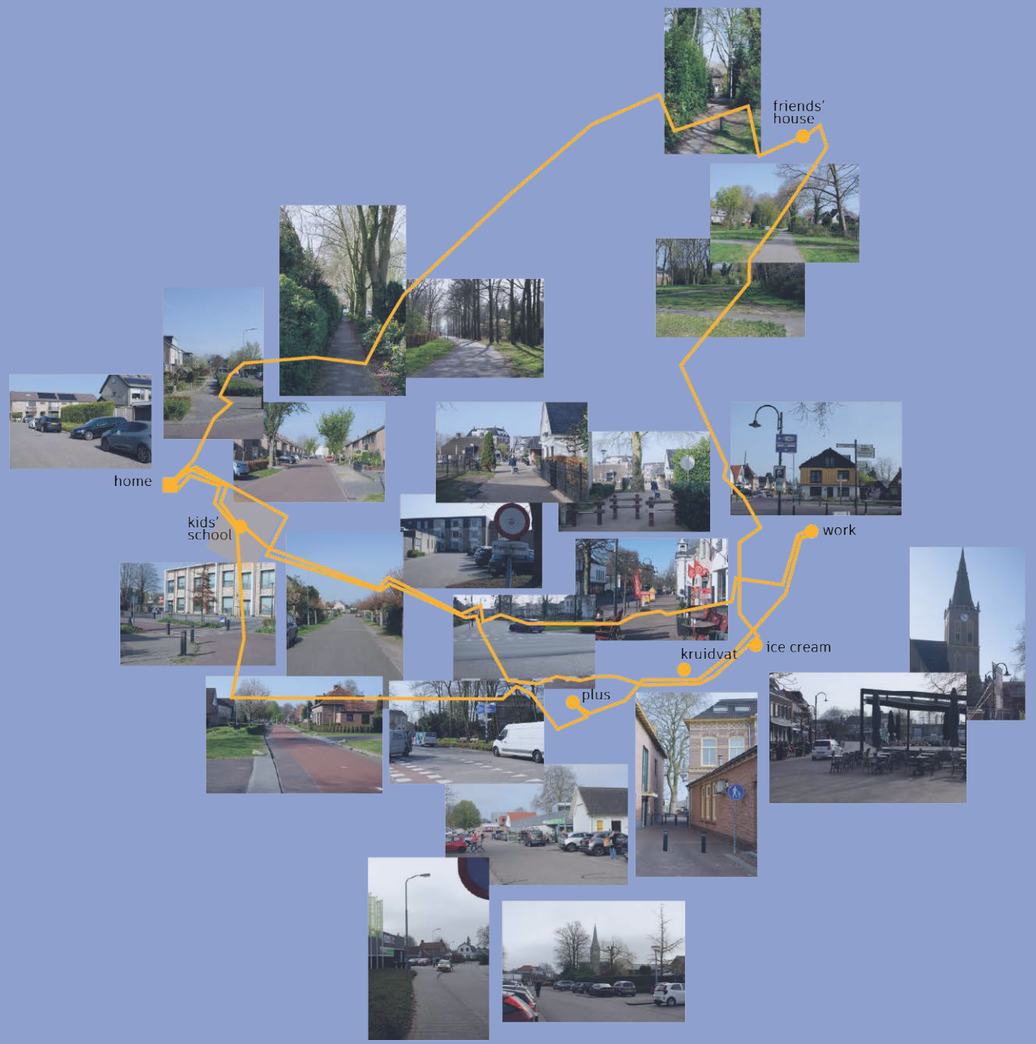


Figure 134 Walking daily routes in Heerde

What if...
Red, Yellow, Green and Blue lived in Heerde?

Fnal proposal of their daily routes

green's home

blue's home

zoom in

yellow's home

red's home

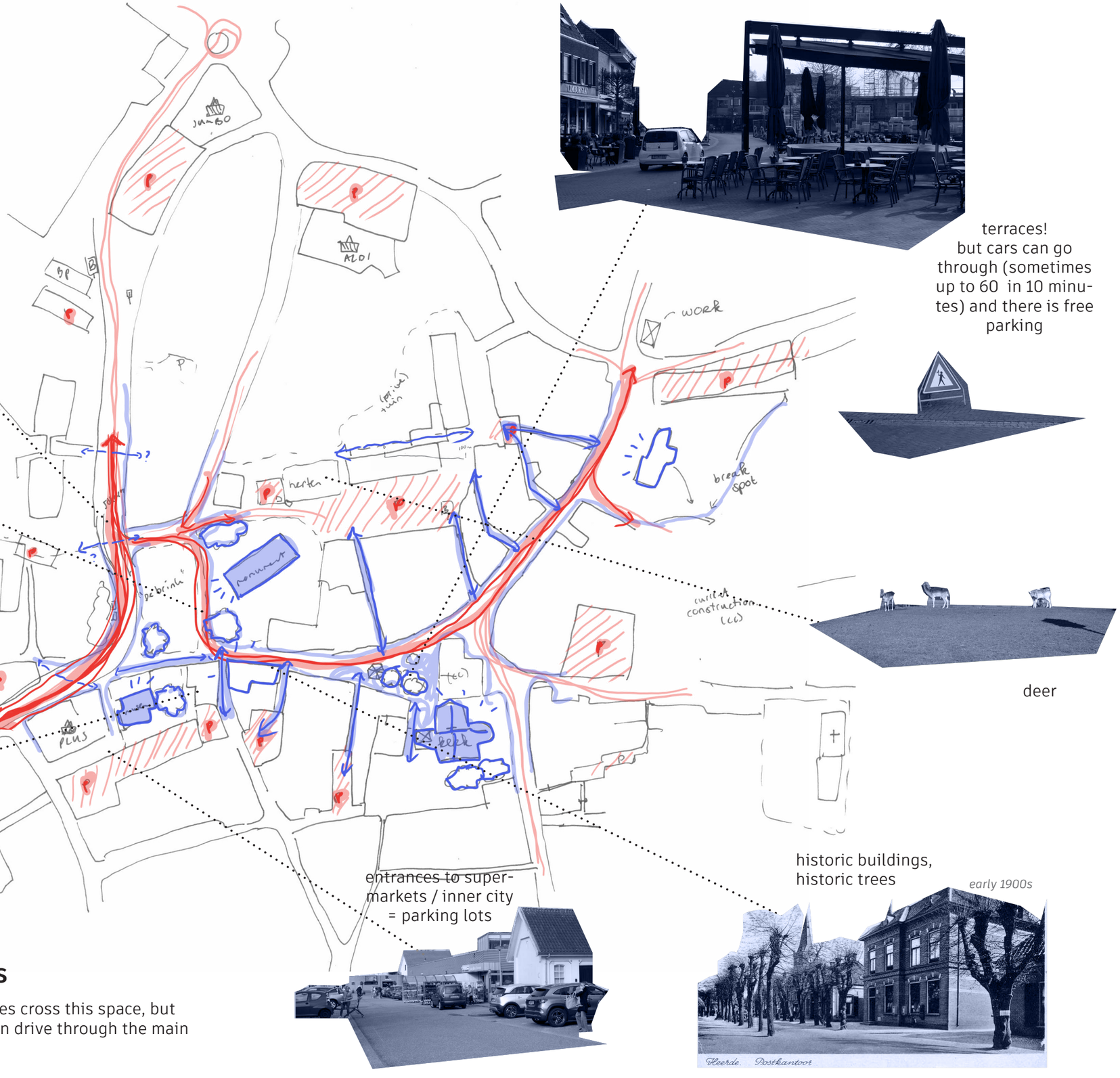
5 MIN WALK

Figure 135 Routes and personas in Heerde (with map from: PDOK luchtfoto)

crossing the eperweg?

brink or roundabout?

terraces! but cars can go through (sometimes up to 60 in 10 minutes) and there is free parking



Zoom-in Heerde: qualities and challenges

The design focuses on the town centre ('Het Dorp'). Many daily routes cross this space, but it is car-dominated. The present situation is one full of cars: they can drive through the main street, there is free parking, and many parking lots.

Figure 136 Collage of characteristics of Het Dorp (with historic image from: https://www.sleyster.nl/ijzebrink-geschiedenis-postkantoor-heerde.htm)

Figure 137 +1 year scenario drawing Heerde

+ 1 year in Heerde

The proposal focuses on trying out different programs for the Dorpsstraat, temporarily, where for every persona there is something which might suit their preferences and types of walks. To realize the try-outs, the street will become temporarily free of cars and parking. Moreover, areas which are not pedestrian-friendly, such as the many parking lots, can be upgraded, for example by adding greenery (for example in pots, a green carpet).

Figure 138 Dorpsstraat of Heerde now (2025)
what if... no cars from 8.30-20.30, no parking

Figure 139 (with images from: https://www.sla.dk/cases/bjorvika-masterplan-and-urban-spaces/)

YELLOW:
Walk with for ice cream, around 20.00, with family

Figure 140

BLUE:
Walk from work, to groceries to home, around 18.00, solo

Figure 141 Collage with images from: https://frameweb.com/article/institutions/can-flexible-public-space-generate-more-climate-conscious-communities

GREEN:
after-dinner stroll, around 19.00 with partner

Figure 142 Collage with images from: https://www.thisiscolossal.com/2021/08/crocheted-canopy-malaga/

YELLOW:
Shopping and chores, after lunch, solo

Figure 143 Collage with images from: https://nos.nl/artikel/2427855-leeuwarden-loopt-al-vast-uit-voor-wandelend-bos

RED:
Walk for groceries, around 17.45, solo

Figure 144 +25 years scenario drawing Heerde

+ 25 years in Heerde

In this scenario, the different walking environments of the try-outs were made permanent. For example the laneways, leading onto the main street, are now full of greenery, or terraces, or elements to sit or play on. The Dorpsstraat became a compromise of sojourning and strolling. The Brink is a main node in the town. Different walking experiences are created everywhere: from walks through previously fenced-off historic buildings with beautiful trees around it, to and walking through green paces which were previously parking lots and walking with animals, deer (in a bigger space in the park) and sheep (kept in the space previously inhabited by the deer, becomes a shelter for a flock of sheep, which maintain the new green spaces across town during the day, accompanied by a shepherd). The park is has abundant space for a full-sized soccer field, and beloved events like the beer festivals and Kingsday fairs.

The following considerations arose during the design:

How should the retail logistics be handled? Delivery access can be managed via rear entries, laneways, and with smaller vehicles, scheduled outside busy pedestrian times.

How can diverse preferences be handled for one street? The main street should serve different walking patterns, of walking through, strolling, playing or lingering. Design must either integrate these within one space or offer alternative routes to accommodate varied use without conflict.

How is this proposal different from a current approaches? Some interventions, such as extensive greening or creating car-free environments, may seem self-evident. However, these measures are consistently identified as essential across walking experiences, in theory (Chapter 2), analysis (Chapter 4), the walks & Talks and imagined personas. Moreover, when such interventions are strategically embedded within wider spatial, social, and policy frameworks, as the pattern languages ensure, they gain lasting impact and effectiveness.

Figure 145 Collage with images from: https://www.perivalepark.london/archives/23785

1 BLUE:
Walk from work, to groceries to home, around 18.00, solo

Figure 146 Collage with images from: https://www.perivalepark.london/archives/23785

2 YELLOW:
walk with family, for ice cream
20.00

Figure 147 Collage with images from: https://rijksmonumenten.nl/monument/520198/h-johannes/heerde/

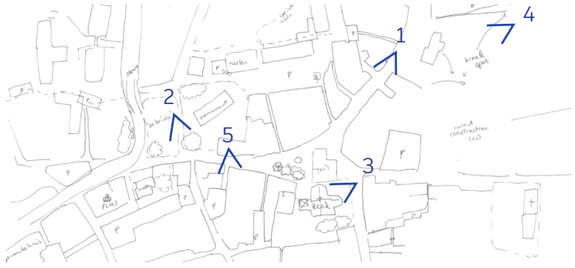
3 GREEN:
after-dinner stroll, around 19.00 with partner

Figure 149

5 RED:
Walk from work, to groceries to home, around 17.45, solo

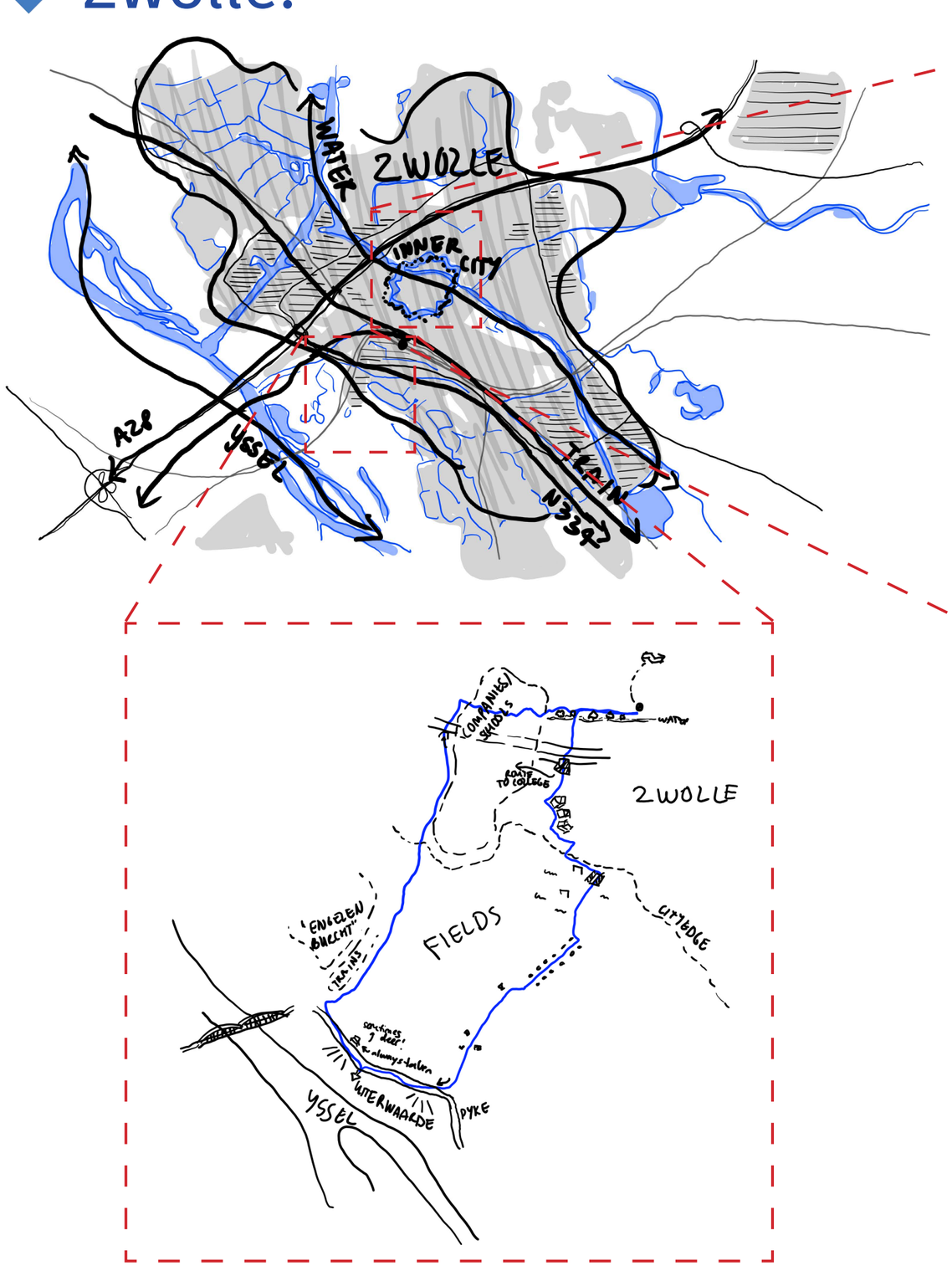
Figure 148 Collage with images from: https://www.perivalepark.london/archives/23785

4 RED:
Walk to work, around 8.30, solo

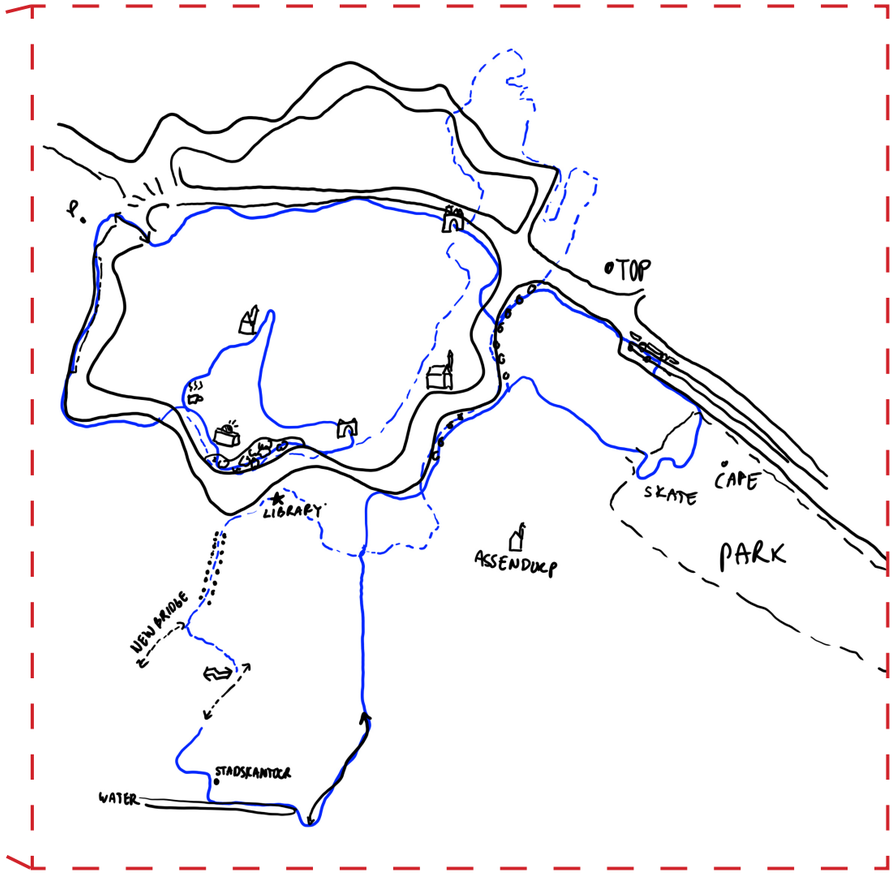


Zwolle.

10.4. Zwolle



walk 18/03/2025



walk 04/03/2025

Situated just above the River IJssel, Zwolle is a city in the province of Overijssel with around 133 830 residents (CBS, 2025b). The river's floodplains (uiterwaarden) offer beautiful walking routes, while water also weaves through the city itself—from the Zwarte Water canal to the singel encircling the historic inner city.

This green-blue network creates an inviting environment for walking. Moreover, many suburban nieghbourhoods have a supermarket or primary school closeby. However, some areas—like the industrial zones—remain mono-functional and uninviting for pedestrians, with their desert-like lack of green and planes of parking lots. These are also areas of coming and going, as fast and efficient as possible.

The city is a regional job centre, with 105,900 jobs and a working population of 88,730, highlighting a growing need for housing (Gemeente Zwolle, 2021). Past and planned developments, such as Stadshagen (VINEX) and the upcoming Spoorzone project (+8,800 homes), aim to address this (Gemeente Zwolle; Ministerie van Volkshuisvesting en Ruimtelijk Ordening, 2023).

The municipality of Zwolle is part of the "Nationaal masterplan Lopen" (National Walking Masterplan), a collaboration between public and private actors to make walking a natural part of daily life. The plan encompasses 30 targeted actions to improve walkability across the Netherlands (Ruimte Voor Lopen, 2024).

Figure 150 Collage of mental maps of Zwolle

Zwolle.

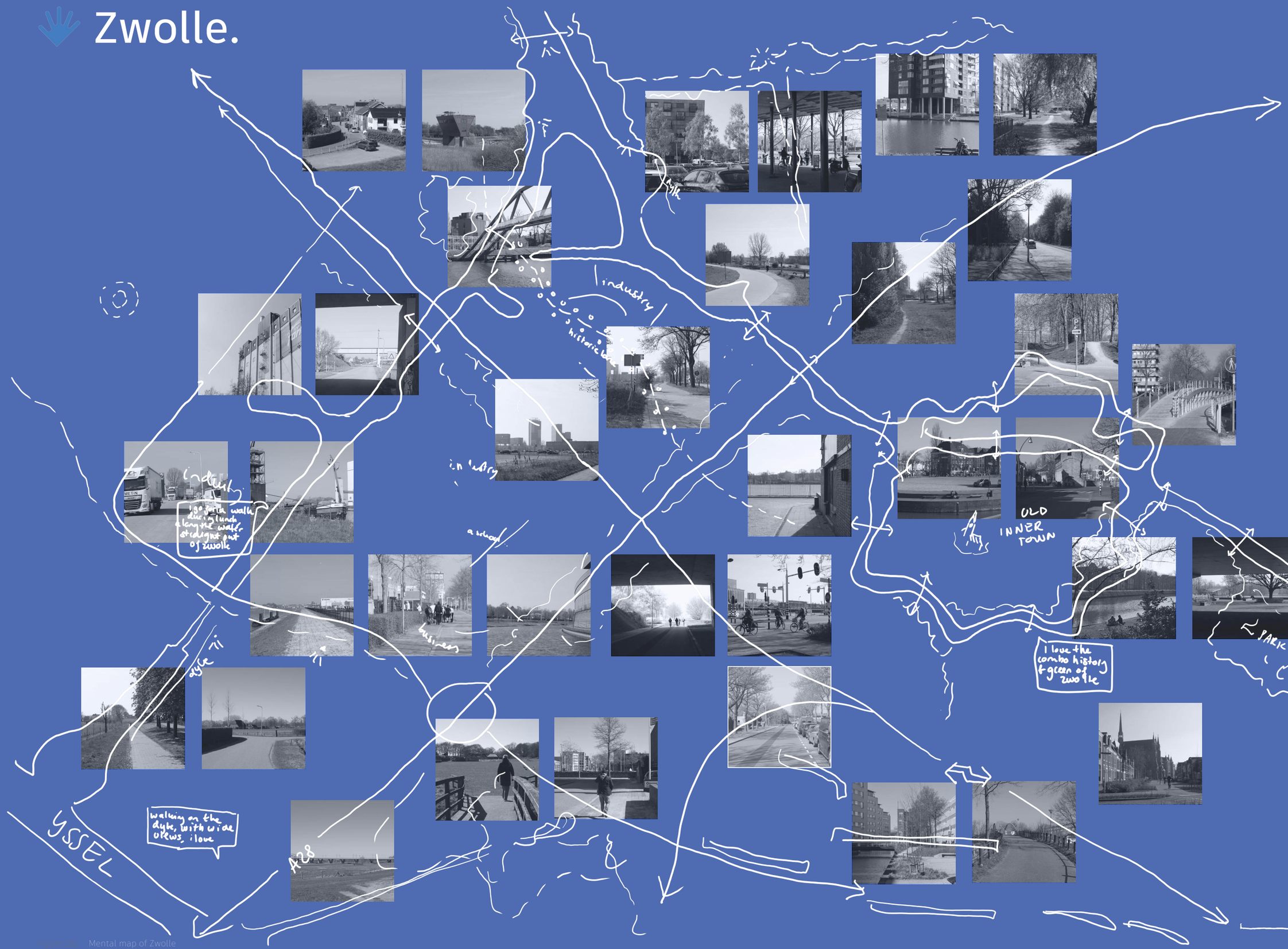


Figure 132 Mental map of Zwolle

What if...
Red, Yellow, Green and Blue lived in Zwolle?

Fieldwork: walking experiences of first proposal of their daily routes

Figure 152 Impressions of daily routes of personas in Zwolle

What if...
Red, Yellow, Green and Blue lived in Zwolle?
Fnal proposal of their daily routes

blue's home

zoom in

green's home

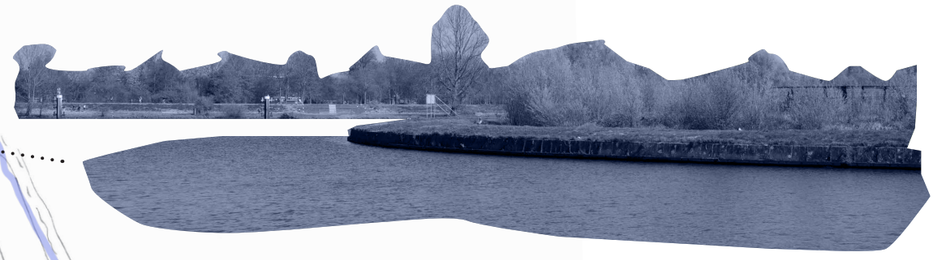
yellow's home

red's home

Figure 153 Routes and personas in Zwolle (with map from: PDOK luchtfoto)

Made by Author (with map from: PDOK luchtfoto)

great spaces to walk along the water, or potential to do so



responsibility is put on to the pedestrian?

walkways along the water to the area, but not in it...

empty lots & parking lots...

big, dusty roads with heavy trucks...

Zoom-in Zwolle: qualities and challenges

The design focuses on an industrial/business area. This environment is hostile and unwelcoming for pedestrians. Moreover, the area is mostly monofunctional and bare, making it a place of coming-and-leaving, not a place to (enjoy) be(ing). However, with its central position in the city of Zwolle and existing qualities like the waterside, there is potential to become a place which many routes choose to cross.

Figure 154

Collage of the characteristics of Voorst in Zwolle

+ 1 year in Zwolle

The main focus of the design proposal is to transform the bare, unfriendly environment into a greener, pedestrian friendly environment. Parking lots are quickly transformed with ‘green’ carpets of grass, old-full grown trees, seating, wildflowers, and quick-growing trees. These parking lots offer attractive short cuts. Existing qualities such as the watersides are opened up to pedestrians. The main road transforms into a market space once a week. On this car(e) free day, trees, seating and elements of play are rolled in, to be moved to another spot in the city the following day. A step towards self-sufficiency is made in starting an orchard, enabling the area to produce its own trees. Moreover, public points with walking aids, ranging from trolleys to umbrellas, make walking easier.

Figure 155

+1 year scenario drawing Zwolle

Figure 156

1 YELLOW
walk for groceries, after lunch, solo

Figure 157 Collage with images from: https://www.perivalepark.london/archives/23785

2 BLUE
walk to work, around 7.30, solo

Figure 158

3 GREEN
Walk to lunch spot

Figure 159 Collage with images from: https://www.perivalepark.london/archives/23785

4 RED
walk from work, from supermarket, around 17.45, solo

+ 25 years in Zwolle

In 25 years, the area is completely transformed, even with existing businesses remaining. Performance codes ensure a qualitative working and living environment in the, now mixed-use area. 700-1000 houses are built, with amenities such as spaces of shopping, culture, entertainment and sports. The main street has permanently become a lively marketspace, resembling the ramblas, with small kiosks and cafes and big trees. The pedestrians share this space only with busses and small logistics vehicles, crossing the space at a leisurely 15 km/h. The A28 has transformed into Zwolle's City Boulevard. Its heightened character allows for wide views, over the trees on both sides, revealing all of Zwolle and its surroundings. The small strips of green along the boulevard offer an alternative, quiet route. The full waterfront is walkable, only a few hours each day, the loading and unloading of ships blocks the route. A park was quickly built over the parking lot on the island at the north side, with trees peeking through its moss-covered roof. The spaces under the park can be flexibly used as well, for example by the businesses in the area.

The following considerations arose during the design:

Can we propose more housing in this area? Current environmental norms (noise, odour) restrict new housing. However, there already is existing housing in the area, and more so, it is worth questioning why these conditions are acceptable for workplaces but not for living, especially given how much time people spend at work. Performance codes could enforce both healthier work environments, and could offer opportunities for creating living spaces.

Should we extend the network of public transport, with for example a new train stop? This supports walkability, as it offers opportunities for chain trips (combined walking and PT routes), however, it risks reinforcing "places to leave" rather than fostering local life. The latter should be the focus of the design, while public transport supports those unable to walk, while enhance walking flexibility (e.g., walking one way, transit return). Integrating walking aids into the transit system supports accessibility.

How can we combine heavy logistics and walking? Logistics should prioritize slow, shared, small-scale vehicles with timed access (e.g., during work hours or off-peak). Multi-level designs may preserve easy, continuous pedestrian routes by derouting vehicles above or below. Moreover, stimulating decentralization and local production reduces the need for transport of goods, as well as people.

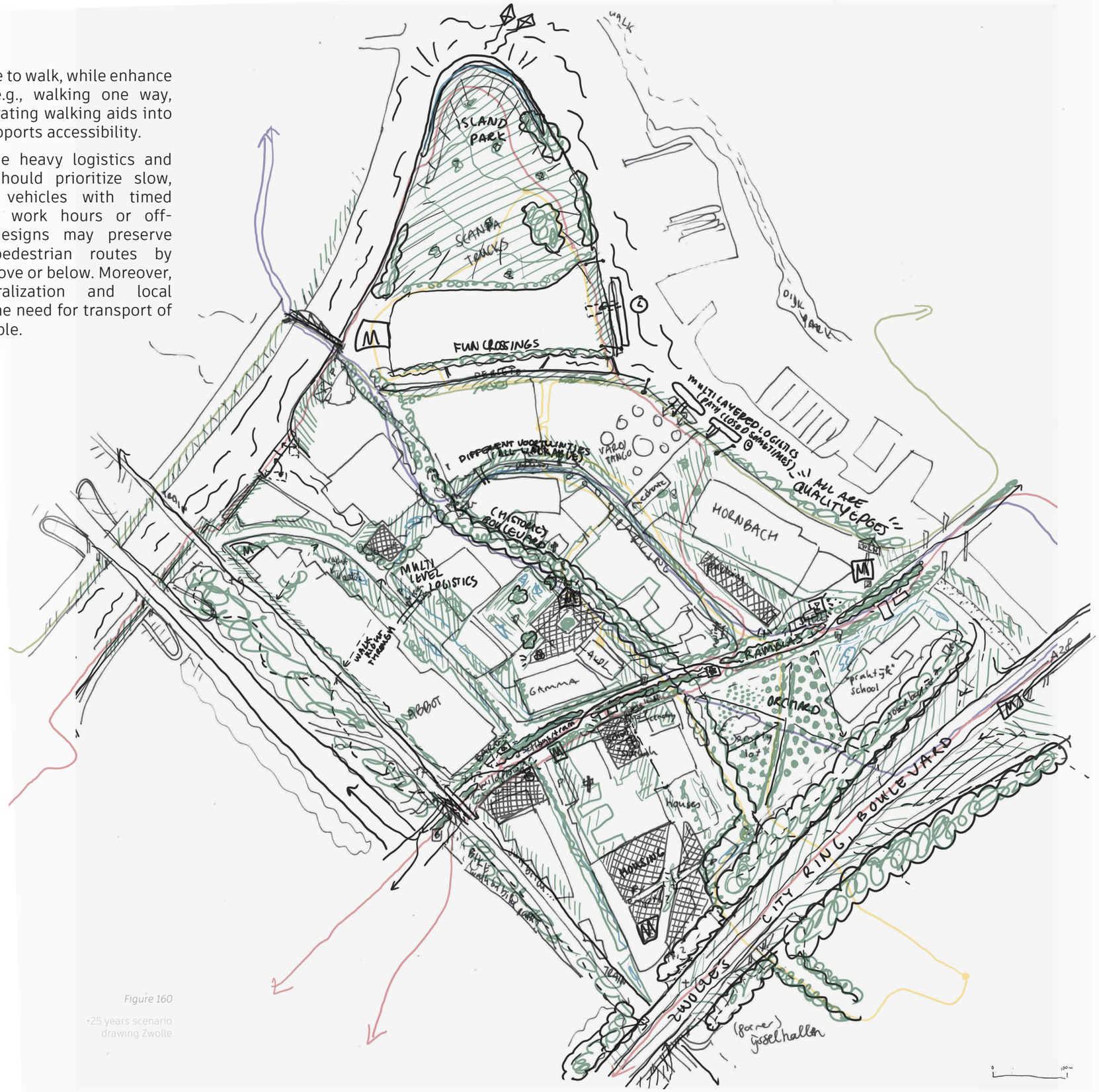


Figure 160

+25 years scenario drawing Zwolle

From..

an empty/parking lot....

Figure 161 Photo of parking lot in Voorst

a highway....

Figure 162 A28 (image from: maps.google.com)

To...

an orchard

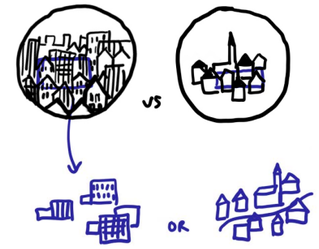
Figure 163 Collage with images from: https://www.perivalepark.london/archives/23785

1 RED
walk from work, to groceries, to home, around 18.00, solo

a city boulevard

Figure 164 Collage with images from: maps.google.com

2 BLUE
walk to work turns weeting, around 8.00, with colleague



10.5. Reflection

Heerde vs. Zwolle?

The case studies examined two contrasting subcontexts: Zwolle, an urban municipality part of the 'Nationaal Masterplan Lopen', and Heerde, a rural town in the Cittaslow network.

While these contexts differ, in both cases, walkers took mostly leisure walks and often sought out nearby greenery for it. Both places offered this in a different way: from lunch walks along the 'singel' and walks along river dykes in Zwolle, to walks in the graveyard, estate forests and fields around Heerde. In this, walking practices were shaped less by an urban-rural divide and more by local spatial qualities. These walks were observed in fieldwork and shared in the planned Walks&Talks and informal street interviews. Mobility culture, however, did vary in the subcontexts: Heerde's town centre is more car-oriented, while Zwolle offers more pedestrian-friendly infrastructure and prides itself on its high mode share of biking. Yet, car-centred or pedestrian unfriendly areas can be found in both places, for example the business and industrial parks.

These understanding, combined with designing with daily routes, shifted the design focus to smaller areas, with a somewhat homogenous spatial character, where many routes and daily activities intersect. Boundaries were defined by walking experience, not administrative borders.

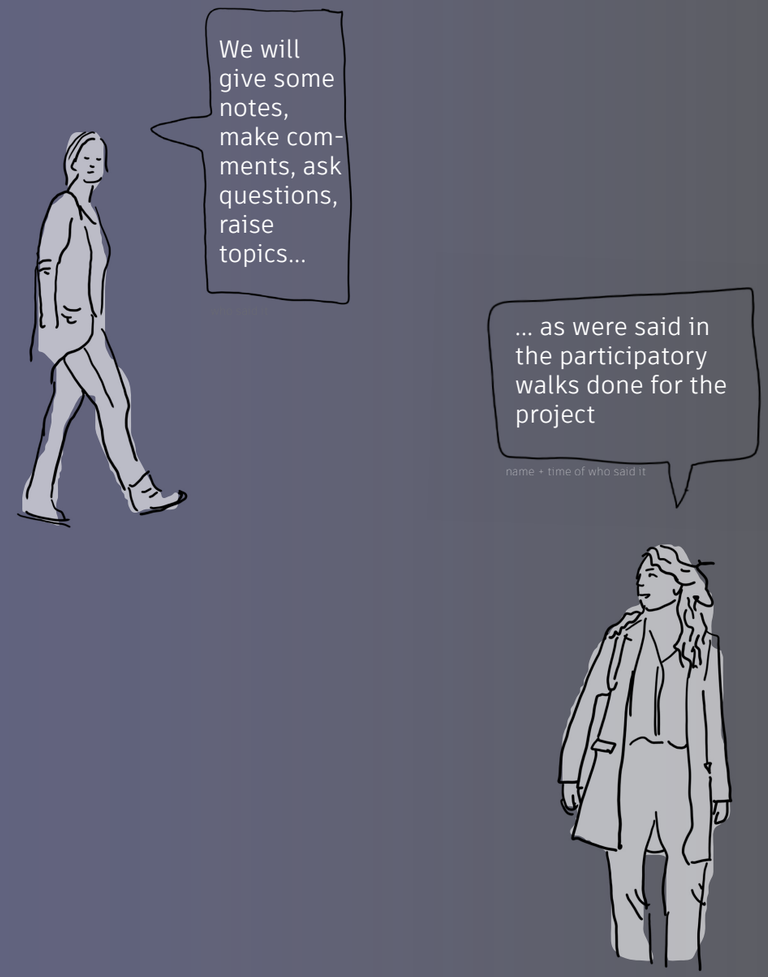
Designs focused on Heerde's town centre and Zwolle's industrial fringe. Though such areas are common across the Netherlands, local specifics, from the buildings, current use, historic layers, rivers and the urban fabric, shaped unique walking opportunities.

Both case studies highlighted the need to create local, mixed-use environments to support walking. Balancing these functions means adding housing and amenities in some areas and introducing workplaces in others. The broader goal of fostering slower, more local and quality-focused lifestyles arose here. This lead the project focus back towards its initial goal of promoting an alternative future of slowness, emphasizing how walking is not merely connected to slowness by the act itself, but moreover by its broader role in organizing both our spaces and lives. This wider philosophy of slowness will be implemented in the design proposal.

It also links back to the Cittaslow movement. However, Cittaslow mostly celebrates existing qualities and only in smaller settlements. While the proposal align with the Cittaslow values, this project seeks to actively create such qualities. The 'Cittaslow Metropolis' explores this idea as well. It proposes embedding values of slowness such as locality and quality in metropolitan planning by focusing on sample (town-sized) segments.

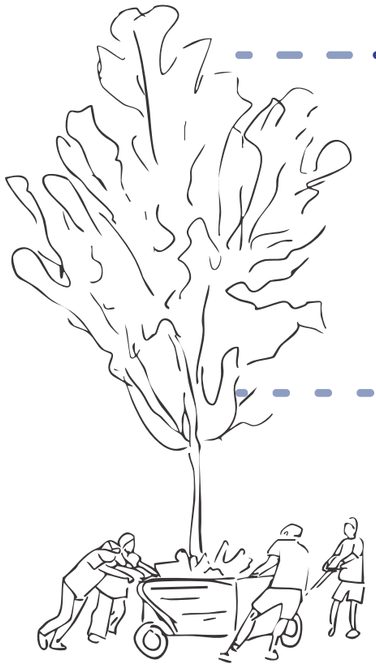
11. Design Proposal

11.1. Introduction
11.2. Heerde
11.3. Zwolle
11.4. Conclusion



KICK-OFF

- *Addressing core issueS inherent to the area with for example many small (temporary) projects, try-outs, car(e) free days. It allows for people to try out different walking experiences, and passers-by to consider walking*
- *Aiming to shift mindsets by targeting change points in daily life, of diverse perspectives (personas)*



BASIS

- *Creating the right conditions: alternatives for fast practices are introduced and made attractive (pull)*
- *Address issues such as equitable access (public transport, cycling, shared mobility) , locality (amenities, housing, jobs) and creating diverse, high-quality walking environments*

RESTRICT

- *Transform fast spaces, sustaining fast practices, into space for walking or space supporting walking (push), to gain time and space for slowness*
- *Address issues such as parking space, logistics, fast biking*

MAINTAIN

- *Preserve and create diversity in walking options and flexibility in how you walk*
- *Aiming at people to personalise walking and supporting the emergence of subcultures.*

Our ideas of what is nice, desirable, or liveable change constantly. A century ago, a field with a lot of daffodils might have insinuated that the farmer was lazy. Now it's viewed as great, it is nature-inclusive, biological farming!

"thematrekker actieve mobiliteit"
Municipality of Zwolle 18/03/25

11.1. Introduction

Informed by scenarios, personas and walks presented in previous chapters, interventions for Heerde and Zwolle can be proposed. This design proposal is presented in this chapter. The proposal includes 4 phases, which aim for people to consider walking and keep walking and create the time and space to walk. The proposal addresses the full practice intelligibility of walking: the immaterial, material context and social site.
The design is presented in the following consecutive, but overlapping, phases: kick-off, basis, restrict and maintain.

Figure 165
Phases of the strategy proposal

11.2. Heerde

Figure 166

Current situation in Heerde

11.2. Heerde: Kick-off

We should not use traffic models for walking, it works differently. In cars, we treat people as divers, machines. While walking, we are humans.

Participating company NML day 20/03/25

How do we make big changes? Without calculating and moddeling everything closed, but just doing it! Many big, now loved projects were thought to not be 'lucrative', but proved to be, over time.

Bestuursadviseur Cittaslow Midden-Delfland 28/02/25

Moreover, many, small projects achieve more than one big, time-consuming, expensive project.

In Heerde we kick off with try-outs in the main street in the town's centre, the Dorpsstraat. The 'try-outs' consist of five rounds of transforming the dorpsstraat into an area of walking and sojourning: a wide through-road with spaces to play on the sides, quiet area with green 'carpet' with sheep, a bustling summer city centre with markets and terraces, a social green space with trees and flowers and an evening experience with lights and seating.

This is supported by measures which create a temporary car and bike-free environment in the dorpsstraat. This draws on the theory of 'traffic evaporation', stating that restricting car access can free space for walking or cycling does not cause major congestion, as traffic models might predict and the public might assume. Moreover, people made different choices and traffic adjusts through changes in route, mode, or timing (Bauer, 2023; Cairns et al., 2002). Concerns about traffic build-up reflect motonormativity.

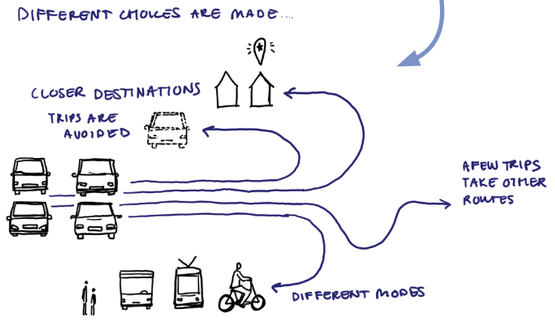


Figure 167

Kick-off phase proposal for Heerde

11.2. Heerde: basis

To create a solid basis of space and practices which support walking and slowness, issues of equitable access should be addressed. For this, an adapted version of the principle of STOMP is used. The STOMP-principle (Stappen, Trappen, Openbaar Vervoer, MaaS (mobility as a service), privéauto) distates that we should first design for walking, then biking and public transport, following by mobility as a service and private cars. However, this assumes mobility, leaving, going. For true 'places to live, not leave' an extra letter 'S' will be added to the STOMP principle, indicating Staying ('verblijven'). Moreover, the needs of groups with walking difficulties should be addressed. The SSTOMP principle is put into practice focusing on ensuring equitable access while promoting walking, as follows:

- Create hospitable places for staying, soujourning, resting, in all seasons
- Provide shared walking aids to lift barriers to walking (SO.02)
- Bikes (SP.25)
- Public transport (SP.22)
- Shared mobility systems focus on creating flexibility in walking and aiding people with walking limitations in moving, through (electric) microcars and scooters and (cargo)bikes
- Driving is slow, and parking is not a right. If they are necessary, parking spaces are shared (between inhabitants, inhabitants-daily places, 'laden en lossen' etc) or temporary.

To address the needs of people with walking difficulties, conversations with inhabitants or interest groups are necessary. In this process, 'grey' regulations can be proposed and found, for example providing (shared) parking spaces for people with walking limitations who are not disabled.

Figure 168
Basis phase proposal for Heerde

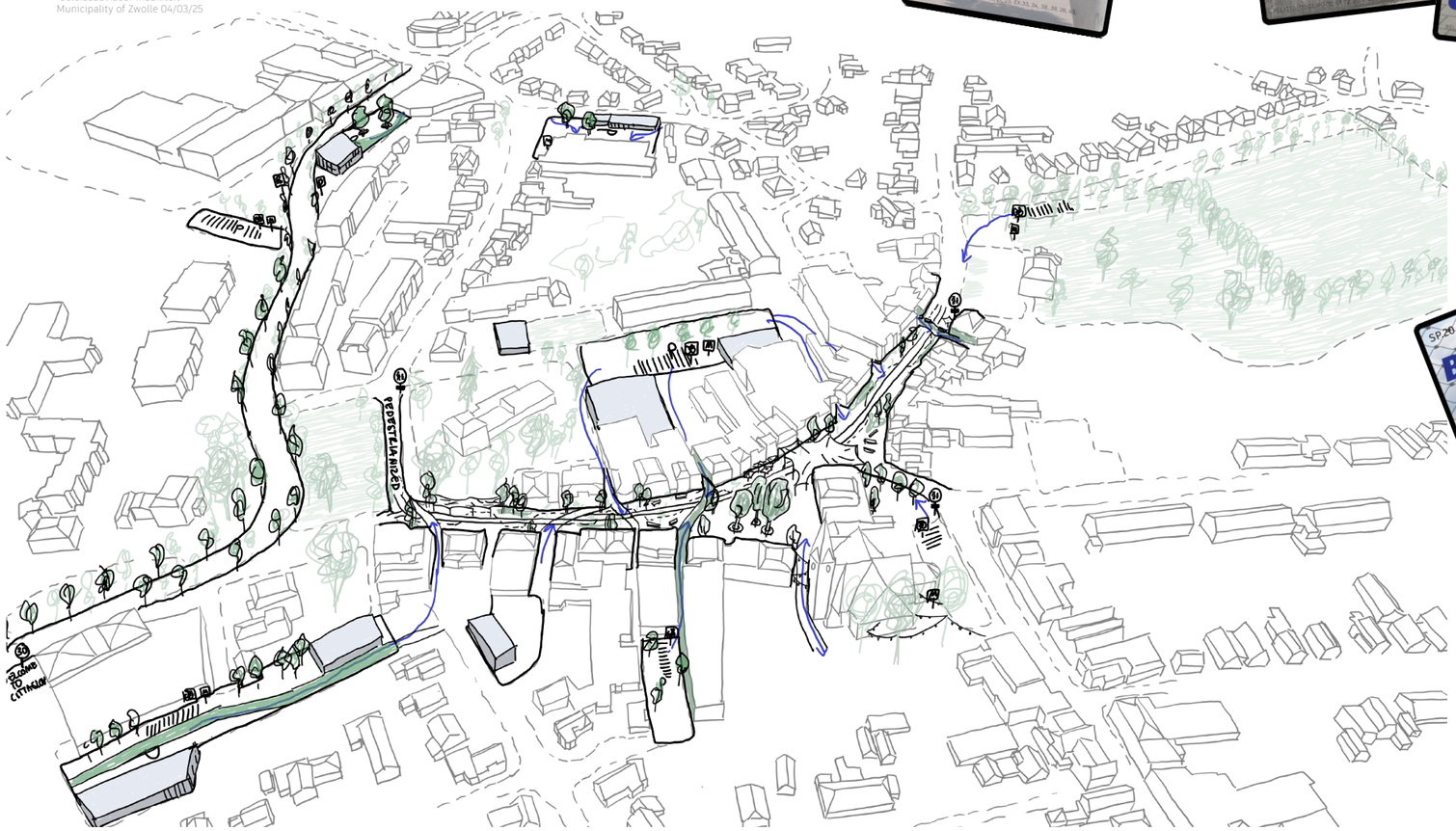
11.2. Heerde: restrict

A street (Zwolle) was recently transformed, reducing the speed to 30km/h, changing the material and re-moving traffic lights. It took some getting -used-to, to have to look around and obey traffic rultes again.

"beleidsadviseur mobiliteit" Municipality of Zwolle 04/03/25

Sharing space is also about trea-ting each other better. Cyclists like to cycle next to each other, walkers too, but there isn't always the space to do both, all the time. Especially when Paths are used by walkers, eques-trians, skaters, dog-walkers and cyclists alike.

"beleidsadviseur landschap" Cittaslow Midden-Delfland 11/03/25



After a basis of alternatives is created, proposals restricting fast practices are implemented. Car space is transformed into quality space, to gain time and space for walking. Quality space is created by quick greening initiatives. Moreover, the available space can indirectly encourage walking, by creating locality. On average inhabitants of Heerde have only 16 000 jobs within a 10 kilometre radius, where the average person in the Netherlands has about 101 000 (Klerks, 2024). For Heerde, locality thus means adding workplaces for a job-housing balance. Lastly, the Eperweg is transformed into a shared boulevard. Shared spaces provide places to practice going slow, no matter the mode of transport, and navigating space by communicating (eye contact, signing etc) with other users.

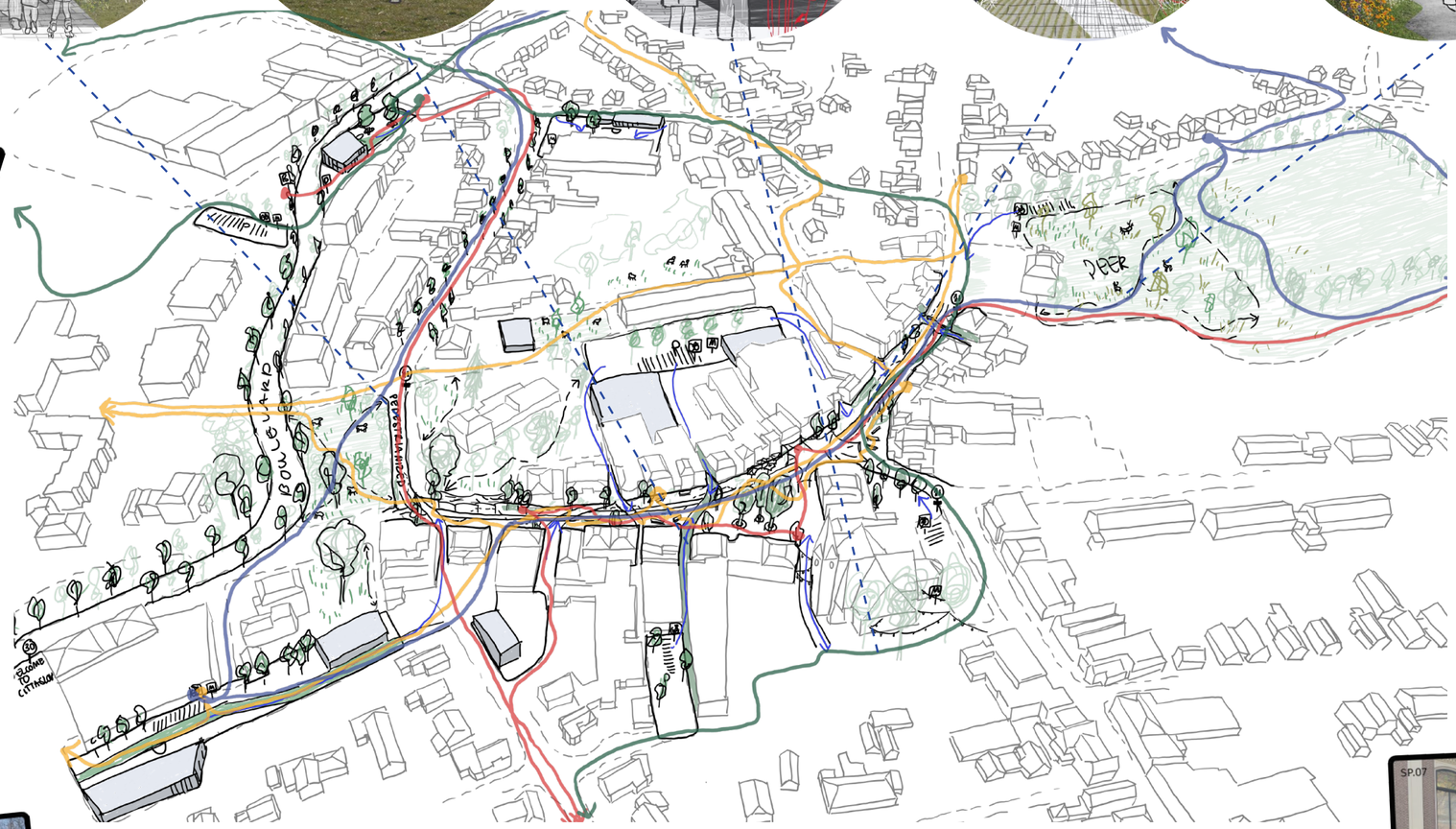
Pedestrian and green spaces are kind of fighting for left-over space in cities. Maybe also because all the other functions have strict norms, not just guidelines.

Researcher at PBL 25/04/25

Figure 169

Restrict phase proposal for Heerde

11.2. Heerde: maintain



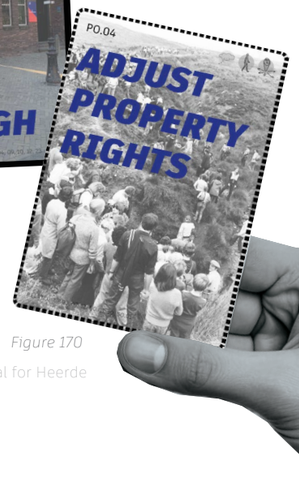


Figure 170

Maintain phase proposal for Heerde

Walk anywhere, anytime

All in all, lots of local qualities were created, enabling people to walking anywhere, anytime. These include walkable environments around daily places such as the supermarkets and bus stops, walking with animals (deer and sheep, which are moved to different places to assist in green maintenance) and enjoying the local historic places, such as the church, by being able to 'walk right through'. This creates diversity in walking options. These also bring flexibility in how you walk, aided by the locality and mobility services previously proposed. After implementation, the process continues in observing how local walking cultures develop, and how spaces will (need to) be altered or used over time.

11.3. Zwolle

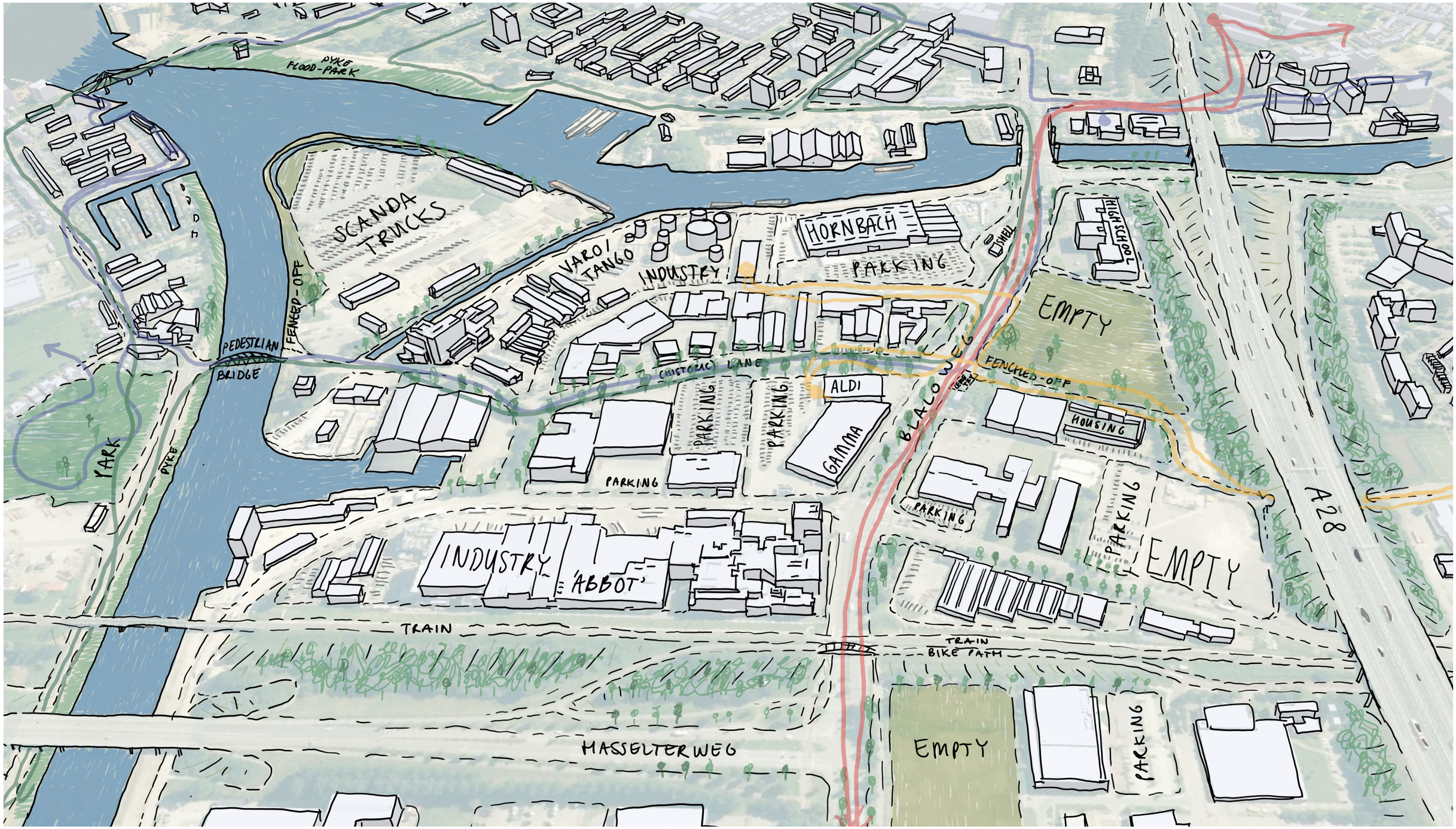
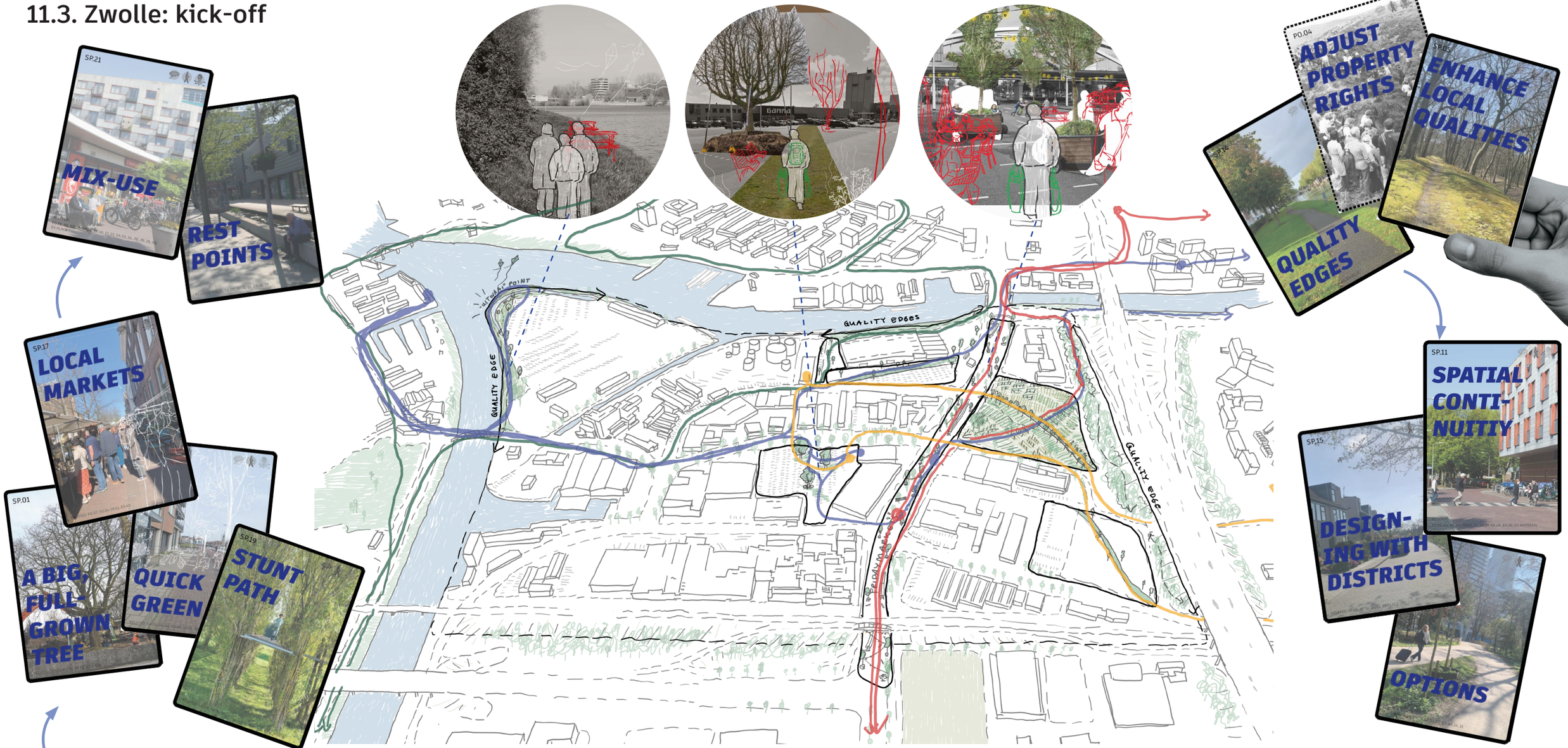


Figure 171
Current situation Zwolle

11.3. Zwolle: kick-off



In Zwolle we kick off with addressing the desert-like, hostile environment of the business area, by adding lots of greenery in a relatively short time. This can be done with fast-growing plants or moveable trees, but also by adding a few big, full-grown trees to the asphalted, grey parking lots and turning these into short-cuts instead of obstacles to walk around. Considering the vast amount of trees the area will need for its transformation into a pedestrian-friendly environment, an (in-house) orchard is created on one of the empty lots, which can provide trees for the area for years to come, and is great to walk through.

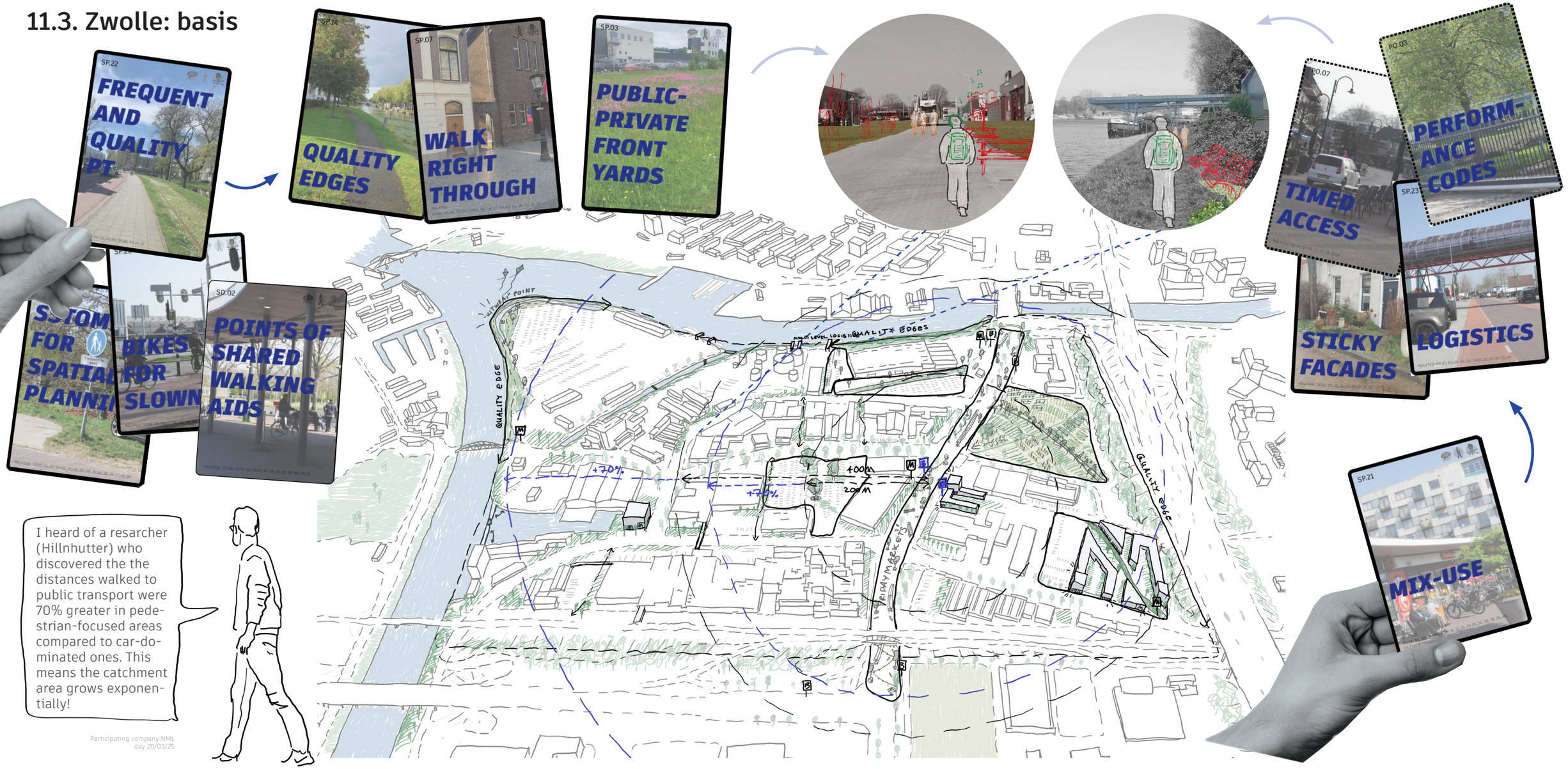
Additionally, car(e) free Fridays are introduced on the 'Blaloweg', a busy road in the middle of the area. On these days, the traffic space is turned into space for humans, with market stalls and rolled-in trees and benches. Similar to the try-outs in Heerde, it encourages rethinking your own daily places, by proposing an alternative and showing what could be possible. Moreover, the market shows the potential of locality and mix use, where the area is not merely a place of coming and going to work, but one of staying, with quality functions, such as fresh food, close by.

Lastly, existing green, quality places are made accessible to walkers. These are especially the edges of the area, which in turn contributes to reading the area as a wayfinding pedestrian. All in all, by working with the daily routes of the personas, multiple options are created, based on existing qualities and addressing the places which currently are most hostile to pedestrians.

Figure 172

Kick-off phase proposal Zwolle

11.3. Zwolle: basis



To create a strong foundation for walking, the proposal emphasizes equitable access by applying the 'SSTOMP' principle. This means addressing public transport. There are three existing bus stops on Blaloweg and train tracks along the southern edge. Walking and public transport can and should work hand-in-hand, offering enjoyable, connected journeys. However, 'transit oriented planning', in this case for example opting for a new bus line or train station, encourage the narrative of going and leaving, instead of creating 'places to live'.

Research shows people are willing to walk 70% farther to transit if the environment is pleasant. Thus, enhancing walking quality, for example with "public-private front yards", are central to the proposal. Moreover, service frequency is increased at the central Gashuisdijk/ Blaloweg bus stop, which will amplify urban life as it is near key amenities like markets and supermarkets.

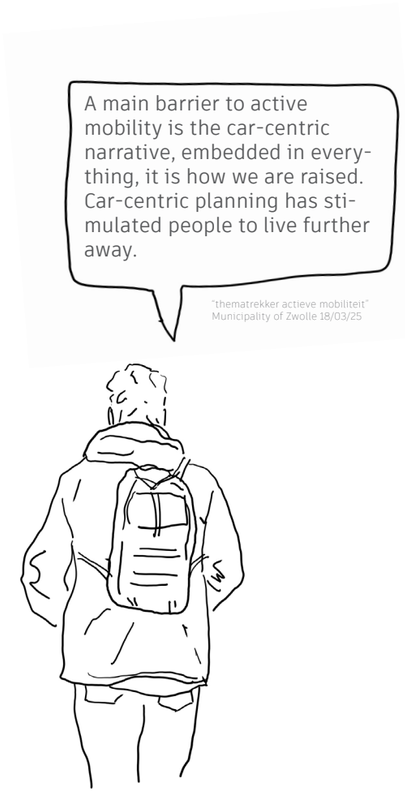
The area is currently a mono-functional business district, with limited housing and services. This spatial and functional imbalance reflects a citywide issue: in the whole of Zwolle there are more jobs than homes. Proposals for housing in the industry area have been rejected due to environmental standards, yet it raises the question: if the area unfit to live in, why is it acceptable to work there all day? This presents an opportunity to increase working conditions, including the journey to work and breaktime, while creating the conditions of a walkable environment.

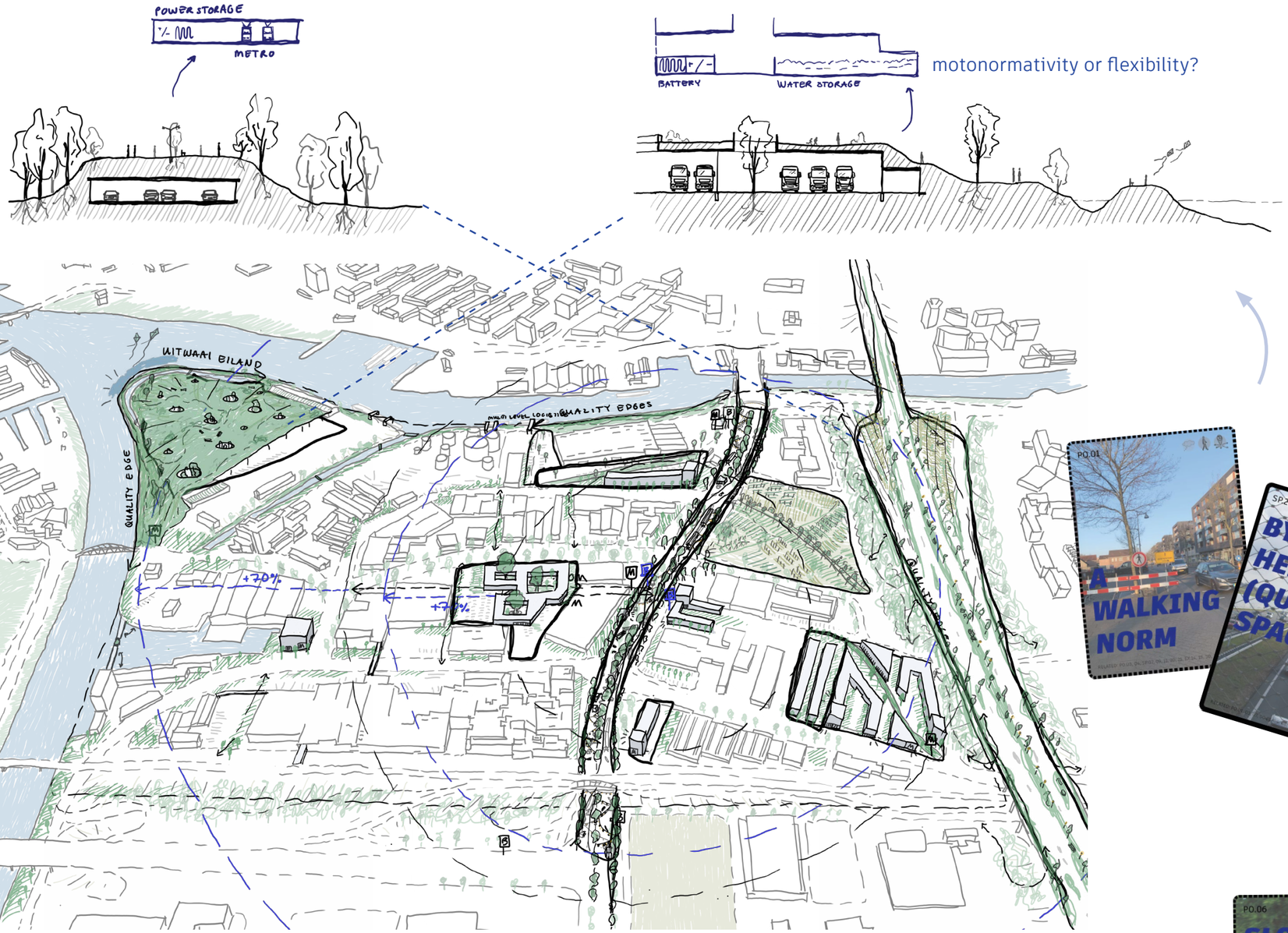
Empty lots can be redeveloped into mixed-use housing with ground-floor amenities ("sticky plinths"), and industrial buildings can be adapted for residential use. This transition could be enabled through legal mandates for mixed-use and 'performance codes'. Originally proposed by Jane Jacobs, performance codes offer flexible alternatives to zoning, supporting both social and environmental interactions. They can promote cleaner industry, better workspaces, and liveable neighbourhoods. Businesses would need to adapt, using smaller, electric vehicles for transport, decentralizing logistics, and opening private areas to pedestrians with time-based access. For example, along the waterfront, public access could be prioritized during commute hours and restricted briefly for deliveries.

Figure 173

Basis phase proposal Zwolle

11.3. Zwolle: restrict





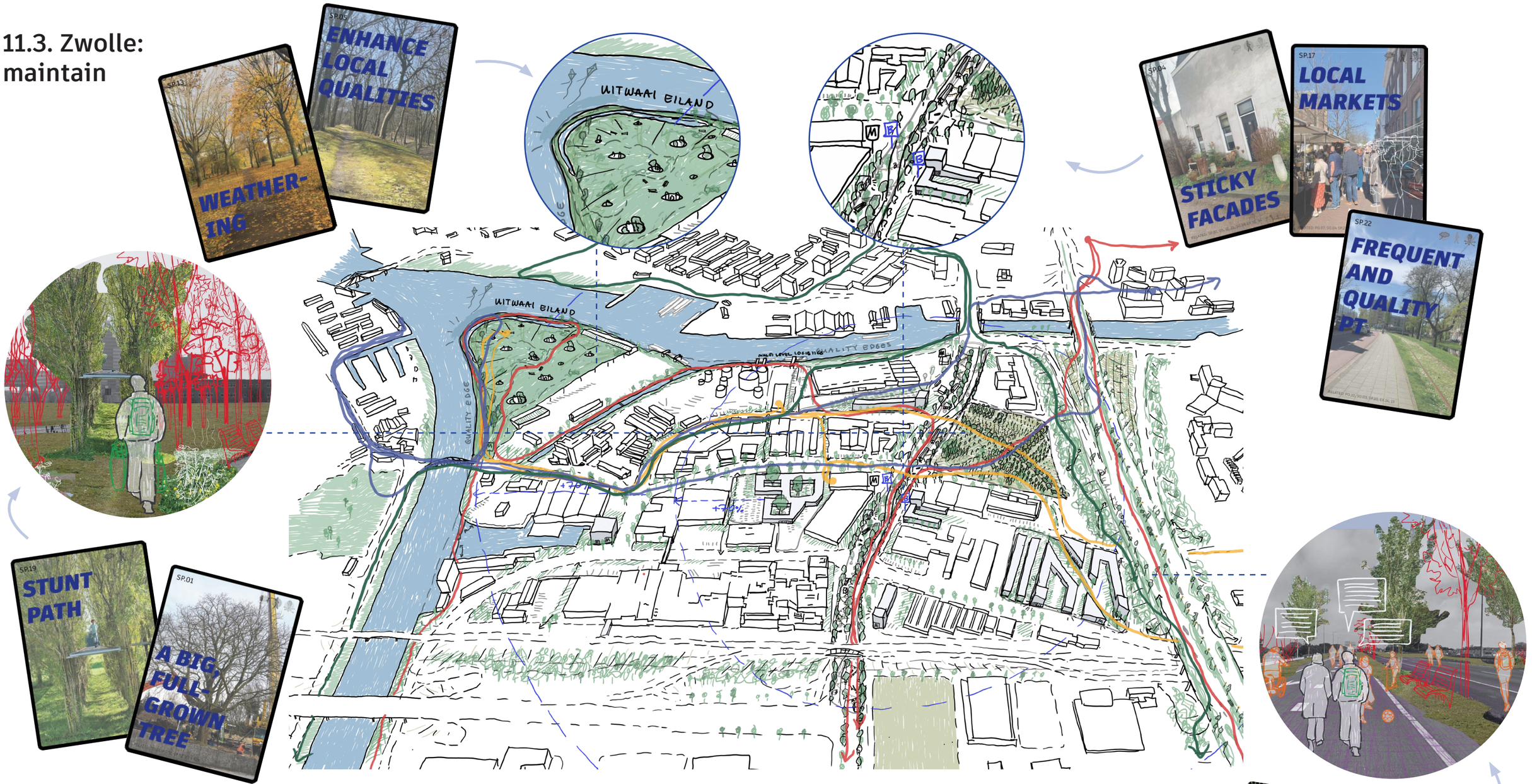
In restricting fast practices, the most car-centric spaces will be addressed: the many parking lots, where housing created more living spaces, Blaloweg, turned into a pedestrian space, with permanent market space, small kiosks, cafés and bus route, the highway (A28), transformed into a city boulevard with views of all of Zwolle, and Scania trucks parking lot, where an 'uitwaai eiland' is created.

In turning these places into qualitative walking environments, concessions could be made. For example proposing turning the highway into a tunnel, which preserves the connection while creating space for slowness. Or the waterside park proposed instead of the 55 000 m2 of asphalt on the Scania terrain could be a roof park, with the trucks parked under it. Especially if the car-space is adaptive to different functions in the future, such as water storage, a neighbourhood battery or farming space for the Scania lot and a metro or train route and logistics functions for the A28.

However this concession is more expensive and does continue the narrative of motonormativty, where other functions need to adjust to the needs of cars and narrative of speed. It is this car-centric planning has stimulated functions to lose proximity, with companies centralizing and people living further away for their jobs. Actually restricting car use, with less parking, roads, subsidies and more, will bring activities closer together again (as according to Machetti's constant) (Verkade, 2020).

Figure 174
Restrict phase proposal Zwolle

11.3. Zwolle: maintain



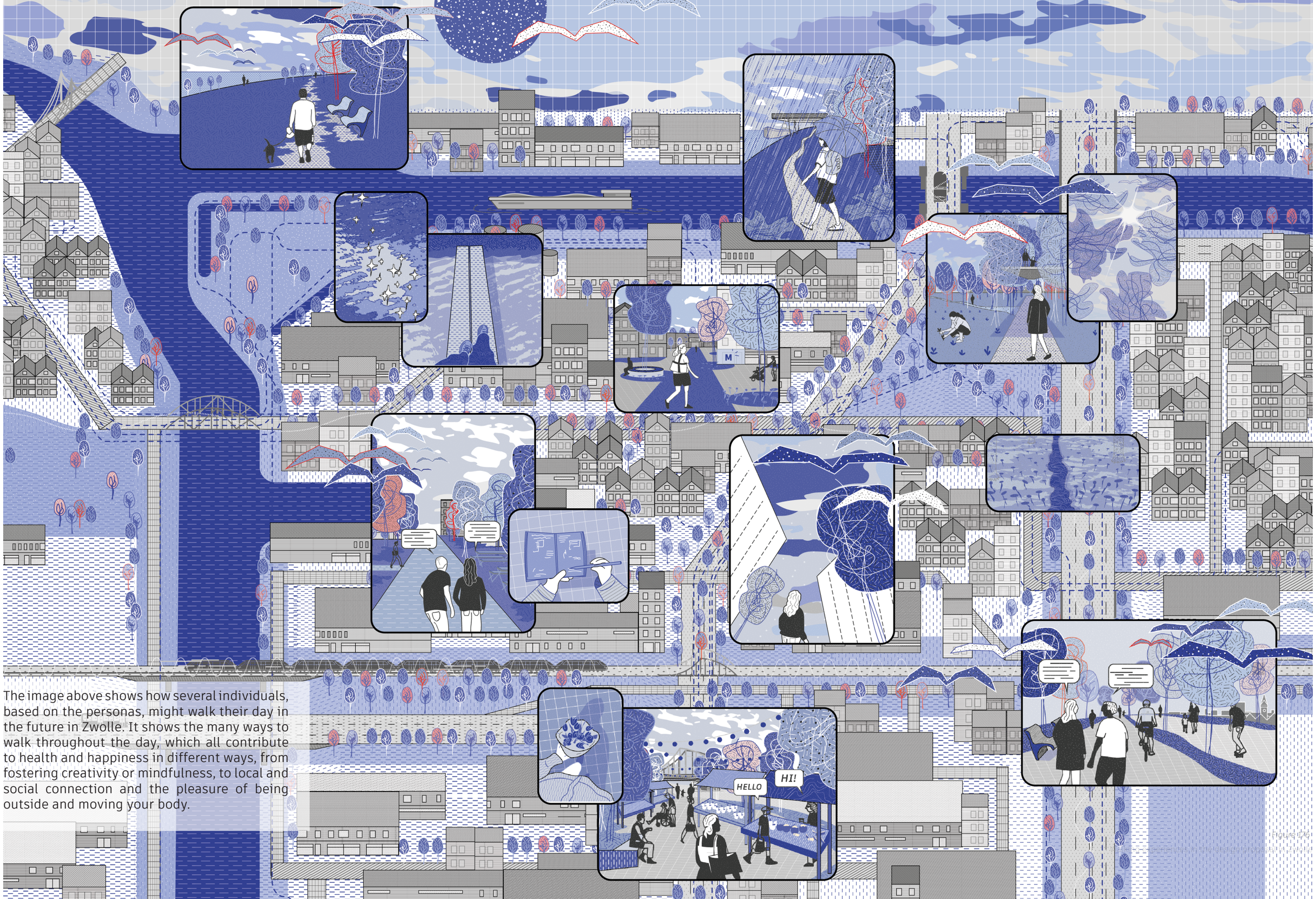
Walk anywhere, anytime

Many walking qualities and options are created to Preserve and create diversity in walking options and flexibility in how you walk, Aiming at people to personalise walking and supporting the emergence of subcultures. All in all, lots of local qualities were created, enabling people to walking anywhere, anytime.

These include a park surrounded by water, the ‘uitwaai island’, a lively ‘ramblas’ with market space, small kiosks, cafés and a high frequency bus route, a shared city boulevard, where people walk, cycle, play and skate with views of all of Zwolle, an urban orchard, walking routes along the water and to the sides of the boulevard through small patches of forest and diverse public-private front yards of the companies, which can be used by employees and passer-by’s to walk through or take a break. Together, this creates diversity in walking options. These also bring flexibility in how you walk, aided by the locality and mobility services previously proposed. After implementation, the process continues in observing how local walking cultures develop, and how spaces will (need to) be altered or used over time

Figure 175
Maintain phase proposal Zwolle

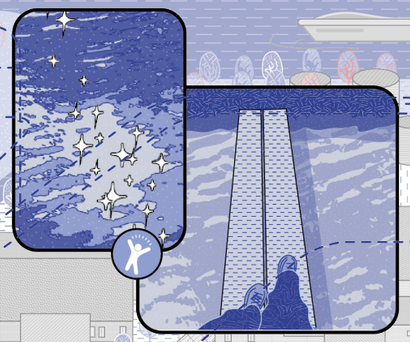
11.3. Zwolle: a walk in the future



The image above shows how several individuals, based on the personas, might walk their day in the future in Zwolle. It shows the many ways to walk throughout the day, which all contribute to health and happiness in different ways, from fostering creativity or mindfulness, to local and social connection and the pleasure of being outside and moving your body.

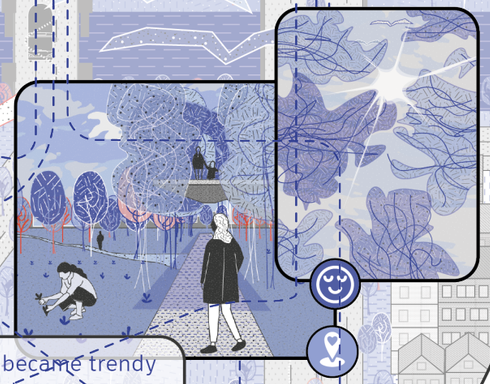
11.3. Zwolle: a walk in the future

I used to 45 min drive to work every day. I'm happy I am now spending those hours moving and outside, with my dog, colleagues or family. I changed jobs, finding one closer to home, to cut down on that wasted travel time.



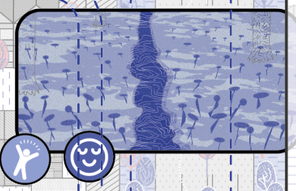
I've come to understand which parts of walking matter most to me–what I can keep doing, or find in other ways. It makes me resilient.

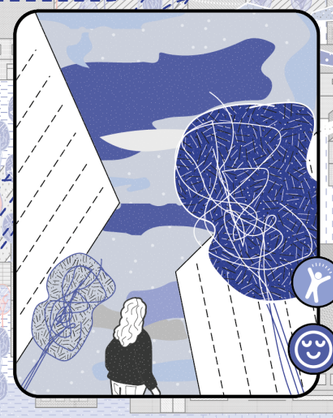
Walking even became trendy through artsy, temporary events my friends liked too.



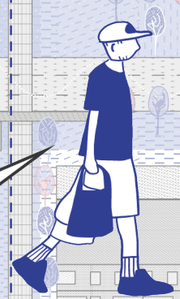
Later, moving closer to work cut my commute and gave me more time. Welcome Walks in my new neighbourhood made walking feel natural and easy.

I used to bike everywhere, until a week without my bike it forced me to walk. At first it was just practical, but soon I started enjoying the slower pace and exploring hidden paths. For me, walking means freedom and adventure.





At my new job, it was normal to walk your meetings, commute and breaks.



Walking wasn't always part of my routine, but it started when our kids began walking to and during school, encouraged by their class, which turned into a habit.

Now walking fits our family's rhythm, turning errands and chores into me-time or shared moments, and helps us feel part of the neighbourhood.

My walking started small, joining work initiatives: sunrise strolls and lunchtime outings, but grew into a reliable habit to stay active, even later in life.

Figure 177
Experiences of personas in Zwolle

11.4. Strategy

Phases and subcontexts

Comparing interventions in Heerde and Zwolle highlights how local qualities shape the proposed interventions, determined by distinct, local challenges and opportunities. This results in different environments and experiences: we can go 'uitwaaien' along the water in Zwolle, whereas we can walk with deer and sheep in Heerde. One can stroll through a church in Heerde, a cornerstone of the town-centre charm, and walk though green production landscapes in Zwolle.

The underlying shift remains similar across contexts. Actions to create a basis which supports walking and limiting fast practices are proposed for both contexts.

Non-spatial actions, aimed at creating time for walking through life-stage change points and persona-based needs are similarly applied across contexts. However, tailoring personas to local inhabitants would better differentiate the proposed actions, aligning them more closely with local characteristics.

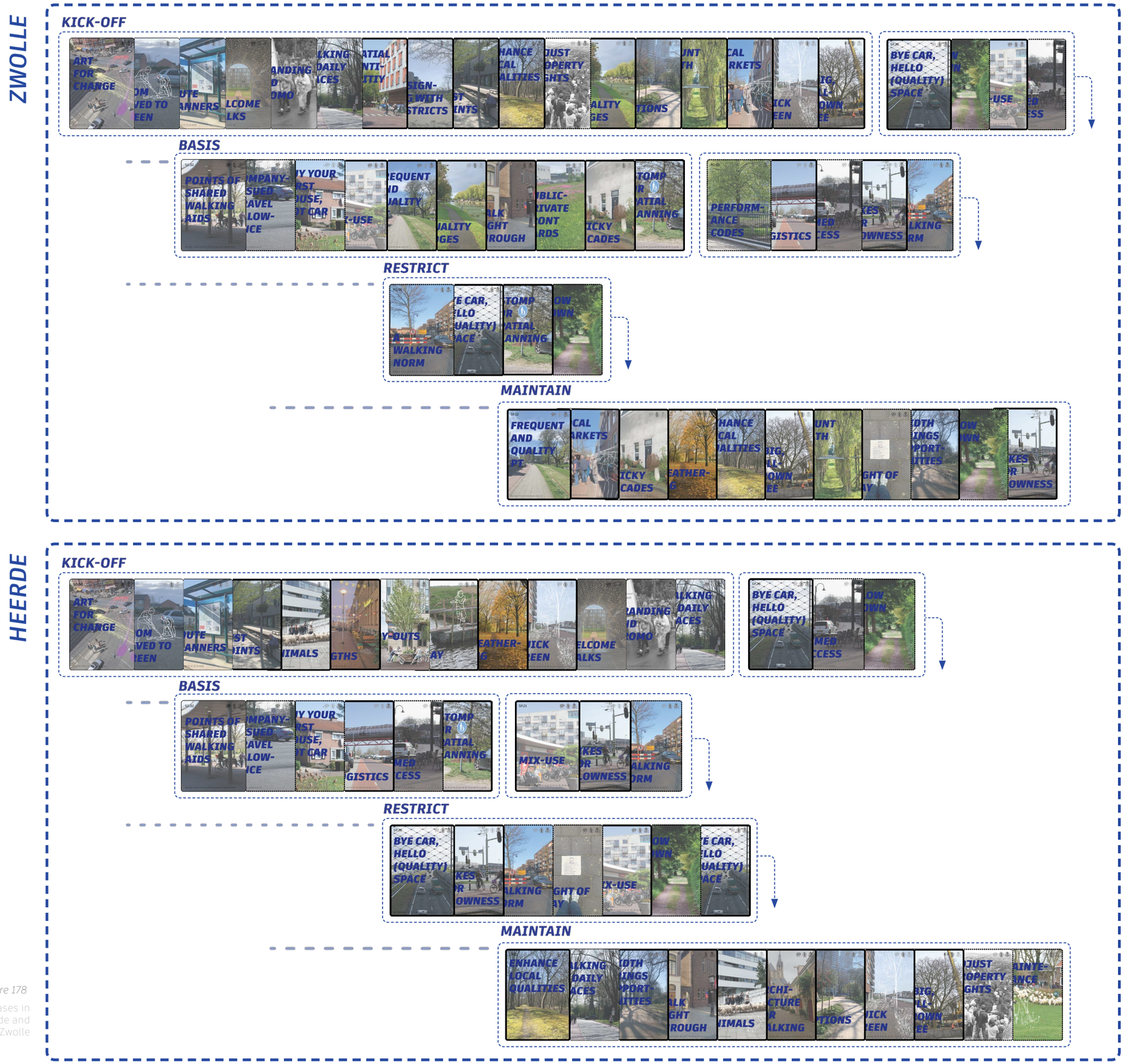


Figure 178

Patterns and phases in proposals for Heerde and Zwolle

11.4. Strategy: actors

While many strategies rely on top-down planning, real change depends on strong public-private collaboration and the powerful of bottom-up action.

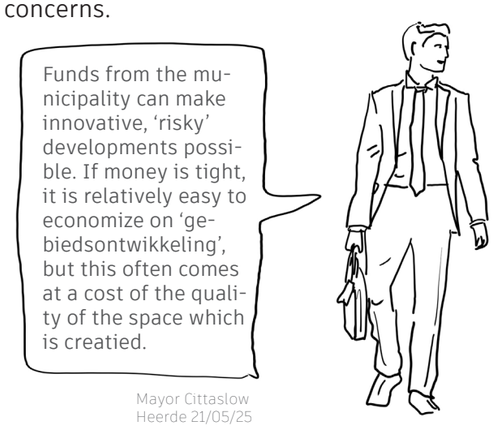
Top-down

National, provincial, and primarily municipal actors must lead by example: implementing inspiring projects which challenge norms, setting new norms, with local policies, spatial project and social activities (such as welcome walks) and enabling others to do the same, through funding and support for value-driven walking projects.

Regulations should establish walking norms, mixed-use requirements, and performance codes.

Funding for walking can draw from multiple sectors, from public health, local economies, climate adaptation to mobility, housing, as it presents recognising its relevance across fields. Moreover, current allocation of municipal funds based on population and (housing) development volume could shift form quantity towards quality-based funding, opening space for different project types.

Walking can also play a greater role in public planning processes, aligning with slower, more grounded approaches. Moreover, walking offers a low-barrier method for engagement, attracting diverse participants who might not attend formal meetings. This fosters deeper community understanding and supports design approaches that are both humble and visionary, balancing societal goals (‘algemeen belang’) with local concerns.



Mayor Cittaslow
Heerde 21/05/25

Private Sector

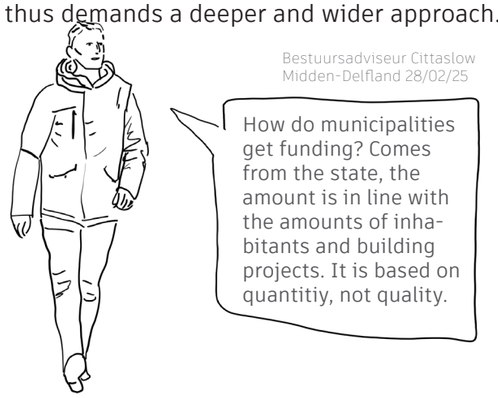
Most spaces are privately owned. Greater access to private land for walking should be facilitated, for example opening up sports fields, cemeteries and orchards to walkers. Alongside, a qualitative transformation of private spaces to contributes to the walking experience, where inviting front gardens and interesting façades could replace views of asphalt, dead façades and fences.

Bottom-up

Citizens can organise walks, events, and local initiatives, fostering a culture of walking. Moreover, by simply starting to walk, for fitness, leisure, or fresh air, you influence your surroundings. Individuals’ actions, as situated within wider societal roles of student, teacher, employee, employer, customer, citizen, friend, roommate, parent or child, have cascading effects in their particular setting (Bronfenbrenner, 1994; Harries & Rettie, 2016; Middleton, 2016; Watson et al., 2020) . In that, walking becomes a small, political act of resistance, a practice of going slow in a world that enforces speed.

Planners and Designers

Operating across public and private sectors, planners and designers can take multiple roles. They must centre walking, quality, and locality. This means challenging car- and speed-oriented norms, and adopting slower, embodied design approaches, like walking-based research and daily journeys of personas. Spatial changes alone aren’t enough; integrated social and policy strategies are key to designing truly walkable environments. Overall, designing for walking thus demands a deeper and wider approach.



Bestuursadviseur Cittaslow
Midden-Delfland 28/02/25

KICK-OFF

SPATIAL ACTIONS:
01.A BIG, FULL-GROWN TREE | 02.QUICK GREEN | 05.ENHANCE LOCAL QUALITIES | 06.LIGHTS | 08.OPTIONS | 10.REST POINTS | 11.SPATIAL CONTINUITY | 13.WEATHERING | 14.QUALITY EDGES | 15.DESIGNING WITH DISTRICTS | 16.PLAY | 17.LOCAL MARKETS | 18.ANIMALS | 19.STUNT PATH | 20.BYE CAR, HELLO (QUALITY) SPACE | 21.MIX-USE

POLICY ACTIONS:
04.ADJUST PROPERTY RIGHTS | 06.SLOW DOWN | 07.TIMED ACCESS

SOCIAL ACTIONS:
01.FROM PAVED TO GREEN | 03.ROUTE PLANNERS | 04.TRY-OUTS | 05.WELCOME WALKS | 06.ART FOR CHANGE | 07.BRANDING AND PROMO | 08.WAKLING IN DAILY PLACES

BASIS

SPATIAL ACTIONS:
03.PUBLIC-PRIVATE FRONT YARDS | 04.STICKY FACADES | 07.WALK RIGHT THROUGH | 14.QUALITY EDGES | 21.MIX-USE | 22.FREQUENT AND QUALITY PUBLIC TRANSPORT | 23.LOGISTICS | 24.SSTOMP FOR SPATIAL PLANNING | 25.BIKES FOR SLOWNESS

POLICY ACTIONS:
01.A WALKING NORM | 03.PERFORMANCE CODES | 07.TIMED ACCESS | 08.COMPANY-ISSUES TRAVEL ALLOWANCE | 09.BUY YOUR FIRST HOUSE, NOT CAR

SOCIAL ACTIONS:
02.POINTS OF SHARED WALKING AIDS

RESTRICT

SPATIAL ACTIONS:
20.BYE CAR, HELLO (QUALITY) SPACE | 21.MIX-USE | 24.SSTOMP IN SPATIAL DESIGN | 25.BIKES FOR SLOWNESS

POLICY ACTIONS:
01.A WALKING NORM | 05.RIGHT OF WAY | 06.SLOW DOWN | 07.TIMED ACCESS | 08.COMPANY-ISSUES TRAVEL ALLOWANCE

MAINTAIN

SPATIAL ACTIONS:
01.A BIG, FULL-GROWN TREE | 02.QUICK GREEN | 04.STICKY FACADES | 05.ENHANCE LOCAL QUALITIES | 07.WALK RIGHT THROUGH | 08.OPTIONS | 09.WIDTH BRINGS OPPORTUNITIES | 12.ARCHITECTURE FOR WALKING | 13.WEATHERING | 17.LOCAL MARKETS | 19.STUNT PATH | 22.FREQUENT AND QUALITY PUBLIC TRANSPORT | 25.BIKES FOR SLOWNESS

POLICY ACTIONS:
02.MAINTENANCE | 04.ADJUST PROPERTY RIGHTS | 05.RIGHT OF WAY | 06.SLOW DOWN

SOCIAL ACTIONS:
05.WELCOME WALKS | 08.WALKING IN DAILY PLACES

KEY
TOP-DOWN
BOTTOM-UP
PRIVATE
MIX

Figure 179
Patterns and actors in proposals for Heerde and Zwolle

11.5. Conclusion

Reflecting on RQ4, *"What form could a spatial design intervention in the case study areas (Heerde and Zwolle) take to support walking, and how might this process challenge or refine prior assumptions and strategies?"* the following insights were gained:

To truly create space and time for walking, fast practices must be restricted, which requires rethinking land use and infrastructure across sectors, while aiming to spatialize values of slowness (locality, quality) to create a foundation which supports walking. In this, walking is not merely connected to Slowness by the act itself, but moreover by its broader role in organizing both our spaces and lives.

By imagining what could be achieved in a year or 25 years, a phased strategy was proposed, which commences with a 'Kick-off', as a lot can be achieved and changed in just a few month. Subsequently, the 'Basis' of alternatives for fast practices and support for walking is created, whereafter fast practices, mainly car-use, are limited in the 'Restrict' phase. Lastly, in the 'Maintain' phase, where diversity and flexibility in how people can walk supports to people making it their own, its meaning changing over time and the emergence of subcultures.

Comparing interventions in Heerde and Zwolle reveals differences are more localized than a rural-urban divide, emphasizing situated qualities and challenges (identified through walking). These local characteristics shape tailored approaches, especially in the 'Kick-off' and 'Maintain' phases and in creating distinct local experiences walking experiences, ranging from 'uitwaaien' in Zwolle to walking among deer and sheep in Heerde. Interventions supporting the fundamental shift toward supporting walking and limiting fast mobility remains consistent, non-spatial strategies (such as creating time for walking linked to personas and life change points) were similarly applicable.

All in all, design methods of walking, imagining personas and backcasting provided a diverse, human-centred approach and grounded the proposal in reality, while revealing **the possibilities of da**ily life in an alternative, desirable future, which could, in turn, be assessed for their contributions to (positive) wellbeing.

Reflecting on RQ5, *"What implications do the project's findings hold for (urban) planners and designers in shaping our environments to enhance both the quality and quantity of walks?"* the following insights were gained:

The project proposed a shift from infrastructure-centric, one-size-fits-all approach to a human-centred design, , which changes how we should intervene, create lasting change and find time and space to walk. This entails using different arguments, aims, methods and tools.

3 Aims for a project which promotes walking are proposed. These projects should aim for people to 1 consider walking, 2 keep walking and 3 find time and space to walk. The approach requires human-centred methods, such as walking-based research and designing with personas and daily routes. Moreover, integrated spatial, social, and policy interventions are necessary, which is supported and linked to walking experiences by two interlinked pattern sets. These tools can be used in the design and participation processes.

Besides methods, aims and tools, the final design proposal and strategy outlines roles for public, private, and civil actors in supporting walking as a normal, meaningful, easy and enjoyable practice. Planners and designers are urged to take both a more expansive and nuanced approach:

- Expand: Design with values of quality and locality and envision alternative futures. Question assumptions of speed, use personas and daily routes to create human-centred, realistic designs. Integrate spatial, social, and policy dimensions for (lasting) impact.

- Deepen: Embrace slower research, using walking-based methods for grounded, embodied, participatory design. Balance real-world insights and imagining alternative futures.

These insights are summarized in a planning and design action manual (Appendix E), providing inspiration and tools for all actors involved in shaping environments that **s**upport walking.

12. Conclusion and Reflection

12.1. Conclusion
12.2. Relevance
12.3. Limitations and further research
12.4. Reflection

12.1. Conclusion

This thesis set out to answer the following research question:

"How can planning and design interventions enhance both the quality and quantity of walking in urban, suburban, and rural contexts in the Netherlands, to promote slowness, improve wellbeing, and support a transition to a post-growth society?"

by answering the five subquestions:

RQ1: "How do current walking practices, both in their performance and intelligibilty, shape our understanding of walking in the Netherlands, and what implications does this have for promoting it?"

- The status quo of walking needs to be reframed: in the Netherlands, often seen as mostly a country of bike, people walk just as much, but moreover, take the car twice as much.
- Walking is typically framed in a narrow binary of either being utilitarian or recreational, ignoring its broader potential.
- Yet, the existing leisure walking culture offers a rich foundation for expanding and normalizing walking practices.

RQ2: "What opportunities for encouraging walking arise at change points in daily life, and what challenges emerge, particularly in relation to competing alternatives?"

- Walking can become a core part of daily life by integrating it into routines and taking advantage of change points—moments such as starting a new job, having a child, moving, or adopting a pet—when habits and perceptions can shift. At these moments, walking needs to be seen as the most logical and attractive option.
- However, competing alternatives like driving or cycling are often deeply embedded in routines, supported by infrastructure, values, and assumptions of convenience. These dominant practices did not evolve naturally but were shaped by policies, planning, and social movements. The same can be done for walking: it can be normalized through integrated spatial, policy, and social interventions.

RQ3: "How can insights from personal and collective walking experiences in varied environments inform fostering enjoyable, diverse walking experiences?"

- A set of walking experience patterns was developed, which capture recurring qualities that contribute to (or detract from) enjoyable walks, which can be stacked to imagine walking experiences. They are informed by theory and walks and linked to the set of spatial, policy and social interventions, enabling planners to integrate walking preferences from the outset.
- Each walk is unique, varying by conditions, focus, space, place, setting, time and more. This means designing for walking requiring an approach which reflects this specific, personal experience: working with personas and daily routes.
- Walking must be integrated in both the research and design process, informing the design with participatory, embodied, eye-level knowledge, at different stages (for example research of walking habits and preferences, local characteristics and challenges or discussing wishes and proposals). In the design process, this localized, grounded approach should be balanced with envisioning a different, alternative future.

RQ4: "What form could a spatial design intervention in the case study areas (Heerde and Zwolle) take to support walking, and how might this process challenge or refine prior assumptions and strategies?"

- To create genuine space and time for walking, fast practices must be restricted. This requires rethinking land use and infrastructure across sectors while embedding values of slowness such as locality and quality to create a foundation for walking.
- A phased strategy was developed, starting with a 'Kick-off', which quick wins in the first months, followed by the creation of a 'Basis' of alternatives to fast practices, a 'Restrict' phase to limit fast practices, mainly focused on car-use, and a long-term 'Maintain' phase fostering flexibility, diverse experiences, and evolving meanings of walking.
- Differences between Zwolle and Heerde are shaped by local qualities rather than a simple rural-urban divide. These differences influence tailored interventions, especially in the 'Kick-off' and 'Maintain' phases, and in creating unique walking experiences. The broader shift towards localized, quality spaces supporting walking and limiting fast mobility, as well as non-spatial strategies (e.g., time for walking linked to personas and life transitions), remains consistent across contexts.
- All in all, design process of walking-based methods, personas, and backcasting ensured a diverse, human-centred approach, grounded in reality, while revealing opportunities for alternative, desirable futures in daily life, which could, in turn, be assessed for their contributions to (positive) wellbeing.

RQ5 "What implications do the project's findings hold for (urban) planners and designers in shaping our environments to enhance both the quality and quantity of walks?"

- The project advocates a shift to a social, human-centred approach to promoting walking. This requires new planning and design aims, arguments, methods, and tools, which guide how we should intervene, create lasting change and find time and space for walking.
- Three aims guide walking-focused projects: 1) encourage walking, 2) sustain walking habits, and 3) create time and space for walking. Methods include walking-based research, designing with personas and daily routes and envisioning alternative futures. Two interconnected pattern sets support the design and participation processes, linking eye-level walking experiences and larger-scaled spatial, social and policy interventions.
- The design proposal and strategy define roles for public, private, and civil actors in promoting walking as a meaningful, normal, easy and enjoyable practice. Planners and designers are encouraged to take both a more expansive and nuanced approach:
  - Expand: Design with values of quality and locality; imagine alternative futures; use personas and daily routes for realistic, human-centred designs; integrate spatial, social, and policy actions.
  - Deepen: Embrace slow, participatory research, using walking-based methods for grounded, embodied, collaborative design. Balance real-world insights with imagining different futures.

These insights are summarised in a planning and design action manual (Appendix E), providing inspiration, guidance and tools for the actors involved in shaping environments that support walking.

12.1. Conclusion

This thesis set out to answer the following research question:

"How can planning and design interventions enhance both the quality and quantity of walking in urban, suburban, and rural contexts in the Netherlands, to promote slowness, improve wellbeing, and support a transition to a post-growth society?"

12.2. Relevance

This thesis deepens the understanding of promoting walking within spatial planning, positioning walking as a pathway to slowness in a fast-paced society. It connects walking with broader societal challenges such as climate change and a decline in wellbeing.

With this objective, the project proposes a human-centred design approach, recognizing the intertwined character of our spaces, behaviours and wider societal norms and values, as derived from Practice Theory. This shift is made actionable with practical tools, such as intertwined spatial, social and policy interventions, and methods, such as walking and persona-based design. The eye-level, embodied and participatory research is balanced with envisioning alternative futures of walking for wellbeing, combined in a design proposal.

This challenges existing concepts, like the 15-minute cities, STOMP, transit oriented development and 'walkable neighbourhoods'. Instead of treating pedestrians as traffic objects using infrastructure, which can lead to one-size-fits-all approaches, we should view walkers as individual humans, with diverse interests and needs. Instead of optimizing time by defining distances or fast ways to cross great distances, the experience and quality of the time we spend should be central to the design proposals. Instead of continuing mobility-driven narratives, we should create quality places to live, not places where people live, but would want to leave (as fast as possible). Instead of merely nudging people into the direction of walking, efforts are made to restrict alternatives and normalize walking, while offering choices of different ways to walk. In the Netherlands, 'Nationaal Masterplan Lopen' (NML) advocates for a culture where walking is a normal part of daily life. This aligns with this project, which dove deep into this topic and expanded on it, by questioning and changing the norms which support and are conveyed by our spaces and behaviours. While the NML offers and seeks measurable standards, often necessary to create policies, standards and regulations, this thesis proposes a softer, experiential approach, arguing its value especially in planning for walking, as the strength of walking lies in its deeply personal, embodied and diverse character.

All in all, the project's approach requires challenging values of the fast paced society, which are often subconsciously embedded in approaches to walking or planning in general. Instead, projects which aim to promote walking should plan and design according to values of slowness like quality and locality (as advocated for by the Cittaslow movement).

While the proposed approach may take more time, it fosters deeper community support and anticipates long-term futures. In this slow, resilient urbanism, walking is a means towards healthier and happier lives, for current and next generations.

This calls for planners, designers, and citizens alike to reflect critically on what we want to spend our daily time and space on, recognising how small, changes in day-to-day life, such as walking, can contribute to broader societal shifts.

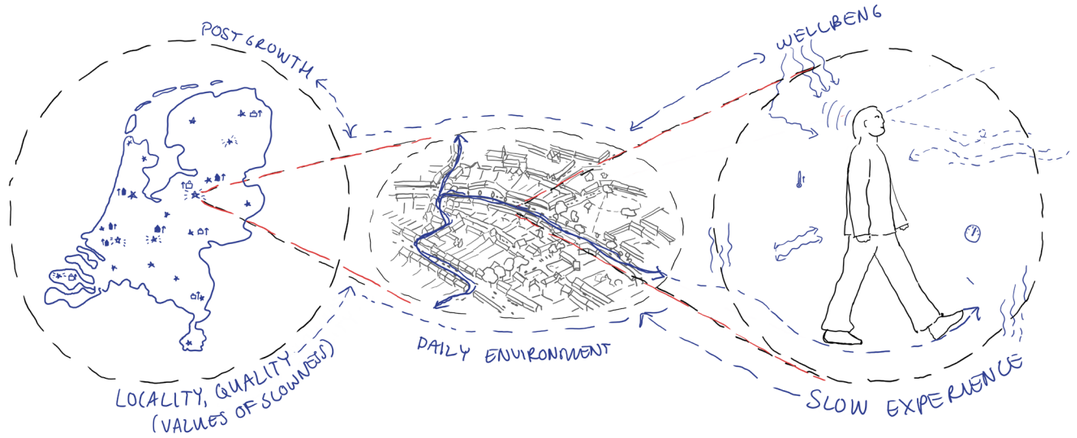


Figure 180
Approach to planning and design for walking

12.3. Limitations and further research

The project focused on society-wide, systemic change. This broad approach guided the choice to focus on 4 value-based personas. These personas were a valuable addition, but they did not capture the full diversity of (walking) experiences, needs and preferences. Further research should dedicate personas to groups with walking challenges, ages, and more localized identities, developed through additional participatory walks. Especially about walking difficulties, such as walking while blind, with dementia, at night, in-depth research would be valuable.

In regards to inclusivity, it is also important to emphasize walking as a means to improve wellbeing, rather than as an end goal in itself. Moreover, ethical questions about the legitimacy of policy interventions that aim to shape behaviors should be considered. While the intention is to support walking as a practice, it is important to remain cautious of overly prescriptive or top-down approaches. The project recognises the tension between enabling change and respecting individual agency, acknowledging that design and policy inevitably influence the materials, meanings, and competencies that structure daily life.

While the project's core principles are broadly applicable across the Netherlands, their international transferability is less certain. Walking cultures, societal values, and infrastructure vary widely; adaptation to other contexts requires careful attention to local conditions. Even within the Netherlands, the project is not comprehensive, as limited time allowed for research and designing for two case studies only. Expanding the research and design, for example engaging in additional case studies, even within the context of Zwolle and Heerde, would enrich the findings and improve applicability. For example the 'bloemkool' suburbs found in both Zwolle and Heerde, Zwolle's pre-war centre and the strips of houses scattered around Heerde would be interesting subcontexts to investigate.

Insights from these recommendations for further research could be integrated into the strategy framework of patterns, as this remains open and expandable. Similarly, these design tools, particularly the experience patterns, are primarily visual and could be expanded to incorporate multisensory dimensions, such as soundscapes and smellscapes, to better reflect the full experience of walking. The experience patterns are not exhaustive but intended to redirect attention and inspire action; they remain open for further development.

12.4. Reflection

This thesis explored walking for slowness in the Netherlands. The reflection addresses key aspects of the process, methods and relationship between research and design, as well as the project's alignment with the Urbanism master track and my own development as an urbanist.

PROCESS AND METHODS

The project combined a theory-heavy foundation with walking as a method and a case-study design approach. The theoretical foundation shaped the direction of the project, grounding it in both wide societal transformation and individual walking experiences, contrasting conventional approaches to planning for walking. The emphasis on grounded, real-world experiences informing the research and design aligned t the process itself with the values of slowness it promoted. Moreover, trying out a participatory approach via walking, opened my eyes to the different ways participation can be carried out and add both value and enjoyment in spatial planning.

Defining the scope, while balancing the wide approach of systemic change with the time-intensive nature of walking research, proved an ongoing challenge. The project evolved from a broad focus on walking in the Netherlands to a design proposal. The design phase enforced consolidation of the findings and bring institutional change, experiences, visioning and practical application together, in making abstract ideas tangible in space.

RESEARCH AND DESIGN

Insights of the literature study and following analysis pushed the design beyond infrastructure and space, into realms like social programs, policy shifts, and everyday practices, while integrating walking in into the process.

Grounding the design in the imagined lives and routes of personas, informed by literature and Walks&Talks, revealed the diverse complexities and possibilities of walking in daily life. The iterative process of moving between big-picture visions and real-life situations helped generate alternative futures, balancing this idealism with realism.

Design choices were guided by the principles of providing choices and options suited to different types of walkers, aiming for inclusion, while recognizing that no single solution fits all. In this, both small interventions like adding quality through greenery and as larger shifts toward mixed-use, decentralised environments, proved necessary.

The design exercise indicated how walking thrives in environments that allow for slower, local, quality-focused lifestyles, brought the project back to its initial problem statement and theory foundation. It emphasized how walking is not merely connected to slowness by experience, but moreover by the role values of Slowness should have in organizing both our spaces and lives.

PROJECT OUTPUTS

The project produced an action manual outlining a vision of an alternative future of wellbeing, achieved by a shift in planning for walking. It should inspire and empower all actors involved in creating walkable environments with the practical tools to do so. This aligns with the projects' call to question values, reflect critically on what we spend our daily time and space on and its recognition and encouragement of small changes in day-to-day life, such as walking, contributing to broader societal shifts.

URBANISM & URBANISTS

This project extended the boundaries of urbanism, highlighting the limitations of isolated spatial design solutions, advocating instead for cross-sectoral strategies that bridge planning, policy, and lived experience. Moreover, the project challenged the dominant practices and methods, such as the desk-based research my education and practical experience in the field of urbanism have been filled with. Proposing walking as a method not only offered a new way of engaging with space but also challenged the conventional boundaries of what is considered valid or 'academic' urban research and design.

For me as an urbanist, this project clarified the kind of practitioner I aim to become: one who values and enjoys taking time for grounded, participatory approaches and designs with humility, openness, and hope. Design process can even include real-world testing through iterative spatial experiments (such as tactical urbanism. These grounded methods of deep engagement aid in creating resilient, long-lasting projects, for which visionary thinking to anticipate faraway futures is essential as well. This type of 'Slow urbanism' takes time, but it is time well-spent, on proposals which will last longer.

Epilogue.

To answer my own question of why did I rarely walk in my daily life in Delft: because I had never given it a full try. Motivated by my research of the benefits of walking and inspired by the many ways of walking I uncovered through this project, I set off.

I walked everywhere for a week in November. And then continued. I began walking to the university, the supermarket, train stations and bus stops, coffee spots, shops, friends' homes, and , to nowhere in particular, to roam around, be outside, listen to music, feel the sun, the wind.I walked through one of the darkest, sunless Decembers since 1990, a surprisingly bright and early spring, and countless rainy May days, cozy under my umbrella. I discovered new routes to take, new places to walk to and through. I discovered how close everything not only was, but felt. I said yes to lunch walks, walk breaks, and every invitation to walk, from friends and family—and offered many in return. I averaged around 4 kilometres a day without; some days over 10, without trying or noticing .

Over the course of several months, I built a habit. One that wasn't broken by time stress in deadline periods, others biking, rain, or even pain.

More importantly, I began walking slower. To enjoy it. Which, I think, is the whole point. Relaxing, going at a leisurely pace: 'wandelen'.

When me and my sister complained about the length of a walk, my parents used to say, "wandelen is omlopen" (walking means taking a detour). In cities, walking can often feel like a detour, a slower option. But I'd like to add that when you walk, a detour is okay. Go the extra mile, take the long way. Walk a little slower. Enjoy it. *Wandel*.

Acknowledgements

This thesis was a challenging, rewarding, and often surprising journey, a path I didn't walk alone.

The project was both an academic and a personal process. In many ways, it reshaping my thoughts on walking as a professional, but also in my own life, creating new views and habits I will carry with me for years to come. This would not have been possible without the support, insights, and time generously offered by many people. I am truly thankful to everyone who contributed in big and small ways.

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Appendix A:

HREC approval

Date 06-Jun-2025
Correspondence hrec@tudelft.nl

Human Research Ethics Committee TU Delft
(http://hrec.tudelft.nl)

Visiting address
Jaffalaan 5 (building 31)
2628 BX Delft

Postal address
P.O. Box 5015 2600 GA Delft
The Netherlands

Ethics Approval Application: Steps towards Slowness: Spatial strategies to promote Walking for wellbeing in a Post-growth future in the Netherlands
Applicant: Padt, Arjanne van der

Dear Arjanne van der Padt,

It is a pleasure to inform you that your application mentioned above has been approved.

Thanks very much for your submission to the HREC which has been approved.

In addition to any specific conditions or notes, the HREC provides the following standard advice to all applicants:
• In light of recent tax changes, we advise that you confirm any proposed remuneration of research subjects with your faculty contract manager before going ahead.
• Please make sure when you carry out your research that you confirm contemporary covid protocols with your faculty HSE advisor, and that ongoing covid risks and precautions are flagged in the informed consent - with particular attention to this where there are physically vulnerable (eg: elderly or with underlying conditions) participants involved.
• Our default advice is not to publish transcripts or transcript summaries, but to retain these privately for specific purposes/checking; and if they are to be made public then only if fully anonymised and the transcript/summary itself approved by participants for specific purpose.
• Where there are collaborating (including funding) partners, appropriate formal agreements including clarity on responsibilities, including data ownership, responsibilities and access, should be in place and that relevant aspects of such agreements (such as access to raw or other data) are clear in the Informed Consent.

Good luck with your research!

Sincerely,

Consent Form

INFORMEND CONSENT FORM – WANDELINTERVIEWS VOOR HET PROJECT 'STEPS TOWARDS SLOWNESS'

Msc Thesis in Urbanism (TU Delft, faculteit Bouwkunde)

U wordt uitgenodigd om deel te nemen aan een onderzoek genaamd 'Steps towards Slowness' (Stappen naar vertraging), een Master Thesis project uitgevoerd door Arjanne van der Padt, Msc student aan de faculteit Bouwkunde van de TU Delft.

Het project heeft als doel om ruimtelijke, sociale en politieke acties en strategieën te ontwikkelen, om lopen in Nederland te promoten. Het onderzoek promoot niet alleen meer wandelen, maar ook het maken van leuke, interessante trips, waarvoor het opdoen van veel wandelervaringen essentieel is. Hiervoor zal de onderzoeker, Arjanne, veel wandelen. Alleen en met deelnemers aan het onderzoek, in 'wandelinterviews'. Deelnemers wordt gevraagd om de onderzoeker mee te nemen naar waar U zich dagelijks in het projectgebied Midden-Delfland & Delft of Heerde & Zwolle bevindt of heeft bevonden, waar U (heen) loopt, of juist niet. De duur van het onderzoek is afhankelijk van de voorkeuren en capaciteit van de deelnemer (van 1 uur tot een halve of hele dag).

De wandelingen met deelnemers worden gebruikt om de diversiteit in wandel voorkeuren en -ervaringen, en de realistische haalbaarheid van wandelen in het dagelijks leven te ontdekken. Hiervoor wordt u als deelnemer gevraagd om informatie over hoe uw dagelijks leven eruit ziet, in wat voor type gebied u woont en wat uw loopgewoontes en voorkeuren zijn en persoonlijke informatie zoals geslacht en leeftijd te delen. Het wandelinterview wordt opgenomen en getranscribeerd.

Zoals bij elke online activiteit is het risico van een databreuk aanwezig. Wij doen ons best om uw antwoorden vertrouwelijk te houden.
We minimaliseren de risico's door de opnames en transcripten worden niet openbaar gemaakt. Alleen samenvattingen van de wandelinterviews worden in de thesis gepubliceerd. Na het maken van de samenvattingen worden de opnames en transcripten verwijderd. De samenvattingen anonimiseren de informatie, door het weglaten van namen (alleen leeftijdsgroep en geslacht worden benoemd) en geografische locatie.
Dit formulier, wat uw naam en contactgegevens bevat, wordt online veilig (in TU Delft server) opgeslagen, op een andere locatie dan de data van de interviews. Dit formulier wordt verwijderd nadat het onderzoek is afgerond (juli 2025).

Uw deelname aan dit onderzoek is volledig vrijwillig, en u kunt zich elk moment terugtrekken zonder reden op te geven. U bent vrij om vragen niet te beantwoorden.
De transcripten en samenvattingen wordt met u gedeeld ter goedkeuring, als u dit wil. Als u meer vragen heeft of updates over het onderzoek wilt ontvangen, kan u contact opnemen met de onderzoeker:

- Arjanne van der Padt

Door het tekenen van dit formulier stemt u in met het gebruik van de data die wordt verzamelt tijdens het wandelinterview, voor het project 'Steps towards Slowness', zoals beschreven in dit formulier.

P. 1 /4

	Ja	Nee
A: ALGEMENE OVEREENKOMST – ONDERZOEKSDOELEN, DEELNEMERSTAKEN EN VRIJWILLIGE DEELNAME		
1. Ik heb de informatie over het onderzoek gedateerd __ /__ /____ , gelezen en begrepen, of deze is aan mij voorgelezen. Ik heb de mogelijkheid gehad om vragen te stellen over het onderzoek en mijn vragen zijn naar tevredenheid beantwoord.	□	□
2. Ik doe vrijwillig mee aan dit onderzoek, en ik begrijp dat ik kan weigeren vragen te beantwoorden en mij op elk moment kan terugtrekken uit de studie, zonder een reden op te hoeven geven.	□	□
3. Ik begrijp dat mijn deelname aan het onderzoek de volgende punten betekent: - praten met de onderzoeker tijdens een wandeling, waarbij het gesprek wordt opgenomen en eventueel foto's en tekeningen van de omgeving worden gemaakt door de onderzoeker - hierbij wandelen we in mijn dagelijkse omgeving, en deel ik informatie over hoe mijn dagelijks leven eruit ziet, waar ik woon, wat mijn loopgewoontes en voorkeuren zijn en mijn geslacht en leeftijd. - De opnames worden in de week na de wandeling getranscribeerd. De opnames en het transcript worden binnen na het einde van het onderzoek verwijderd (juli 2025). Alleen de geanonimiseerde samenvatting van het interview wordt gedeeld in het report. Het report wordt gepubliceerd op de Repository van de TU Delft (openbaar toegankelijk).	□	□
4. Ik geef toestemming voor het maken van geluidsopnames tijdens de wandeling, en het transcriberen en samenvatten van deze opnames.	□	□
5. Ik begrijp dat mijn deelname aan het onderzoek niet financieel wordt gecompenseerd.	□	□
6. Ik begrijp dat de studie Juli 2025 eindigt.	□	□
B: POTENTIELE RISICO'S (EN DATABESCHERMING)		
7. Ik begrijp dat mijn deelname de volgende risico's her identificatie van mij als deelnemer of fysiek of mentaal ongemak met zich meebrengt. Ik begrijp dat deze risico's worden geminimaliseerd doordat ik mij op elk moment kan terugtrekken uit de studie, vrij ben om vragen niet te beantwoorden en alleen geanonimiseerd samenvattingen van de interviews openbaar worden gedeeld.	□	□
8. Ik begrijp dat deelname aan het onderzoek het verzamelen van specifieke persoonlijk identificeerbare informatie (PII) inhoudt, zoals naam, e-mailadres, evenals bijbehorende persoonlijk identificeerbare onderzoeksgegevens (PIRD) zoals mijn ervaring met lopen in Heerde-Zwolle en mijn dagelijkse routines. Ik begrijp dat er in het geval van een databreuk potentiële her identificatie- en reputatierisico's kunnen zijn.	□	□
9. Ik begrijp dat er stappen worden ondernomen om het risico van een databreuk te minimaliseren, waarbij mijn identiteit word beschermd, zoals het apart opslaan van persoonlijke	□	□

P. 2 /4

gegevens van dit formulier en de data die wordt verzameld tijdens de wandeling, slechts essentiële persoonlijke informatie verzamelen tijdens het onderzoek, het verwijderen van de interview opnames en transcripten nadat het onderzoek is afgerond en het anonimiseren en samenvatten van de interviews.		
10. Ik begrijp dat de persoonlijke informatie die over mij verzameld wordt en mij kan identificeren, zoals mijn naam, email adres en woonplaats, niet gedeeld worden buiten het studieteam.	□	□
11. Ik begrijp dat de persoonlijke data die over mij verzameld wordt, vernietigd wordt nadat het project is afgerond. De verwachtte einddatum van het project is eind juni 2025. Ik begrijp dat indien het project langer duurt dan verwacht, de persoonlijke data langer bewaard moet worden. Ik wordt hierover geïnformeerd en wordt opnieuw gevraagd om toestemming voor het gebruiken van de data.	□	□
C: ONDERZOEKS PUBLICATIE, VERSPREIDING EN TOEPASSING		
12. Ik begrijp dat na het onderzoek de geanonimiseerde informatie gebruikt zal worden in de Master Thesis, die wordt gepubliceerd op de openbare Repository van de TU Delft en mogelijk gebruikt kan worden in wetenschappelijke artikelen of aanbevelingen voor beleidsveranderingen.	□	□
13. Ik geef toestemming om mijn antwoorden, ideeën of andere bijdrages anoniem te quoten in resulterende producten.	□	□
D: (LANGETERMIJN) OPSLAG VAN DATA, TOEGANG TOT DATA		
14. Ik geef toestemming om de geanonimiseerde data (interview samenvattingen in het report) die over mij verzameld worden gearchiveerd worden in de TU Delft Repository opdat deze gebruikt kunnen worden voor toekomstig onderzoek en onderwijs.	□	□
15. Ik begrijp dat de toegang tot deze repository openbaar is.	□	□

E: EXPERT INTERVIEWS	**N.v.t.**	**Ja**	**Nee**
16. Ik geef toestemming dat mijn voornaam wordt benoemd in de samenvattingen van het wandelinterview. Ik begrijp dat de interviews niet worden geanonimiseerd, wat leidt tot her identificatie (zoals benoemd in vraag 7).	□	□	□
17. Ik geef toestemming dat mijn achternaam wordt benoemd in de samenvattingen van het wandelinterview. Ik begrijp dat de interviews niet worden geanonimiseerd, wat leidt tot her identificatie (zoals benoemd in vraag 7).	□	□	□
18. Ik geef toestemming dat mijn professionele functie (namelijk: _____ _____) wordt benoemd in de samenvattingen	□	□	□

P. 3 /4

van het wandelinterview. Ik begrijp dat de interviews niet worden geanonimiseerd, wat leidt tot her identificatie (zoals benoemd in vraag 7).			
19. Ik begrijp dat hierdoor de vragen over anonimiseren (vraag 12,13) vervallen.	□	□	□

Signatures

_____ _____ _____
Naam deelnemer Handtekening Datum

Ik, de onderzoeker, verklaar dat ik de informatie en het instemmingsformulier correct aan de potentiële deelnemer heb voorgelezen en, naar het beste van mijn vermogen, heb verzekerd dat de deelnemer begrijpt waar hij/zij vrijwillig mee instemt.

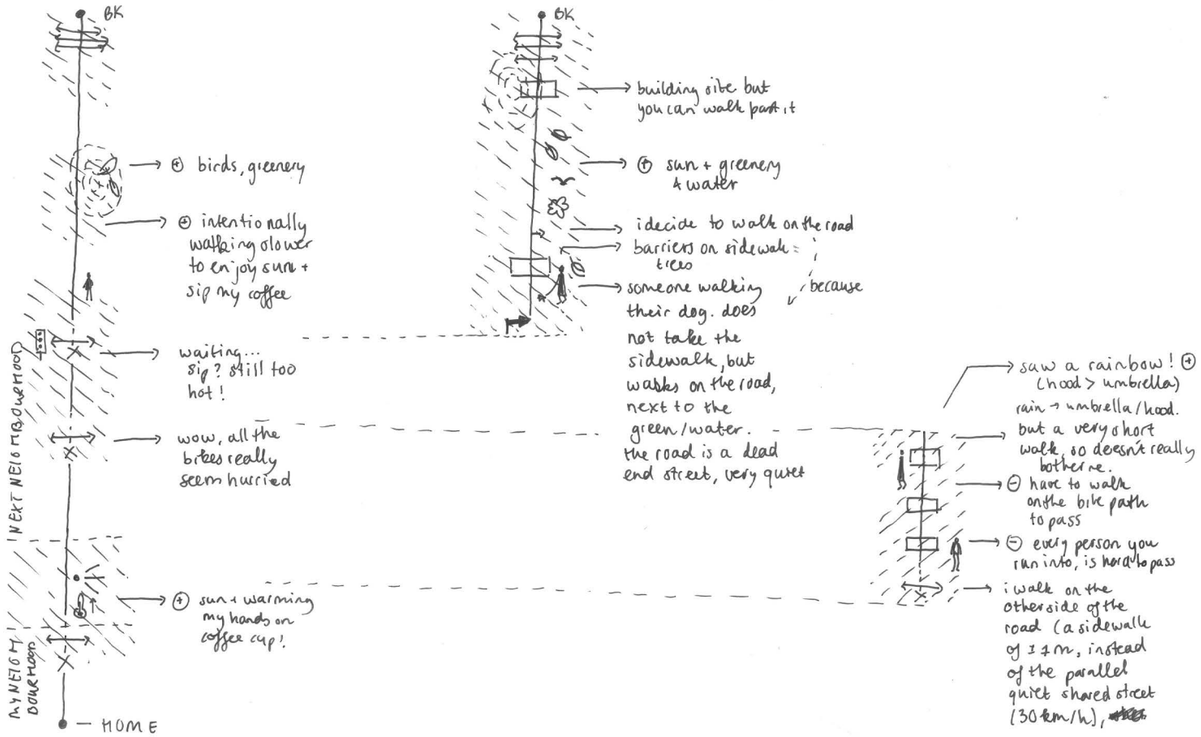
Arjanne van der Padt _____ _____
Naam onderzoeker Handtekening Datum

Contactgegevens van de onderzoeker voor verdere informatie:

Arjanne van der Padt
+31 6 42041924
a.vanderpadt@student.tudelft.nl
Arjanne.vanderpadt@gmail.com

P. 4 /4

Appendix B: Daily walking abstracts



1.1 TO WORK/SCHOOL #2
walk to BK
freq: 4-5x/week
time: ~~12 min~~, start 8.30 - 9.30
alteration: with coffee

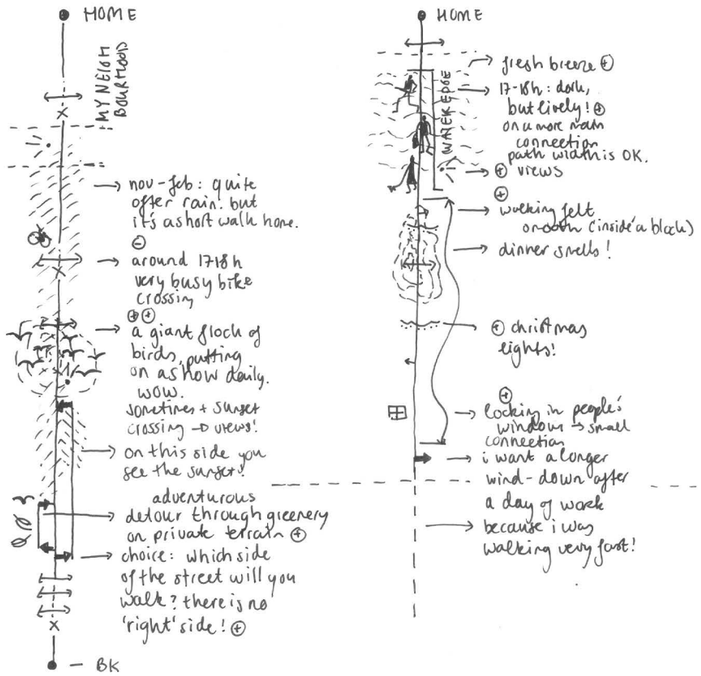
INVENTORY

1.1 TO WORK/SCHOOL #3
walk to BK
freq: 4-5x/week
time: 10-12 min, start 8.30-9.30
alteration: different route!

INVENTORY

1.1 TO WORK/SCHOOL #4
walk to BK
freq: 4-5x/week
time: 10-12 min, start 8.30-9.30
alteration: different route

INVENTORY



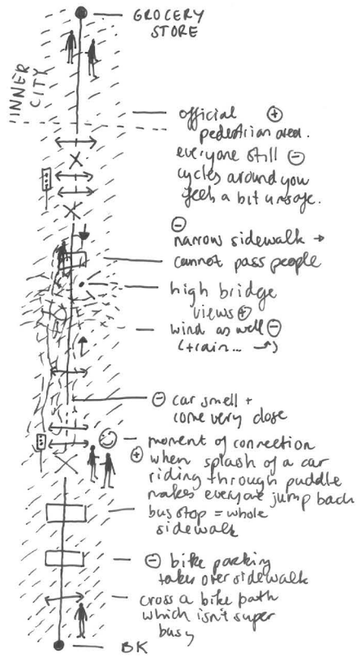
1.2 TO WORK/SCHOOL #1
walk from BK to home
freq: 4-5x/week
time: 10-12 min, start 16-18 h
alteration: standard

1.2 FROM WORK/SCHOOL #2
walk from BK to home
freq: 4-5x/week
time: 10-12 min, start 16-18 h
alteration: ~~60~~ min extra 5-10

1.2 FROM WORK/SCHOOL #3
walk from BK to home

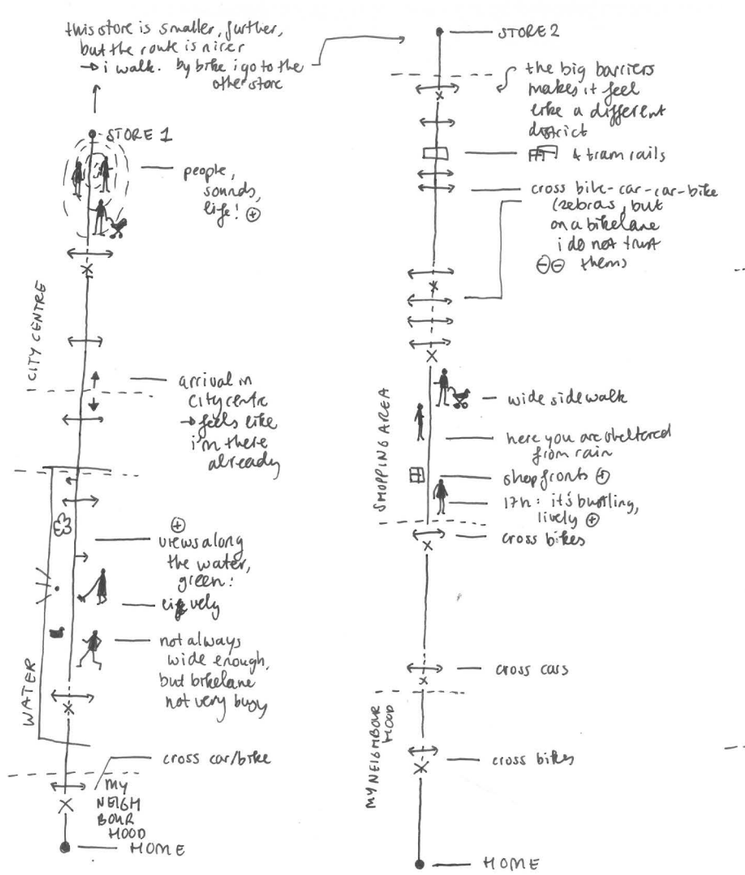
alteration: +15 min.

Appendix B: Daily walking abstracts



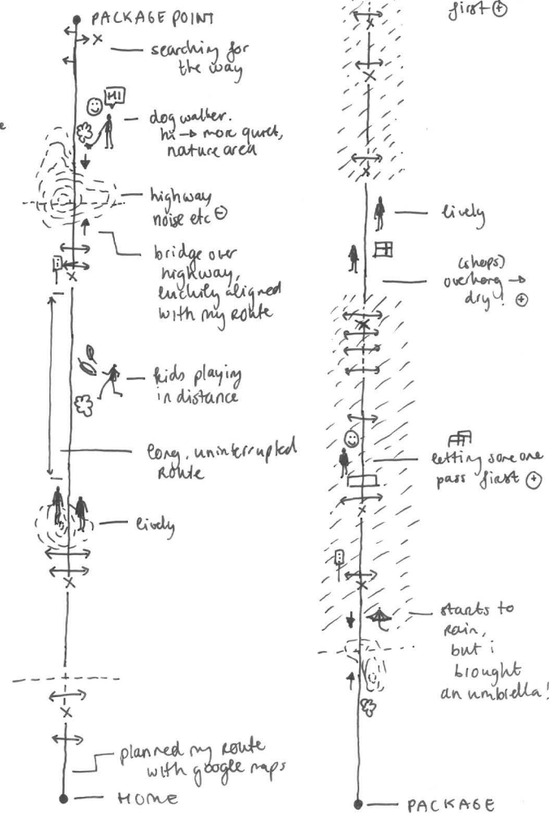
CHORES:

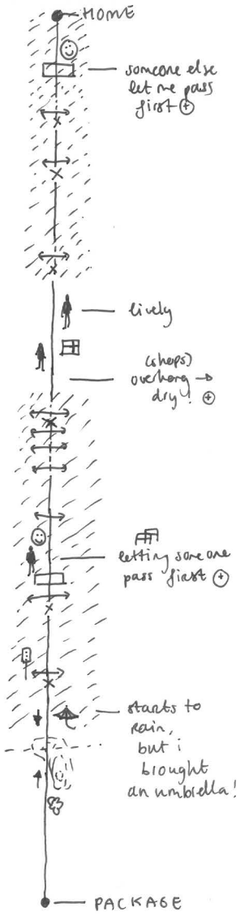
1.3 FROM WORK/SCHOOL / 3.1 GROCERIES #1
walk from BK to groceries
freq: 1x/week
time: 10 minutes, start 17-18h
alteration: standard alteration: from BK
INVENTORY:



3.1 CHORES: GROCERIES #2
walk from home to store 1
freq: 1-3x/week
time: 17 min
alteration: ~~(Hamburg closed)~~ standard
INVENTORY:

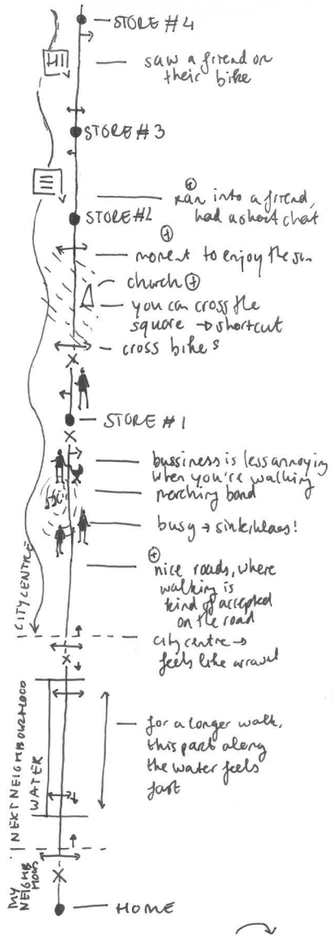
3.1 CHORES: GROCERIES #3
walk from home to store 2
freq: 1-3x/week
time: 15 min
alteration: standard
INVENTORY:

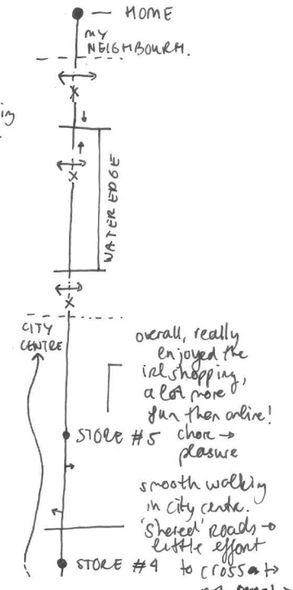




3.2 CHORES: PICK UP A PACKAGE/PACKAGE → HOME
walk towards a package-point
freq: 2x/month
time: 40 min (there & back)

INVENTORY:





3.3 CHORES: SHOPPING / 2.1 LEISURE: SHOPPING
walk for sinterklaas shopping in Delft
freq 1x/year
time: 2 hours?

INVENTORY:

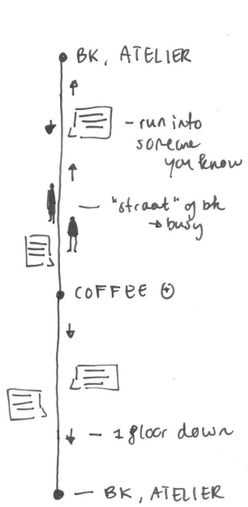
Appendix B: Daily walking abstracts

1.4 DURING WORK/SCHOOL #1
a lunch walk from BK, in a park
freq: 3x/week
time: 15 min

INVENTORY:
→ FRIENDS

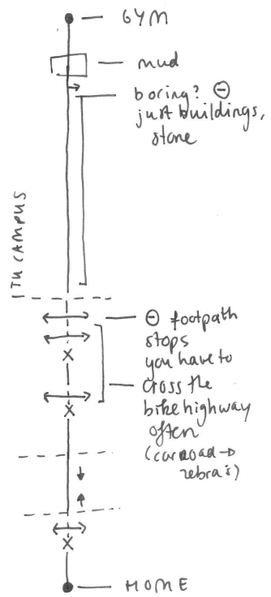
1.4 DURING WORK/SCHOOL #2
a walk around BK
freq: 1x/week
time: 10 min

INVENTORY



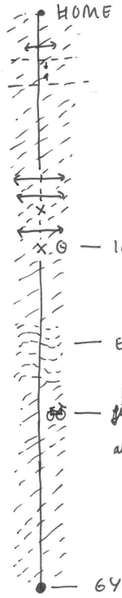
1.4 DURING WORK/SCHOOL #3
inside walk, in BK
freq: 3x/week
time: 10 min, ↕ 3 floors

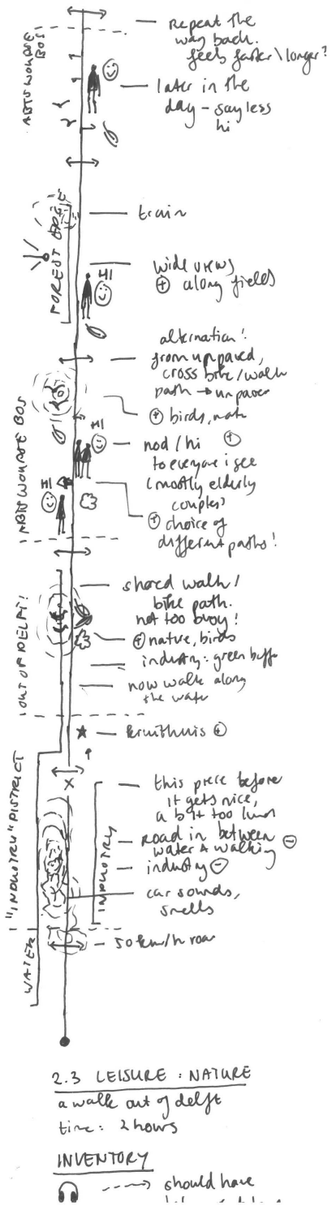
INVENTORY



2.2 LEISURE: SPORTS
a walk to the gym
freq: 2-3x/week
time: 20 min

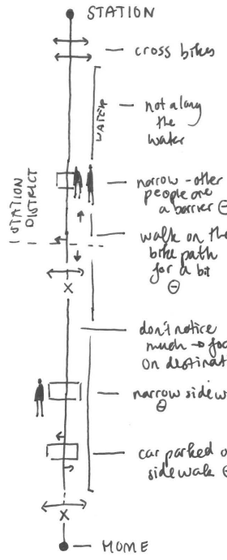
INVENTORY



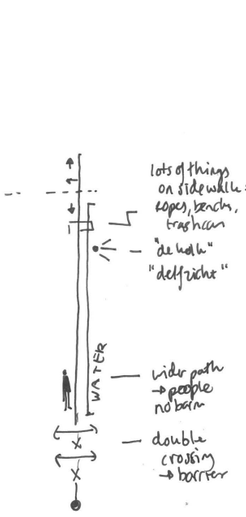


2.3 LEISURE: NATURE
a walk out of delft
time: 2 hours

INVENTORY
---→ should have

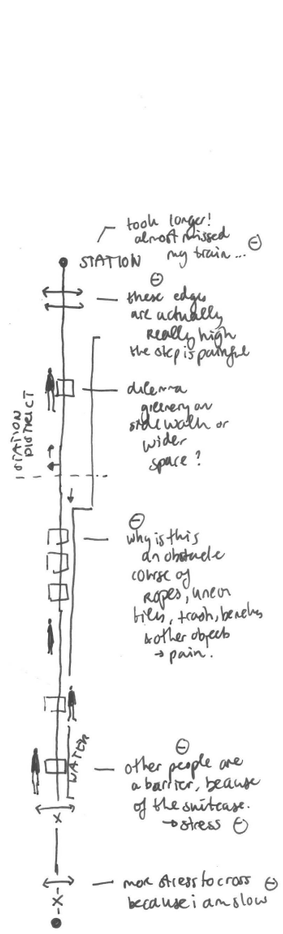


5.1 TRIP CHAINING: DELFT #1
a walk to Delft station
freq: 0-2x/week
time: 10-12 min
alteration: standard

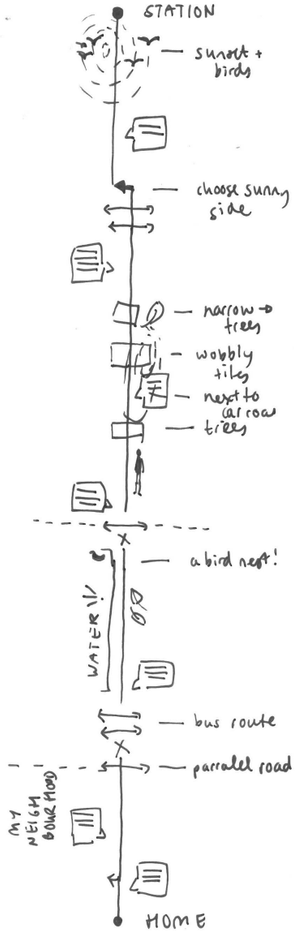


5.1 TRIP CHAINING: DELFT #2
a walk to Delft station
freq: 0-2x/week
time: 10-12 min
alteration: walking on the other side of the bike

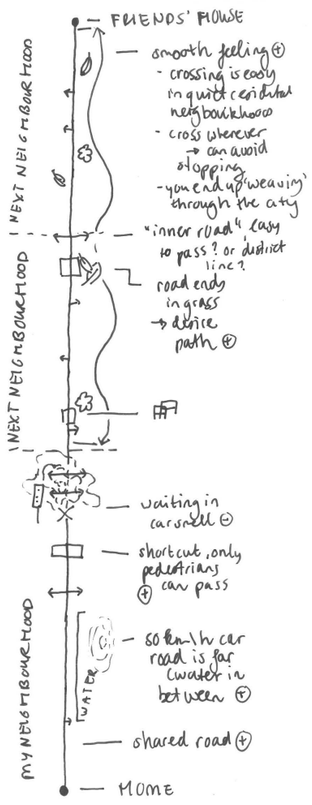
Appendix B: Daily walking abstracts



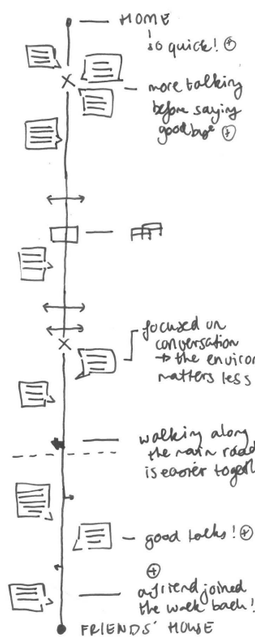
5.1 TRIP CHAINING: DELFT #3
a walk to deeps station
freq: 0-2x/week
time: 15 min
alteration: with back pain, an a suitcase



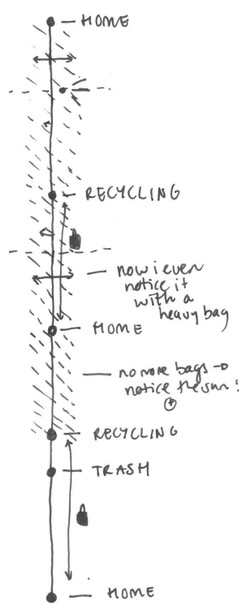
5.2 TRIP CHAINING: APELDOORN
a walk from home to the station.
time: 10-12 min
freq: 0-2x/week



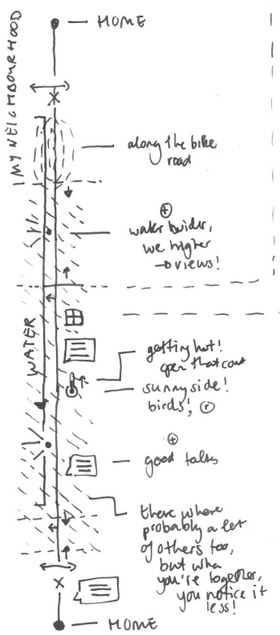
5.1 SOCIAL
a walk to a friend's house in Apeldoorn
time: 20 min, start at 16.00
INVENTORY



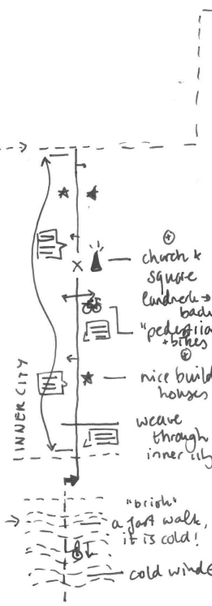
5.2 SOCIAL: WITH FRIEND #1
walk with a friend (back) from a friend's house
time: 25 min, at 0.00
INVENTORY



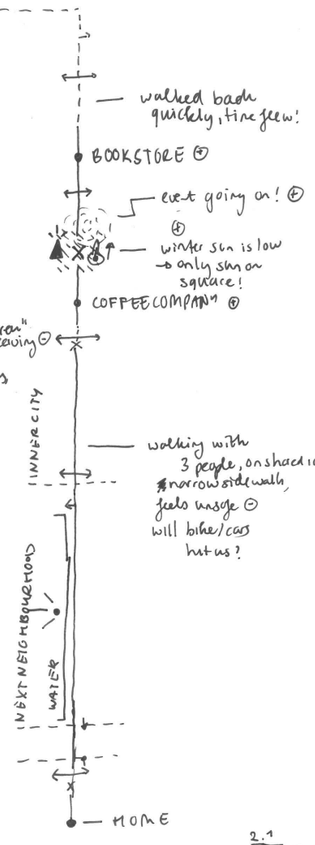
3.4. CHORES: TRASH
walk to take out the trash
freq: 1x/week
time: 10 min
INVENTORY:



5.3 SOCIAL: AROUND THE BLOCK #1
a walk around the block with my roommate.
freq: 1x/week
time: 10 min, sometimes 20h, sometimes 11h ... etc
INVENTORY
yummy coffee!



5.3 SOCIAL #2
a walk with my roommate
freq: 1x/week
time: 35 min
alteration: decided on a longer walk



5.3 SOCIAL #3 / 2.1 LEISURE #2
a walk for coffee with roommates
freq 1x/week
time: 45 min
alteration: for coffee!
INVENTORY
+2x roommate

Appendix C: Patterns

Space (SP)

front back

SP.01

A BIG, FULL-GROWN TREE

An old, big tree can transform a bare, unattractive area into a place where you want to walk.

It is possible to move trees with a root ball diameter of more than 7 metres, and weight of more than 70 000 kilograms. Old, large trees can also be landmarks to orient yourself towards while walking. Moreover, they stimulate the walking experience by sound, smell and feel (birds, rustling leaves, atmospheric feel).

sources: Barton et al., 2009; Berman et al., 2008; Martens et al., 2011; Song et al., 2018
img: https://hoefakker.com/boomspecialisten/bomen-verplanten/

RELATED: SO.01, PO.02, SP.02, 20, EX.28

SP.02

QUICK GREEN

Adding more greenery to an area, can quickly make the walking experience more enjoyable. This includes moss, wildflowers or weeds, fast growing trees (such as willow, birch or plane trees), a grass mat, full-grown trees or moveable, temporary green.

sources: Barton et al., 2009; Berman et al., 2008; Martens et al., 2011; Song et al., 2018

RELATED: SO.01, SO.04, PO.02, SP.01, 03, 04, 20, EX.27, 28, 29, 31, 32

SP.07

WALK RIGHT THROUGH

Pedestrians should be able to go anywhere, as this adds to the walking experience. It can make a walk feel free, short and interesting. This includes making private terrains accessible, such as sports fields, work or industry campuses and cemeteries, or walking through a building. Pedestrian-only connections and short cuts give an edge to walking and to realize The Walking Norm (PO.01)

sources: Chaudhuri, 2025; Van Dijk, 2024

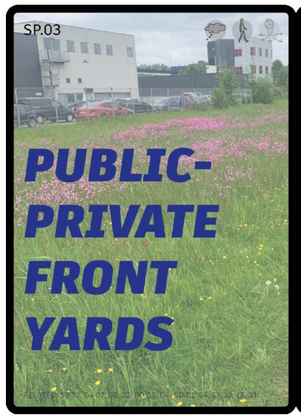
RELATED:
PO.01, PO.04, SO.04, SP.03, 05, 08, 12 , EX.03, 04, 09, 10, 12, 23

SP.08

OPTIONS

There should be multiple options of routes connecting daily destinations. This keeps it interesting. Routes can consist of greener options, fully pedestrianized routes, routes which are quieter or livelier, wider or narrower, etc. Moreover, they should accommodate the different movement patterns of diverse lifestyles. An design exercise where daily routes of different inhabitants are explored is recommended.

RELATED: PO.07, SO.05, SP.03, 05, 07, 09, 14, 15



SP.03

PUBLIC-PRIVATE FRONT YARDS

We often walk along private terrains. But what if they contributed to a nice walking experience, or are accessible to walk, both for users of the plot and passerby's? Especially big private terrains, such as workplaces or schools. The type of public-private front yard can fit the purpose of the place (more playful, room to take a break, etc). A miniature example are the Dutch 'voorstoepjes', a small strip of seating/planters in front of people's homes.

RELATED: SP.02, 04 07, 08, 12, PO.03, 04, SO.01, 04, EX.10, 13, 31

SP.04

STICKY FACADES

Public spaces become lively and inviting when buildings are designed with "sticky facades": deep, layered, and active frontages that encourage people to stop, linger, and engage. Instead of flat, closed-off walls, sticky facades feature elements like shop windows, seating areas, awnings, steps, art, displays, cafés, or greenery that create human-scale interest and invite interaction. These active edges extend the building's presence into the public realm, blurring the line between inside and outside, and making streets more walkable, vibrant, and sociable.

sources: Gehl, 2013; Speck, 2013

RELATED: SP.02, 03, 12, 21, SO.06 EX.31, 34

SP.09

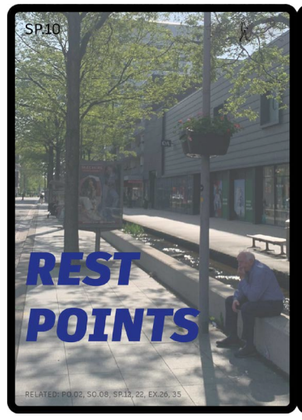
WIDTH BRINGS OPPORTUNITIES

The width of a pedestrian area determines what can happen: will people walk next to each other, or are they forced to walk in line? Will parents and kids walk here together? Will it be a busy route, or a quieter connection? This should reflect the necessities of the area and nearby destinations. Width is dependent on the surroundings. On an unpaved path one might use the grass around it as well, whereas a path next to a quay makes the 50cm next to the water unused as well. Work with 'real' widths and their different uses, for example:

A path of 30cm can be adventurous. On a sidewalk of 3m, one person can walk next to someone who is walking with their bike. A 6m wide street can turn into a lively, maybe even shared boulevard.

sources: CROW, 2023 + fieldwork

RELATED: PO.01, SO. SP.08, 14, EX.40, 41, 42, EX.SPACE

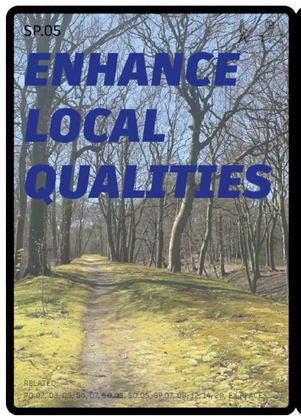


SP.10

REST POINTS

Rest points take away barriers to walking. They can be small and big: from benches, a free, public toilet, trash can or a water point, to forest cafés and places to réfuges in nature. Consistency in where rest points can be found helps people find them. Place them around daily places which can be found across cities, such as schools, supermarkets, bus stops or churches. Rest points should be usable in all weather conditions (consider: material, colour, shelter, publicness). Private rest amenities can be opened to the public. For example "Die Nette Toiletten" gave stickers to gastronomy owners in Germany/ Switzerland, that opened their toilets to the public, for free.

RELATED: PO.02, SO.08, SP.12, 22, EX.26, 35



SP.05

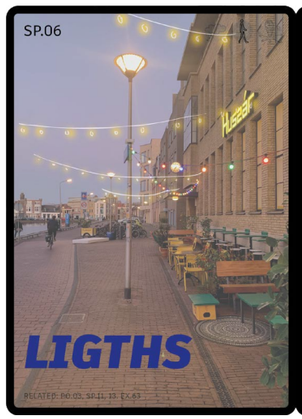
ENHANCE LOCAL QUALITIES

Many attractive spaces already exist. These should be accessible to pedestrians.

This can include opening up private watersides to the public, creating walking routes along dykes, and identifying small green spaces for strolling. Highlight historic buildings, trees, and other features that enrich the walking experience, and consider incorporating shortcuts or laneways to improve connectivity. Especially finding spaces with views, either because of openness or height differences (old trainways, highways, dykes..), is exciting in a flat country like the Netherlands.

The qualitative localities are best discovered through walking or engaging with locals who know the area well.

RELATED:
PO.02, 03, 05, 06, 07, SO.03, SO.05, SP.07, 08, 12, 14, 20, EX.PLACE



SP.06

LIGHTS

Well-lit walkway feels safer and more 'gezellig' (cozy, fun). It keeps people walking throughout different kinds of weather. It can also attract more people to specific walking routes.

RELATED: PO.03, SP.11, 13. EX.63

SP.11

SPATIAL CONTINUITIY

Continuity in the material and heigh of pedestrian spaces and infrastructures, especially at crossings, makes walking easier, for people of all ages and abilities. In 5 years, one city can easily raise all its zebras and road exits to create continuity for pedestrians. Moreover, continuity can contribute to wayfinding efforts.

sources: te Brömmelstroet & Verkade, 2020

RELATED:
PO.01, 03, SO.03, SP.06, 15, EX.29, EX.28, EX.26, EX.MATERIAL

SP.12

ARCHITECTURE FOR WALKING

Buildings can contribute to walkability and walking experiences in several ways: they can provide shortcuts in or around the building, an interesting sight (both from far away (landmark) and close by (detailing), or shelter (arcades, public ground floors, pavilions, building orientation), destinations and rest points.

sources: Heatherwick, 2023; Lenzholzer, 2013; Speck, 2018

RELATED: PO.04, SO.08, SP.03, 04, 05, 07, 10, 13, 15 EX.01, 02, 05, 08

Appendix C: Patterns

Space (SP)

front back

SP.13

WEATHERING

Weather plays a significant role in how walking feels. Preferred conditions for walking are often dry, mild, calm and sunny, but not too hot. While we cannot control the weather, we can design spaces that make walking comfortable in a wide range of conditions, by offering shelter from wind or rain and access to sunlight and heat relief. This can be done by adding public overed spaces, flexible canopies (textile, (large) deciduous trees), green facades, water elements (streams, fountains, misting) and choices in material (density, albedo, permeability). Walking to experience specific microclimate conditions and overall ambiance is essential. Cultural attitudes toward weather matter. Normalizing walking in all seasons and conditions and purposefully experiencing weather conditions, helps adopt a resilient attitude towards weather.

sources: Böcker et al., 2016; Lenzholzer, 2015; Meijering et al., 2024

RELATED: PO. SO.07, SO.06, SP.06, 12, EX.57, 58, 59, 60, 61

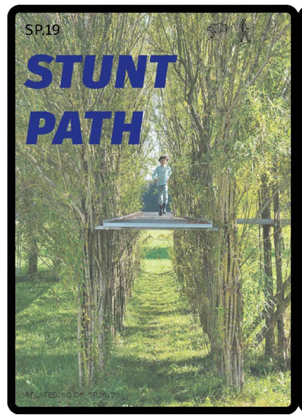
SP.14

QUALITY EDGES

A pedestrian does not move according to traffic flows and speed. There are no main, sub- and tertiary roads. There are, however, routes and paths that are clear, and often used in (mental) routes (planning), that you use to orient yourself towards, that you route might end or start with, or you even prefer. For example the edges of a park, or a water edge. Both are clear and qualitative routes, which help in orienting yourself, and they are strong in your mental map. They can be, for example, an edge of a park, edge of water, edge of district. Or a wider path, which is straight and has a good connection to other routes.

sources: Hospers, 2010; Lynch, 1964) + fieldwork

RELATED: SO.03, SP.05, 08, 09, EX.06, 07



SP.19

STUNT PATH

A cool path can be walking destinations or enhance the walking experience. They can be green, such as the Baubotanik Footbridge (in Wald-Ruhestetten, GER), bottom-up initiatives and a city connector, such as the 'Luchtsingel' (in Rotterdam, NL) or a piece of art, such as the moses bridge (in Bergen op Zoom, NL) or 'on water' (in Münster, GER).

img: https://www.u-l-a.eu/project/baubotanischer-steg/

RELATED: SO.06, SP.16, 20

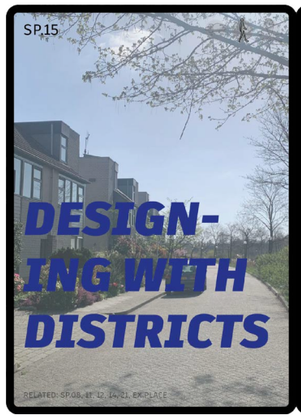
SP.20

BYE CAR, HELLO (QUALITY) SPACE

A lot of our space is dedicated to cars: parking lots, highways and local roads, car dealerships, gas stations and more. In total, in the Netherlands is more space dedicated to parking than dwelling (for each car, there are 3 parking spaces). Moreover, these car-centred spaces are unfriendly for anything which is not a car, such as walkers. These spaces of going should be transformed into quality spaces, temporarily or permanently. This encourages walking and discourages driving. For example, breaking up the car network and reducing parking space breaks motonormativity and takes drivers off the road (and therefore even tackles congestion). Interventions such as lowered or underground highways also offer opportunities to create more qualitative, walkable space. However, they do continue the narrative of motonormativity.

sources: Bauer, 2023; Cairns et al., 2002; te Brömmelstroet, 2022; Verkade, 2018

RELATED: PO.01, 03, 07, SO.01, 04, 08, SP.01, 02, 05, 16, 17, 19, 21, EX.14



SP.15

DESIGNING WITH DISTRICTS

Designing with districts can make walks feels smooth and fast. Within a district, one walks smoothy, as there are not too many nodes or crossings. Not having to pass many districts can make a walk feel shorter, while arriving in the district of the destination can make a walker feel like they have arrived already, which, in turn, makes the trip feel even shorter. A district can be a neighbourhood, like the old city centre, or a park, or another area, which is coherent in appearance. Designers should safeguard a balance between coherence and variety within the look and use of a district.

sources: Hospers, 2010; Lynch, 1964) + fieldwork

RELATED: SP.08, 11, 12, 14, 21, EX.PLACE

SP.16

PLAY

Elements of play, both for grown-ups and kids, can be walking destinations or enhance the walking experience. Play can include swings, playgrounds, adventurous detours or fun crossings. Especially around schools, this can encourage walking.

RELATED: PO. SO.04, SP.19, 21 , EX. 39

SP.21

MIX-USE

Mixed-use places, offer a good context for walkers, as destinations are closer. However, also the quality of the environment, not merely numbers of inhabitants, jobs and amenities, is crucial.

In practice, safeguarding and creating a mix of uses means thoughtfully adding housing, workplaces, or amenities—depending on the local context—to create a balanced mix, where there are enough jobs and amenities for current inhabitants, or enough houses and daily amenities for the current workers. This supports the goal of creating places to live, not leave.

sources: Soderstrom, 2008; Speck, 2018

RELATED:
PO.01, 03, SO.08, SP.04, 15, 16, 17, 23, EX.33, 34, 38, 39, 26, 43, EX.PLACE

SP.22

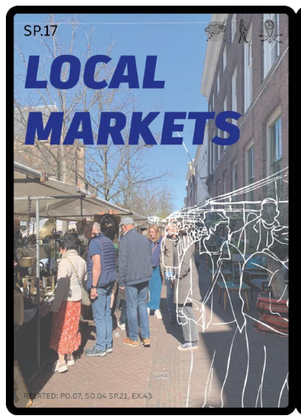
FREQUENT AND QUALITY PT

Walking and public transport complement each other. In a chain trip, combining PT with walking, longer distances are covered in an enjoyable and slow way. Moreso, the environment along PT routes often is walkable as well, much more so than around a highway (with constant noise, air pollution). Still, walkability should come first. Places should be easy to reach on foot without needing to travel far.

For people to use PT more, we need high frequency and clear routes (strive for the "network-effect") and qualitative surroundings. The catchment area of a PT stop increases by 70% when the area around it is perceived as nice to walk in. Transit stops should amplify urban life: place them near cafés, pocket parks, nature areas, and other attractive public spaces—so people want to be there, even beyond the commute.

sources: Hillenhütter, 2016; Nielsen & Lange, 2005; Speck, 2018

RELATED: PO.10, SO.03, SP.10, EX.14, 15



SP.17

LOCAL MARKETS

Local markets can be walking destinations, enhance the walking experience and make a chore into an enjoyable experience. Their locality and potential for seasonality, also contributes to a wider, slower and local lifestyle, which both promotes walking and is promoted by walking.

RELATED: PO.07, SO.04 SP.21, EX.43

SP.18

ANIMALS

Animals can be walking destinations or enhance the walking experience. Certain animals can even contribute to maintenance (such as sheep) or local food production, linking a city or village to its surrounding farms.

img: https://tvmaastricht.nl/nieuws/artikel/schapen-door-de-binnenstad

RELATED: PO.02, SO.04, EX.33

SP.23

LOGISTICS

To support walkability, logistics should move away from centralized, large-scale systems toward smaller, more locally distributed models. Think neighborhood hubs, cargo bikes, and multi-level solutions that fit within pedestrianized or shared environments. Qualitative space should always go to walkers. This approach keeps reduces traffic and emissions, and brings services closer and supports daily life without relying on cars.

RELATED: PO.07, PO.03, 07, SO. SP.07, 21, EX.10, 13, 14

SP.24

SSTOMP FOR SPATIAL PLANNING

For planning and design, this thesis adapts the STOMP principle, by adding an 'S' for Staying/Slowness/Stilstaan, emphasizing the need for 'places to live, not leave', and focusing on inclusive design, especially for those with walking difficulties. Actions include:

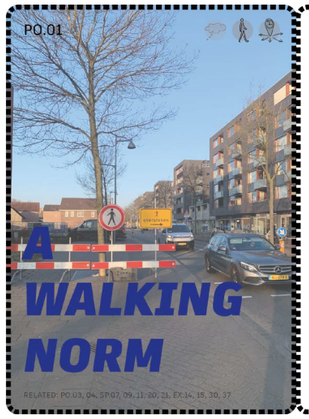
- S: Creating hospitable, year-round spaces for staying and resting (SP.21)
- S: Providing shared walking aids (SO.02)
- T,O: Prioritizing (slow) cycling (SP.25) and public transport (SP.22) for individuals with walking limitations
- M: Offering flexible shared mobility (e.g. microcars, scooters, electric cargobikes)
- P: Slowing cars, treating parking as shared and temporary and formulating 'grey' regulations through engagement, such as shared parking for those with mobility limitations who do not qualify for disability permits.

RELATED: SP.20, 22, 25, SO.02, PO.01, 05, 08, EX.14, 15, 16, 17, 47, 30

Appendix C: Patterns

Policy (PO)

front back



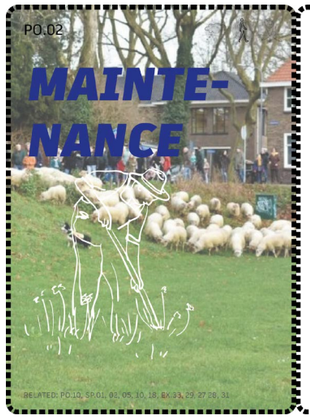
PO.01

A WALKING NORM

By setting a "walking norm," pedestrians are prioritized over other users and create spaces where pedestrians walk with ease. This approach puts SSTOMP principles into practice through a human-scale network (blocks no larger than 400 x 400 meters), direct pedestrian access to entrances (nearby bike parking, and car parking located further away). A parking norm of "0" applies unless explicitly justified ("yes unless..." approach). Similarly, the ideal is a fully pedestrian environment ("yes unless..." approach). Shared streets follow, where pedestrians feel free to cross everywhere and "jaywalking" becomes the norm. Complementary to this, a "green norm" enhances the quality and attractiveness of public spaces for walking.

sources: CROW, 2023; Speck, 2018

RELATED: PO.03, 04, SP.07, 09, 11, 20, 21, EX.14, 15, 30, 37



PO.02

MAINTENANCE

Well-maintained pedestrian space contributes to the quality of a walk. We should safeguard a budget for maintenance of paths and greenery and cleaning of public spaces. Volunteering should be possible and easy. Even animals, such as sheep, can help. This makes taking a walk even more interesting. Smart technologies, such as drought sensors, streamline and lower the cost of maintaining greenery. This ensures that trees and plants thrive well into the future. A varied mix of greenery enhances their resilience.

img:https://indebuurt.nl/middelburg/nieuws/opgemerkt!/jubeeb-een-schaapskudde-liep-door-de-binnenstad-en-dat-zag-er-zo-uit!-294620/?photoswall=294648

RELATED: PO.10, SP.01, 02, 05, 10, 18, EX.33, 29, 27 28, 31

PO.07

TIMED ACCESS

Sharing space (for example in mix-use environments) can be easier with timed access, or it can ease a transition towards a fully pedestrianized space. For example, daytime can be car-free in a city centre. Logistics can be done in early mornings or evenings. The default should be that you can walk. Parking spaces can be time-shared, for example between inhabitants and workers in a certain area.

RELATED: SO.04, SP.08, 17, 20, 23, EX.14

PO.08

COMPANY-ISSUED TRAVEL ALLOWANCE

A company-issued travel allowance ('kilometervergoeding') offer another way to bring SSTOMP into practice. Companies can fund their empoyee's daily commute per kilometre travelled, where walkers should receive the biggest amount, both per km and in total, as by foot you often span less distance than with other modes of travel. Cyclists and public transport users would follow in priority. In line with SSTOMP, commuting by car should not be compensated at all.

sources: te Brömmelstroet & Verkade, 2020; Walker & Brömmelstroet, 2025

RELATED: PO.10, SO.08, EX.14, 15

PO.03

PERFORMANCE CODES

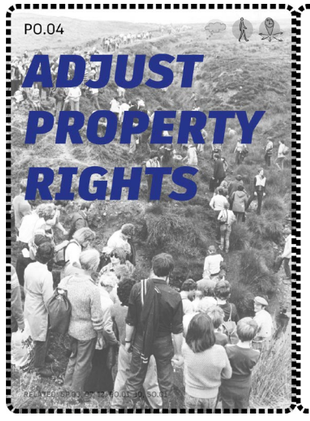
Improving the quality of walking routes can be as simple as minimizing unpleasant smells, noises, and even light pollution. Especially in mixed-use areas such disturbances are common. Jane Jacobs advocated for performance codes, which are flexible regulatory tools that focus on how spaces function, rather than prescribing exact uses (like traditional zoning does). Performance codes address both human-human and human and non-human interactions.

Example:

Instead of zoning an area only for offices, a performance code might allow: Housing, cafés, studios, or light manufacturing as long as noise levels stay below a certain threshold and pedestrian access is maintained.

sources: Soderstrom, 2008

RELATED: PO.01, 06, SP.03, 05, 06, 07, 12, 20, 21, 23



PO.04

ADJUST PROPERTY RIGHTS

Private terrains, especially those with qualitative potential, should be walkable, by right. An example of the rights of walkers to access (private) nature areas are the 'right to roam' in the UK and 'allemansretten' in Scandinavian countries. In the Netherlands there is especially potential to make farmland walkable, even temporarily or seasonally.

sources: Ladenburg, 2020

img:https://www.bbplusuenorth.com/comment/2021/08/winter-hill-britains-biggest-mass-trespass/

RELATED: SP.03, 07, 12, PO.01, 10, SO.01

PO.09

BUY YOUR FIRST HOUSE, NOT CAR

Support people in living closer to work by offering financial incentives, such as homebuyer assistance or mortgage or rent discounts, for living near their job. Even if they already live locally, such support can help them stay. This approach contributes to the broader goal of creating places to live, not leave, where daily places are close, and can be walked to, and phasing out private cars.

sources: te Brömmelstroet & Verkade, 2020; Walker & Brömmelstroet, 2025

RELATED: PO.08, 10, SO. SP.20, 21, EX.14

PO.10

FUNDING

Creating walkable, high-quality environments requires funding. Investment should be shared, as are the benefits. Budgets for health, education, housing, sustainability, and even food systems can all contribute. A major source of funding is phasing out unsustainable practices, primarily the private car. In 2018, the Netherlands spent €30 billion on car-related costs (€950 per second!). By for example not building new car infrastructure, spending can be lowered and funding can be redirected.

Moreover, the 'Gemeentefonds' should be changed. Currently, municipal funding rewards quantity (of population or growth in housing) over quality. Criteria should be quality-based, such as taking walkers as "indicator species," whose wellbeing is a reflection of the living conditions of a place.

sources: Beaumont, 2020; Verkade, 2018

RELATED: SO.02, 04, 06, 07, SP.22, PO.02, 04, 08, 09, EX.14

PO.05

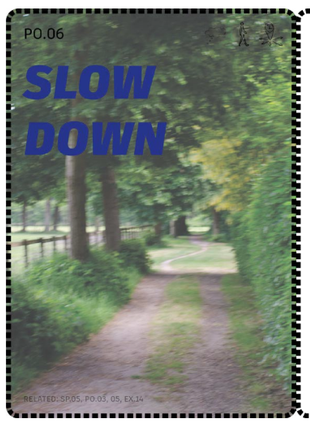
RIGHT OF WAY

In the Netherlands, for law, pedestrians are part of 'traffic', but giving 'right of way' only happens between vehicles (cars, trucks, mopeds, bikes). This means pedestrians never have the right of way, and always have to wait for streams of vehicles to pass, before they can cross. Moreover, it means pedestrians have to walk on sidewalks, while vehicles also park on these, or ride/drive over them.

For nicer walking experiences, pedestrians should either be given and give right of way the same way as vehicles, which makes streets fairer, or they should always have right of way. Cities should be strict in enforcing vehicles to enter/park pedestrianized spaces such as sidewalks or inner cities.

sources: CROW, 2024

RELATED: PO.01, 06, SO.04, EX.14, 15



PO.06

SLOW DOWN

Lower driving speeds. This is safer for pedestrians and animals alike, creates less emissions and makes driving slower and therefore less attractive. Speed limits can be lowered from 50 km/h within cities, to 30. Streets in dwelling areas can be 15 km/h (woonerf).

RELATED: SP.05, PO.03, 05, EX.14

Space (SP)

SP.25

BIKES FOR SLOWNESS

Cycling is often the fastest and most efficient mode of transport, especially within cities, in the Netherlands. While this active mobility is valuable, a (planning) trend toward higher speeds and longer distances has emerged, which building 'doorfietsroutes' and 'bike highways', where the quality of biking gets replaced with a narrative of speed. Moreover, cyclists bike in pedestrian areas, which can feel unsafe, and park their bikes anywhere, often on sidewalks.

Shared spaces, such as boulevards of a 'woonerf', where pedestrians and cyclists can (learn to) coexist, promote slowness and inclusivity. Interventions like dedicated space for bike parking, enforcement against cycling in pedestrian zones, and reclaiming asphalt for multi-use such as 'walk and roll' practices (wheelchairs, rollerblading, walking with a bike in hand) can rebalance walking and cycling priorities.

sources: te Brömmelstroet & Verkade, 2020

RELATED: SP.09, 24, PO.01, 05, 06, 08, SO.02, EX.15, 47, 30

Appendix C: Patterns

Social (SO)

front back

SO.01

FROM PAVED TO GREEN

People should have the opportunity to shape and improve their surroundings, making them more walkable and inviting. A great example is the "Tegelwippen" (tile-flipping) movement in the Netherlands, where residents replace paving stones with greenery. However, it is important not to reduce pedestrian space—prioritize the removal of asphalt, reclaim areas currently allocated to cars, and introduce greenery without creating additional obstacles for pedestrians.

RELATED: SP.01, 02, 03, 20, EX.31, 32

SO.02

POINTS OF SHARED WALKING AIDS

Shared aids in walking, at daily places, can make walking more flexible and accessible. There are many ways to assist in walking, such as provides umbrellas, carts and maps, but also opportunities to find walking buddies or someone to help you carry, creating a weeting point or, in the future, a robot which carries your groceries. Points with shared walking aids should be made in collaboration with daily spaces such as schools, supermarkets and workplaces. A good example is the 'Wandelkast' where a company provides a closet full of items that make it easy to have walking meetings, which all employees can take. The PostNL headquarters for example provide umbrellas, ponchos, sunblock, pedometers and various suitable walking routes in their Wandelkast.

sources: de Vaan, 2021; Stichting Wandelnet, 2021

RELATED: SO.08, SP.10, 22, EX.47, 49, 58, 56, 57, 59, 60, PO.10

SO.07

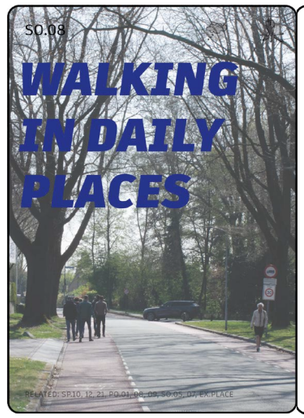
BRANDING AND PROMOTION

Promote walking by linking it to its benefits, especially in everyday activities—grabbing coffee, meeting friends, doing groceries, or taking a mindful break. Focus on positive messaging, and create a self-fulfilling prophesy —walking creates lively, safe, and enjoyable places. Let this message come from media, schools, workplaces, government, and everyday role models.

Concrete actions include: Campaigns that show walking as joyful and practical, Role models in schools, workplaces, municipalities, especially in positions of power, Storytelling through events and videos Social engagement: (niche) walking groups, challenges, car-free days and linking walking to existing and new Traditions: dauwtrappen, vierdaagse, flânerie, passeggiata. Walking groups can be linked to shared interests, such as walking book clubs, café crawls, gym walks or birdwatching.

img: personal correspondance (van der Padt, 2010)

RELATED: SP.13, PO.10, SO.03, 04, 05, 06, 08



SO.08

WALKING IN DAILY PLACES

Our daily environment is essential in normalizing walking and creating time and space to walk. Besides a walkable environment around daily places (SP.03, SP.12, SP.07,) and providing walking aids (SO.02), actions include:

Specifically for schools: placing walking in the curriculum, participating in the 'Daily mile', doing seasonal walks, multiple 'vierdaagses', walks for certain classes. For Workplaces: role models, have walking challenges and walking groups, give a good example, have a 'Wandelkast' with lendable items, a weeting point and weeting routes, break spaces outside, doing a VRIJMIBO with a walking café (VRIJMIWA). And In general: Have (diverse) walking groups, temporary walks, walking challenges.

RELATED: SP.10, 12, 21, PO.01, 08, 09, SO.05, 07, EX.PLACE

SO.03

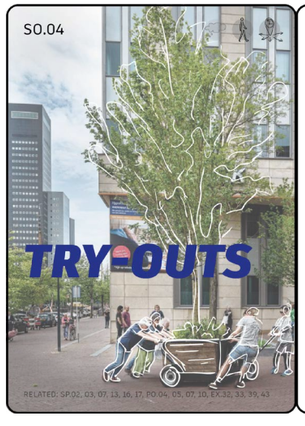
ROUTE PLANNERS

Many existing wayfinding systems, like Google Maps, do not account for the quality of the journey and can even give inaccurate advice for pedestrian routes. Municipalities should develop a comprehensive, city-wide wayfinding system tailored to pedestrians, which can emphasize short walking times, scenic routes, or interesting destinations. It could also involve local residents in the process to explore where they enjoy walking.

A notable example is the Metrominuto in Pontevedra, a maps designed to show just how walkable the city is. It combines both a physical map displayed around the city and a mobile app. Spreading such a map sends a strong message: This is a city for walking!

sources: Hoogers, 2010; Reinste Voor Logen, 2024

RELATED: SP.05, 11, 12, 14, 15, 22, SO.05



SO.04

TRY-OUTS

Cities need time and flexibility to test what works for pedestrians, public life, and property owners. Temporary initiatives help shift everyday habits and perceptions.

Moveable greenery, pop-up seating, green carpets, local markets, playful elements, art, animals, or creative crossings can all activate spaces. Car-free days offer a chance to experience streets without cars, while temporary walking routes can encourage seasonal exploration in different weather conditions.

Good examples are 'Vliegende Wandelingen' (farmland opens up for walkers for a few months in Midden-Delfland) or 'Bosk' (1300 walking trees in Leeuwarden).

img: https://nos.nl/artikel/2427855-leeuwarden-loopt-alvast-uit-voor-wandelend-bos

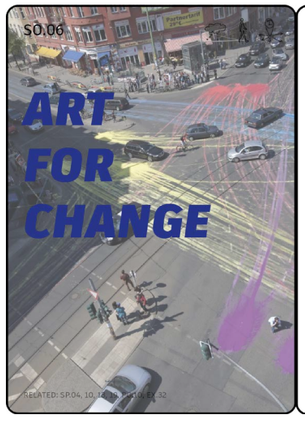
RELATED: SP.02, 03, 07, 13, 16, 17, PO.04, 05, 07, 10, EX.32, 33, 39, 43

SO.05

WELCOME WALKS

Big moments of change, such as moving house or jobs, are a great moment introduce walking as a new habit. This can be done with Welcome Walks, done by schools, jobs and neighbourhoods. They are a reminder that walking is an easy possibility, and create a message that walking is normal there. The welcome walks can include hidden gems in the surroundings, and a wayfinding map. The community can be involved in giving the walks, making it a social event, and/or creating local wayfinding maps.

RELATED: SP.05, 08, SO.03, 08



SO.06

ART FOR CHANGE

Art can change minds. Public art can change public opinions. Projects such as 'Bosk' (1300 walking trees in Leeuwarden) and 'Parkwheel' (a giant hamster-like wheel to walk in, with grass on the inside) rethink our relationship to walking and greenergy. Art such as Pierre Brault's 'Slow life project' (3d murals which by sunlight slowly come together during the day) questions our relationship to time and 'Highrise campsite' by Willem de Haan (tents on 5 floors of scaffolding in a field) our approach to housing.

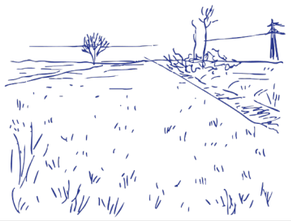
img: https://www.platoon.org/report/painting-reality

RELATED: SP.04, 10, 13, 19, PO.10, EX.32

Appendix D: Patterns: experience

Place

EX.09a FIELD *place*



RELATED TO: SP.05, 07, .21, SO.08

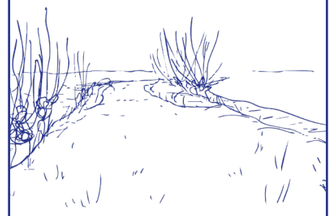
EX.08a SUBRURBS *place*

RELATED TO: SP.12, 21, SO.08

EX.12 PLAY *place*

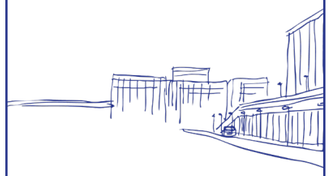
RELATED TO: EX.16, SP.07, 21, SO.08

EX.09b FIELD *place*



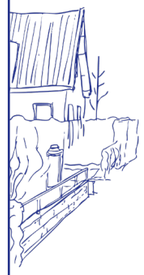
RELATED TO: SP.05, 07, .21, SO.08

EX.10a INDUSTRY *place*



RELATED TO: SP.03, 07, 21, 23, SO.08

EX.08a SUBRURBS *place*



RELATED TO: SP.12, 21, SO.08

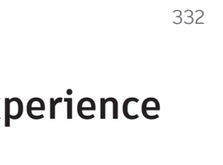
EX.06 PARK *place*

RELATED TO: SP.14, 21, SO.08

EX.03a DYKE *place*

RELATED TO: SP.05, 07, 21, SO.08

EX.02b HIGH RISE *place*



RELATED TO: SP.12, 21, SO.08

EX.13 SHOPS *place*

RELATED TO: EX.38, SP.03, 21, 23, SO.08

EX.05a PREWAR NEIGHBOURHOOD *place*

RELATED TO: SP.05, 12, 21, SO.08

EX.01a LANDMARK *place*

RELATED TO: SP.05, 12, 21, SO.08

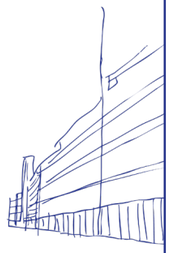
EX.01b LANDMARK *place*

RELATED TO: SP.05, 12, 21, SO.08

EX.08c SURBURBS *place*

RELATED TO: SP.12, 21, SO.08

EX.10c INDUSTRY *place*



RELATED TO: SP.03, 07, 21, 23, SO.08

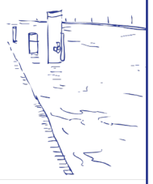
EX.05b PREWAR NEIGHBOURHOOD *place*

RELATED TO: SP.05, 12, 21, SO.08

EX.11 FACADE

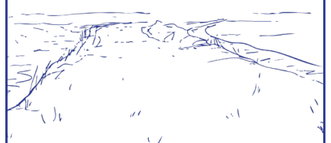
RELATED TO: EX.31, SP.12, 21, SO.08

EX.07a WATER



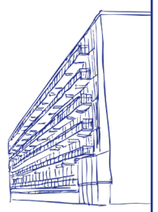
RELATED TO: SP.05, SP.21, SO.08

EX.03b DYKE *place*



RELATED TO: SP.05, 07, 21, SO.08

EX.02a HIGH RISE



RELATED TO: SP.12, 21, SO.08

Appendix D: Patterns: experience

Users

EX.14f (PARKED) CARS *users*

RELATED TO: EX.18, 30d, 36, SP.20, 22, 23 PO.01, 05, 06, 07, 08, 09, 10, SO.04

EX.18b WALKERS *users*

RELATED TO: EX.14, 54

EX.14h (PARKED) CARS *users*

RELATED TO: EX.18, 30d, 36, SP.20, 22, 23 PO.01, 05, 06, 07, 08, 09, 10, SO.04

EX.14g (PARKED) CARS *users*

RELATED TO: EX.18, 30d, 36, SP.20, 22, 23 PO.01, 05, 06, 07, 08, 09, 10, SO.04

EX.18a WALKERS *users*

RELATED TO: EX.14, 54

EX.18c WALKERS *users*

RELATED TO: EX.14, 54

EX.14c (PARKED) CARS *users*

RELATED TO: EX.18, 30d, 36, SP.20, 22, 23 PO.01, 05, 06, 07, 08, 09, 10, SO.04

EX.15b CYCLISTS *users*

RELATED TO: EX.24, 54, 30abc, SP.22, PO.01, 05, 08

EX.14d (PARKED) CARS *users*

RELATED TO: EX.18, 30d, 36, SP.20, 22, 23 PO.01, 05, 06, 07, 08, 09, 10, SO.04

EX.14e (PARKED) CARS *users*

RELATED TO: EX.18, 30d, 36, SP.20, 22, 23 PO.01, 05, 06, 07, 08, 09, 10, SO.04

EX.15a CYCLISTS *users*

RELATED TO: EX.24, 54, 30abc, SP.22, PO.01, 05, 08

EX.16 KIDS PLAYING *users*

RELATED TO: EX.12, 39, 54

EX.17 CROWD *users*

RELATED TO: EX.54, 34, 43

EX.14b (PARKED) CARS *users*

RELATED TO: EX.18, 30d, 36, SP.20, 22, 23 PO.01, 05, 06, 07, 08, 09, 10, SO.04

EX.14a (PARKED) CARS *users*

RELATED TO: EX.18, 30d, 36, SP.20, 22, 23 PO.01, 05, 06, 07, 08, 09, 10, SO.04

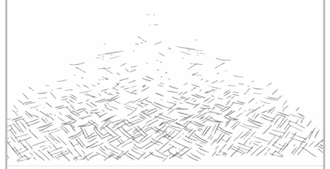
Appendix D: Patterns: experience

Material

EX.24b (BIKE) ASPHALT *material*

RELATED TO: EX.15, 47 , EX.PLACE

EX.21 CLINKERS *material*



RELATED TO: EX.47, EX.PLACE

EX.19a STONES *material*

RELATED TO: EX.47, EX.PLACE

EX.23 GRASS *material*

RELATED TO: EX.PLACE

EX.24a (BIKE) ASPHALT *material*

RELATED TO: EX.15, 47 , EX.PLACE

EX.24b (BIKE) ASPHALT *material*

RELATED TO: EX.15, 47 , EX.PLACE

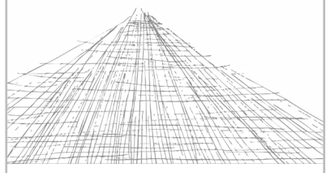
EX.25 SIDEWALK GREENERY *material*

RELATED TO: EX.PLACE

EX.19b SAND *material*

RELATED TO: EX.PLACE

EX.19b STONES *material*



RELATED TO: EX.47, EX.PLACE

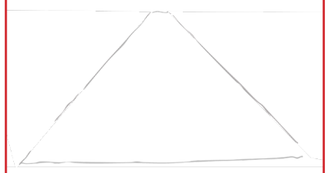
EX.20a SAND *material*

RELATED TO: EX.PLACE

Appendix D: Patterns: experience

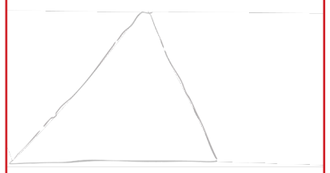
Space

EX.42a 4M WIDE *space*



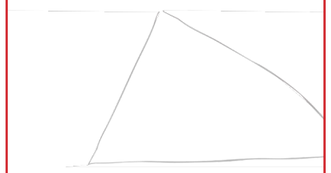
RELATED TO: EX.53, SP.09

EX.41 2M WIDE *space*



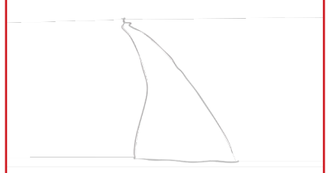
RELATED TO: EX.53, SP.09

EX.42b 4M WIDE *space*



RELATED TO: EX.53, SP.09

EX.40a 1M WIDE *space*



RELATED TO: SP.09

EX.40b 1M WIDE *space*

RELATED TO: SP.09

EX.28a OLD TREES *space*

RELATED TO: EX.60, 58, SP.01, 02, PO.02

EX.34a TERRACE *space*

RELATED TO: EX.17, SP.04, 21

EX.43 MARKET *space*

RELATED TO: EX.17, SP 17, 21, S0.04

EX.26a BENCH *space*

RELATED TO: EX.31, SP.10, 21

EX.29b YOUNG TREES *space*

RELATED TO: SP.02, PO.02

EX.26b BENCH *space*

RELATED TO: EX.31, SP.10, 21

EX.36 BOLLARDS *space*

RELATED TO: EX.14, 15

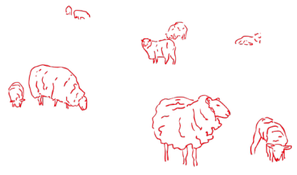
EX.35 TRASH *space*

RELATED TO: SP.10

EX.34b TERRACE *space*

RELATED TO: EX.17, SP.04, 21

EX.33a ANIMALS *space*



RELATED TO: EX.32, SP.21, P0.02, 04

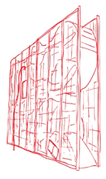
EX.26c BENCH *space*

RELATED TO: EX.31, SP.10, 21

EX.31b FACADE GARDEN *space*

RELATED TO: EX.11, SP.02, 03, 04, P0.02, S0.01

EX.39a PLAY *space*



RELATED TO: EX.16, 32, SP.21, 16, 19 S0.04

EX.39b PLAY *space*

RELATED TO: EX.16, 32, SP.21, 16, 19 S0.04

EX.32a TACTICAL URBANISM *space*

RELATED TO: EX.39, 33, 61, SP.02, 19, S0.01, 04, 06

EX.32b TACTICAL URBANISM *space*

RELATED TO: EX.39, 33, 61, SP.02, 19, S0.01, 04, 06

Appendix D: Patterns: experience

Space

EX.33b ANIMALS *space*

RELATED TO: EX.32, SP.21, P0.02, 04

EX.37 SCAFFOLDING *space*

RELATED TO: P0.01

EX.31a FACADE GARDEN *space*

RELATED TO: EX.11, SP.02, 03, 04, P0.02, S0.01

EX.30a PARKED BIKES *space*

RELATED TO: EX.15, P0.01

EX.30b PARKED BIKES *space*

RELATED TO: EX.15, P0.01

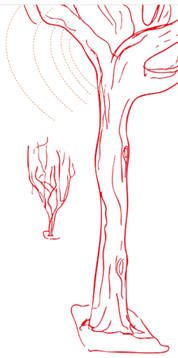
EX.30c PARKED BIKES *space*

RELATED TO: EX.15, P0.01

EX.29 YOUNG TREES *space*

RELATED TO: SP.02, P0.02

EX.28b OLD TREES *space*



RELATED TO: EX.60, S8, SP.01, 02, P0.02

EX.27 FLOWERS *space*

RELATED TO: EX.31, SP.02, P0.02

EX.38 SIGNS *space*

RELATED TO: EX.13, SP.21, S0.03

Appendix D: Patterns: experience

Setting

EX.46a SOLO *setting*

EX.44 TRIO *setting*

EX.47c WALK AND ROLL *setting*

RELATED TO: EX.19, 21, 24, SP.02

EX.47b WALK AND ROLL *setting*

RELATED TO: EX.19, 21, 24, SP.02

EX.47d WALK AND ROLL *setting*

RELATED TO: EX.19, 21, 24, SP.02

EX.47a WALK AND ROLL *setting*

RELATED TO: EX.19, 21, 24, SP.02

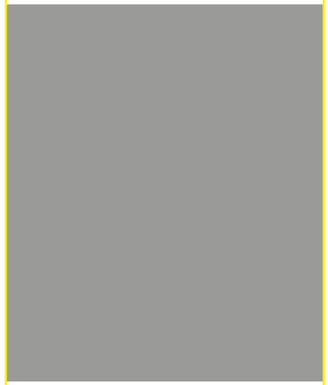
EX.45a DUO *setting*

EX.45b DUO *setting*

Appendix D: Patterns: experience

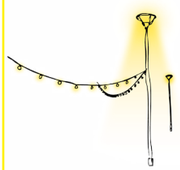
Conditions

EX.62 DARK *conditions*



RELATED TO: EX.63, 64

EX.63c STREET LIGHTS *conditions*



RELATED TO: EX.62, SP.06

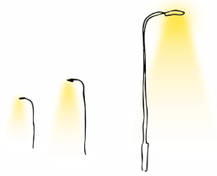
EX.63d STREET LIGHTS *conditions*

RELATED TO: EX.62, SP.06

EX.63e STREET LIGHTS *conditions*

RELATED TO: EX.62, SP.06

EX.63f STREET LIGHTS *conditions*

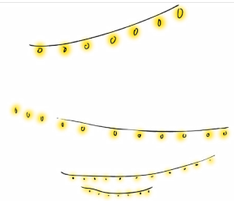


RELATED TO:EX.62, SP.06

EX.64 CURTAINS *conditions*

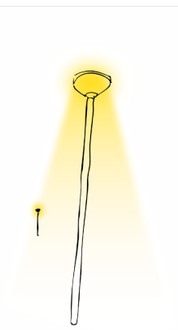
RELATED TO: EX.62

EX.63b STREET LIGHTS *conditions*



RELATED TO: EX.62, SP.06

EX.63a STREET LIGHTS *conditions*



RELATED TO: EX.62, SP.06

EX.60 SUN *conditions*

RELATED TO: EX.61, SP.13, SO.02

EX.58b RAIN *conditions*

RELATED TO: EX.61, SP.13, SO.02

EX.59 WIND *conditions*

RELATED TO: SP.13, SO.02

EX.57 COLD *conditions*

RELATED TO:

EX.61b AWNING *conditions*

RELATED TO: EX.60, 58, SP.13

EX.61a AWNING *conditions*

RELATED TO: EX.60, 58, SP.13

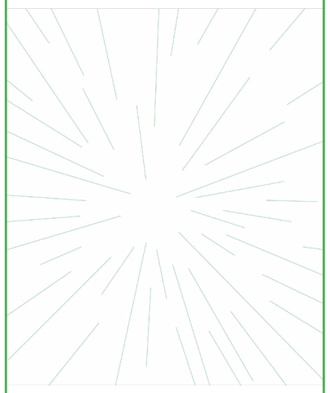
EX.58a RAIN *conditions*

RELATED TO: EX.61, SP.13, SO.03

Appendix D: Patterns: experience

Focus

EX.50 FOCUS *focus*



EX.51 DOG WALK *focus*

EX.52 MUSIC *focus*

EX.53 SOCIAL *focus*

RELATED TO: EX.SETTING, EX.41, 42

EX.55 COFFEE *focus*

EX.54 HI *focus*

RELATED TO: EX.15, 16, 17, 18

EX.49 CHORES *focus*

RELATED TO: SO.02

EX.56 BACKPACK *focus*

RELATED TO: SO.02

Planning and design for walking in the Netherlands:

An action manual

by Arjanne van der Padt

WHY?

CULT OF SPEED

Life in the twenty-first century moves at a quicker pace than it ever has. The acceleration of our society spans from everyday hurrying and multitasking, to vast amounts of space dedicated to moving quick and efficient and our societal values deeming faster to be better, to be more profit, to be *progress*.
There is an urgency to change our way of life. Fast lifestyles put enormous pressures on both our own, and the planet's wellbeing, driving it into its current state of climate emergency. Issues of wellbeing range from declining mental health, to a global and local pandemic of physical inactivity.

WALKING

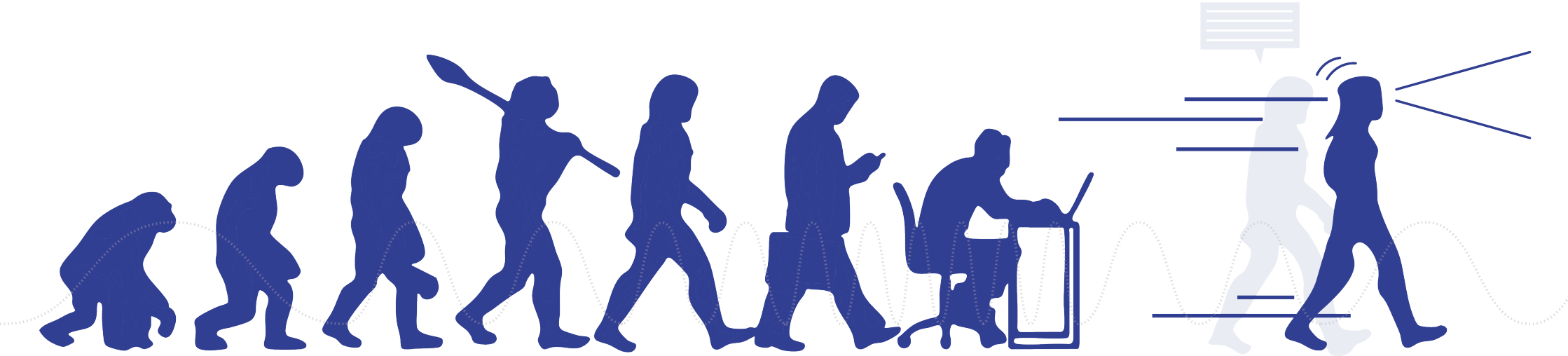
Walking has the potential to adress these problems, making people happier and healthier, in diverse ways. Almost everyone can walk, and feel the benefits for their physical and mental health, autonomy and freedom, thinking and creativity and social and local connection. Even society-wide positive effects occur, such as savings in public healthcare or a decrease in emissions.

Overall, the act of walking can raise the quality of life, without additional consumption. It presents a move towards an alternative future, where slowness becomes a source of joy.

STATUS QUO: TO WALK OR NOT TO WALK?

Historically, we walk less than ever. Where people once (around 1900) covered 15 kilometres a day on foot, the average has dropped to just 1.1 kilometres. This is easily contributed to bikes in the Netherlands, as it is seen as a country of bikers, a 'fietsland'. However, about a quarter of our trips are cycled and a close 20% is walked, while a staggering 45% is made in a car. This reframes the status-quo of the Netherlands from 'fietsland' to car-dominated. And maybe unexpectedly, the Netherlands is almost as much a country of walkers as bikers.

But we still have a long way to go. Many Dutch homes, for example, are within a 15-minute "walkable distance" of a supermarket. And yet, people mostly choose not to walk. Walking is not a valued part of our routine, but rather



^ *By Author*

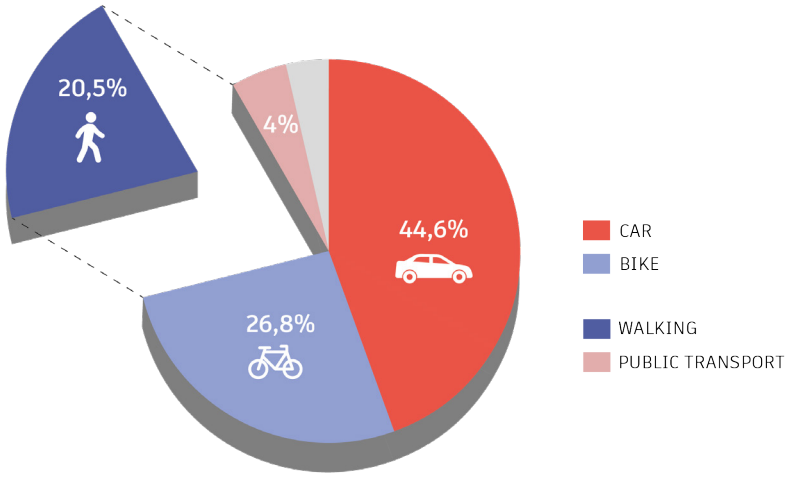
WHY?

understood as either (slow, impractical) transport or an extra activity of for leftover, 'free' time.
However, a leisure walking culture does exist, fostered by traditions such as the Vierdaagse, 'dauwtrappen' and 'uitwaaien', and newer impulses of lunchwalks and ommetjes. These offer strong starting points for promoting walking more broadly.

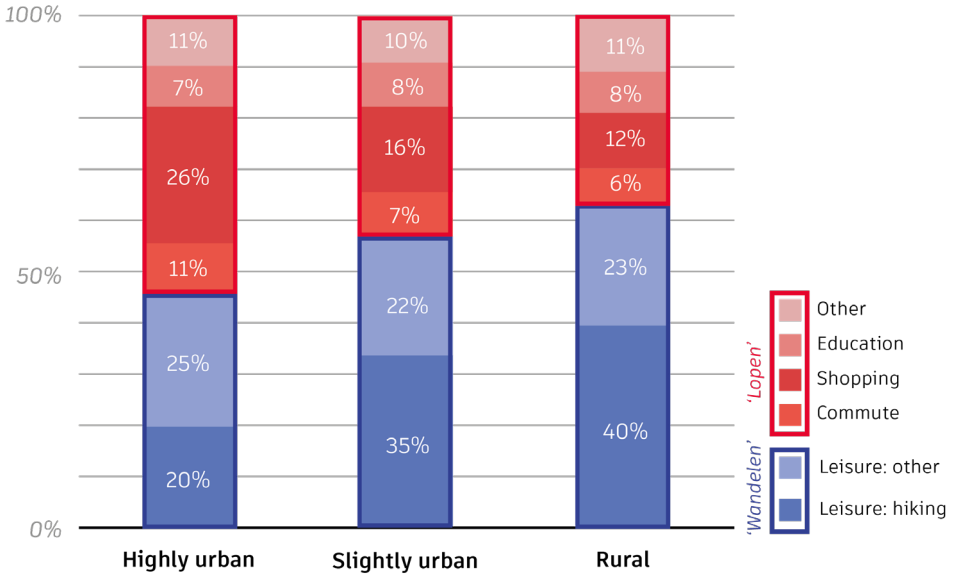
PLANNING FOR WALKING?

Walking is underrepresented and oversimplified in planning, design, research, and policy.
We must move away from the dichotomy of walking for either leisure or transport, and embrace its full variety. Moreover, instead of treating pedestrians as traffic objects using infrastructure, we should recognize walkers as diverse humans with varied needs, values and interests. Instead of optimizing time by defining distances or fast ways to cross great distances, the experience and quality of the time we spend should be central to the design proposals. Instead of continuing mobility-driven narratives, we should create quality places to live, to stay and enjoy. Instead of merely nudging people into the direction of walking, efforts should normalize walking and offer diverse ways to walk, while restricting alternatives.
This calls for a new approach, going beyond standard models like 15-minute cities, transit-oriented development or STOMP. Instead, we focus on the diverse nature of walking and its broad societal context. This approach to planning for walking is presented in this action manual. We set off by expanding our understanding of walking.

% TOTAL TRIPS IN THE NETHERLANDS



TYPES OF WALKING IN % OF TOTAL WALKING TRIPS



^^ 2023, ^2024. (based on: https://www.kimnet.nl/binaries/kimnet/documenten/publicaties/2024/10/02/loopfeiten-2024/KiM+brochure_+Loopfeiten+2024_defDT.pdf + https://www.cbs.nl/nl-nl/visualisaties/verkeer-en-vervoer/personen/hoeveel-reisden-inwoners-van-nederland-en-hoe-)

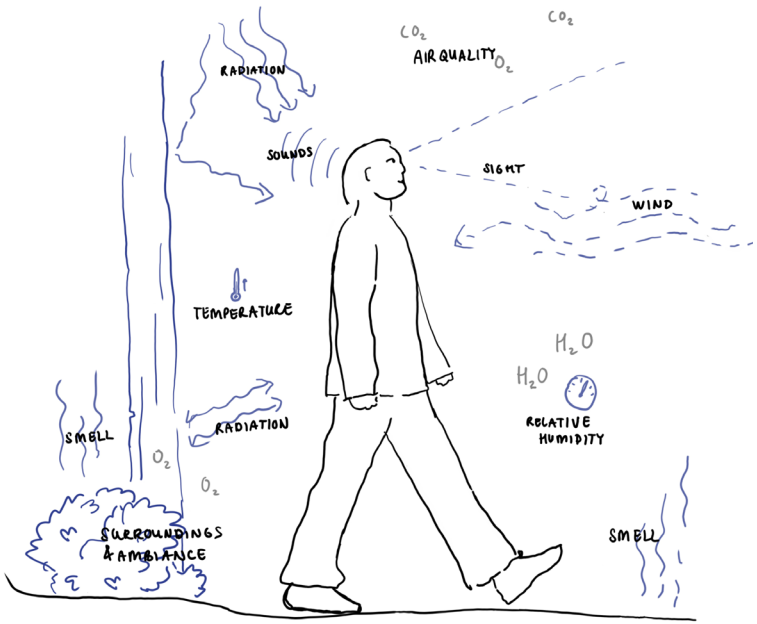
WALKING SHOULD BE....

...meaningful
Walking is more than transport or leisure: it supports work, learning, socialising, and play. It boosts mood, reduces stress, and offers moments of slowing down. Expanding the meanings of walking makes it more accessible and relevant to diverse groups. Through campaigns, storytelling and branding at everyday places such as schools and work should walking should be integrated walking into routines, offering accessible and meaningful opportunities for walking in daily life.

...normal
Walking reflects cultural values. It should be reframed as part of a desired and good life, linking to shared goals such as freedom, comfort, safety, wellbeing, and sustainability. Shifting norms takes (life)time(s). Engagement with younger generations who will adopt walking habits which last throughout life help make walking a natural choice. Car-free developments focused on local living and quality, frame walking as a normal, desirable part of life.

...easy
Easy walks are shaped by designs which support wayfinding through compact, walkable, and connected spaces, with clear landmarks and edges that embed themselves into people's mental maps. Places should be inclusive, accommodating all forms of walking, including those who 'walk & roll' (with wheelchairs, strollers, suitcases, roller skates, etc.).

...enjoyable
Walking enjoyment depends on many factors such as the time of day, weather, other users, materials, setting and place. An enjoyable walk might inspire another walk or a longer one. But any walk, anywhere, anytime by anyone is different. Design should allow for diversity, guided by eye-level experience of liveliness, greenery and weathering.



PLANNING FOR WALKING

Knowing this...

HOW SHOULD WE INTERVENE TO PROMOTE WALKING?
Walking is shaped not just by spatial design, but also by our subconscious values and social norms, guiding our choices, habits and interpretations of our spaces. Effective interventions must therefore integrate spatial, social, and policy actions. These should focus on introducing, reinforcing and embedding all kinds of walking in everyday life, at moment where we could choose walking, even if it currently does not even cross our minds. These 'change points' are depicted on the next pages.

HOW CAN WE CREATE LASTING CHANGE?
Lasting change relies on long-term shifts in societal norms and the persistence of daily walking habits. This means embedding walking within shared cultural values while allowing its meaning to evolve as people make it their own. Designing for diverse walking preferences in everyday life ensures walking remains enjoyable and relevant, helping habits take root and remain.

HOW CAN WE FIND THE TIME AND SPACE TO WALK?
Going beyond a short walk to the shop or around the block can seem to demand creating extra time and space to walk, when our days and spaces often feel full already. Yet the real question is not how to create time and space, but how to find it, as it is already there. This requires planners, designers, and citizens alike to critically reflect on how we choose to spend our time and shape our environments.
Many of our everyday routines and spatial structures are built around speed, efficiency, and time-saving, which is seen as normal or desirable, yet it can undermine our wellbeing and the liveability of our spaces. We must shift our focus towards quality: quality of experience, of destinations, and of local environments. This means creating "places to live, not leave": environments that invite people to stay, enjoy and walk around, not leave. "Places to live" start at our front doors, continuing to where we need to be on a daily basis. This requires a focus on values of slowness in planning, such as quality and locality. For instance, rethinking housing, amenities and job distribution, which can reduce commuting, freeing up space and time for walking.

WHAT ROLES SHOULD PLANNERS AND DESIGNERS ADOPT?
All in all, planners and designers are encouraged to:

- Expand: Design around values of quality and locality; imagine alternative futures; use personas and daily routes for realistic, human-centred designs; integrate spatial, social, and policy actions.

And

- Deepen: Embrace slow, participatory research, using walking-based methods for grounded, embodied, collaborative design. Balance real-world insights with imagining different futures.

While the proposed approach may take more time, it fosters deeper community support and anticipates long-term futures. In this slow, resilient urbanism, walking is a means towards healthier and happier lives, for current and next generations. It recognizes how small changes in day-to-day life, such as walking, can contribute to broader societal shifts.

PLANNING FOR WALKING

Change points...

a day.

commute by foot | *lunch walk* | *weeting* | *daily mile* | *study walks* | *shopping* | *walk for groceres* | *walk and roll* | *hot girl walk* | *walk and play* | *flanerie* | *walking clubs* | *podcast walk* | *pub crawl* | *pokémon go*

a year.

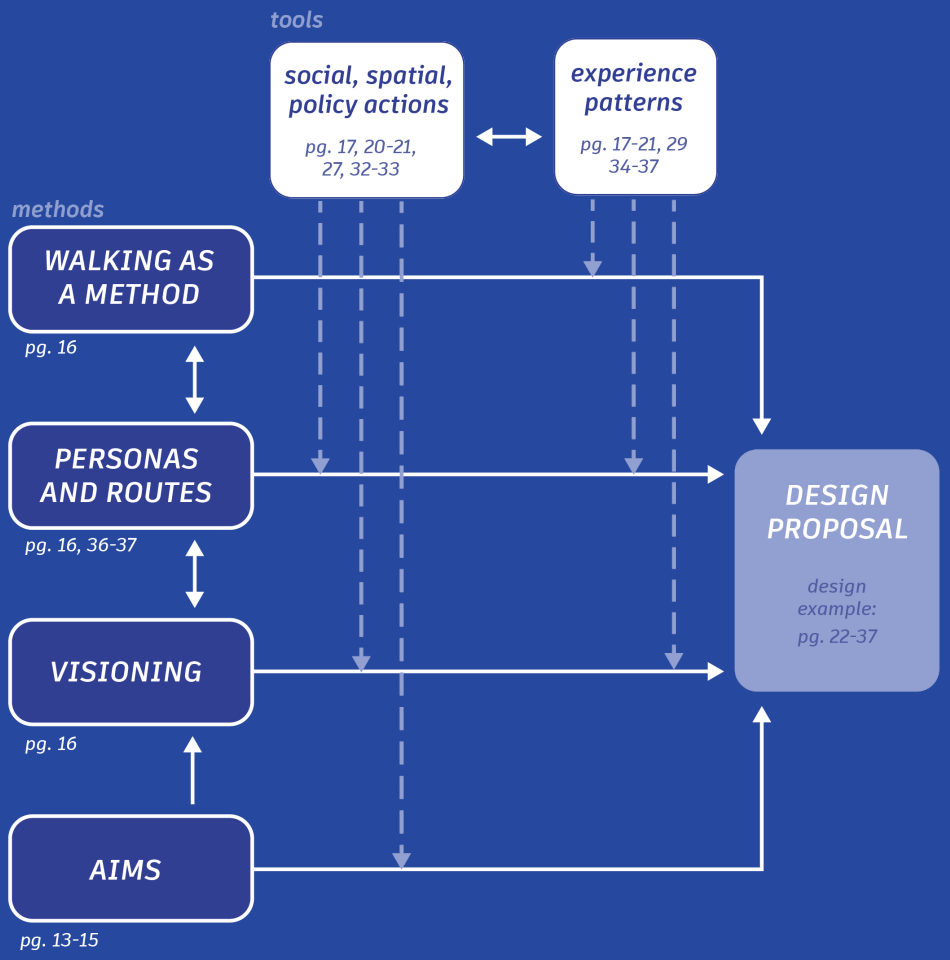
'uitwaaien' | *walk & collect leaves* | *sint-maarten* | *christmas lights walk* | *flower walk* | *'dauwtrappen'* | *trekking* | *'vierdaagse'*

a life.

walk and roll | *learn to walk* | *new schools* | *move for college* | *new job* | *move* | *get a pet* | *new job* | *buy a car* | *buy a house* | *walk and roll*

PLANNING FOR WALKING

Based on these insights, the framework below outlines the key steps, methods, and tools to plan and design for walking:



AIMS

1. CHOOSE WALKING, *because...*

A walking has many meanings in daily life
B walking is normal, self-evident

2. KEEP WALKING, *because...*

A walking has many meanings in daily life - - - - - - -
B walking is normal, self-evident - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - long lasting change
C the walking experience feels easy - - - - - - - - - - - -
D the walking experience feels enjoyable - - - - - - - - - lasting habit

3. FIND TIME AND SPACE TO WALK, *because...*

A walking has many meanings in daily life
B walking is normal, self-evident
C the walking experience feels easy
D the walking experience feels enjoyable
E places are designed for living, not leaving

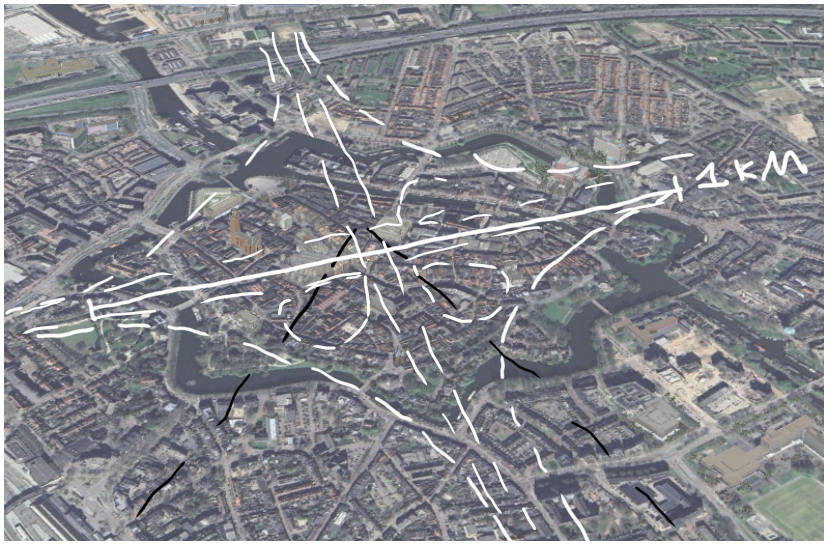
..... TO WALK ANYWHERE, ANYTIME

Three aims guide walking-focused projects: 1) encourage walking, 2) sustain walking habits, and 3) create time and space for walking.
These aims are interdependent, as without initial consideration, walking does not occur (1); without positive experiences, it does not continue (2); and without structural change in how we organize our space and time, walking remains constrained to an 'extra' leisure activity or sometimes-nice transport to nearby places such as the supermarket (3). Supporting all three is essential to making walking a desirable, integrated part of daily life across all contexts.

AIMS

place to leave...

HIGHWAY
(A28, ZWOLLE)



place to live.

INNER CITY
(ZWOLLE)

^ By Author

METHODS

WALKING AS A METHOD

Walking, alone or with others, offers direct, embodied insight and fosters reflection and collaboration with residents and actors. It shifts the focus from abstraction to real experiences, sparks inspiration and grounds the design in reality.
Walking can be integrated into research and design by:

- Experiencing places first-hand, not just through maps or screens (especially your first impression)
- Getting lost on purpose to discover spatial logic and voids
- Walking with locals, listening and observing
- Documenting sounds, smells, visuals, and conversations
- Taking advantage of the creativity and flow-state during walking: brainstorm, design, together, on a walk

PERSONAS AND DAILY ROUTES

Walking differs per person and context. Using diverse personas and their daily routes in the design process helps account for varied preferences, values, abilities, and routines. These can be based on literature and/or local insights, such as walking and talking with inhabitants. This method supports human-centred, inclusive design.

VISIONING

Visioning allows us to radically reimagine the futures. Starting from an ideal human-focused vision of a truly walkable place, or a day of walking and wellbeing in the future, and working backwards from there ('backcasting') reveals the steps which are needed for long-term, value-driven spatial transformation.

TOOLS

To operationalize the aims and design with walking experiences, two interconnected 'pattern languages' were developed:

1. A set of policy, social, and spatial action patterns

2. A set of walking experience patterns that support the design of meaningful and enjoyabl e walking environments.

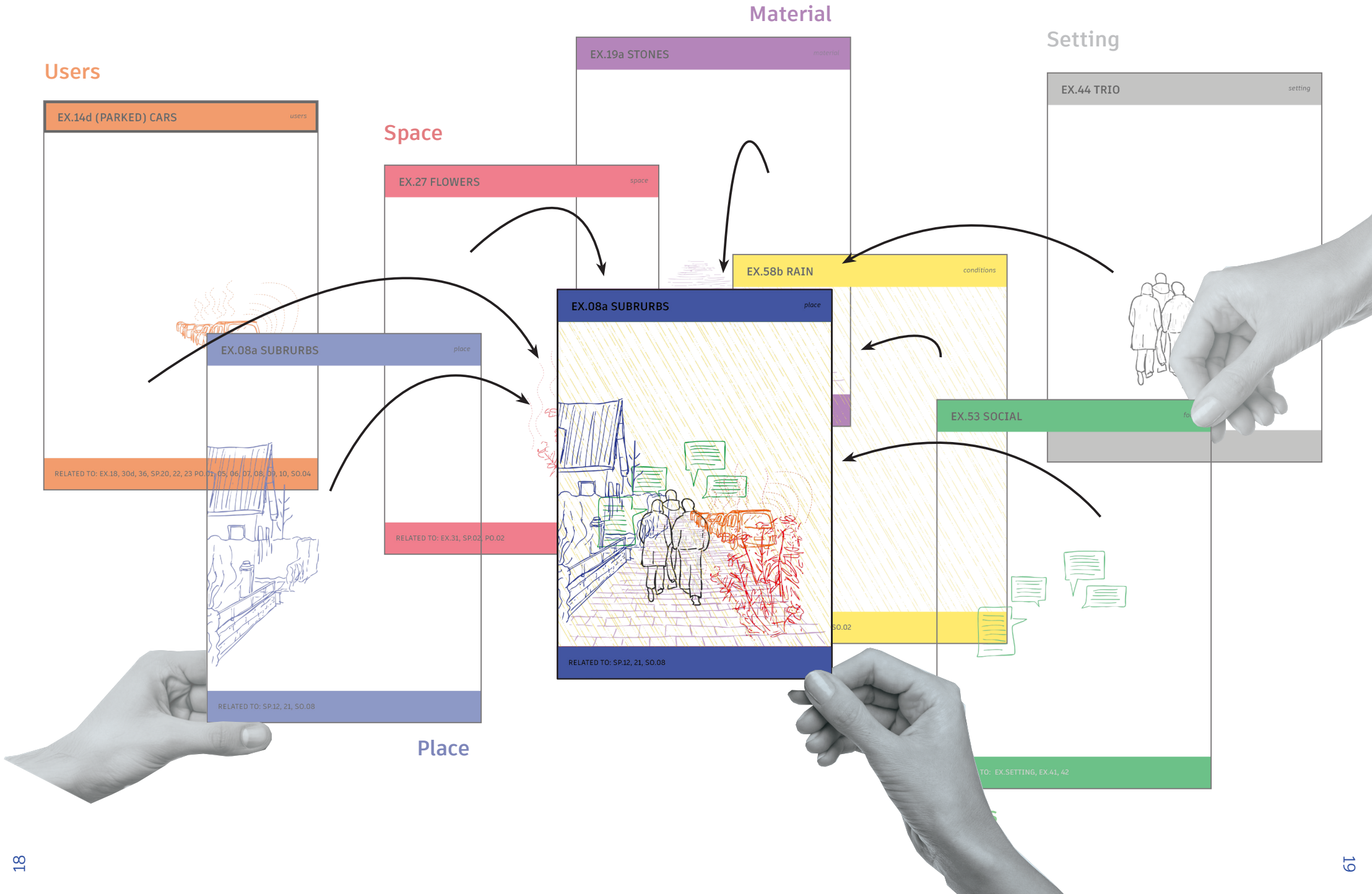
A 'pattern language' is a systemically linked set of individual 'patterns', which offer practical design and planning principles, grounded in theory, solo and shared walking experiences, and design analysis.
The set of policy, social and spatial actions represent a system of broader-scale actions. These are linked to the experience-based pattern cards, which can be layered to envision or assess walking environments. They align interventions with the everyday realities of walking, while ensuring that experiential quality is embedded in policy, spatial, and social strategies.

deskwork

walking

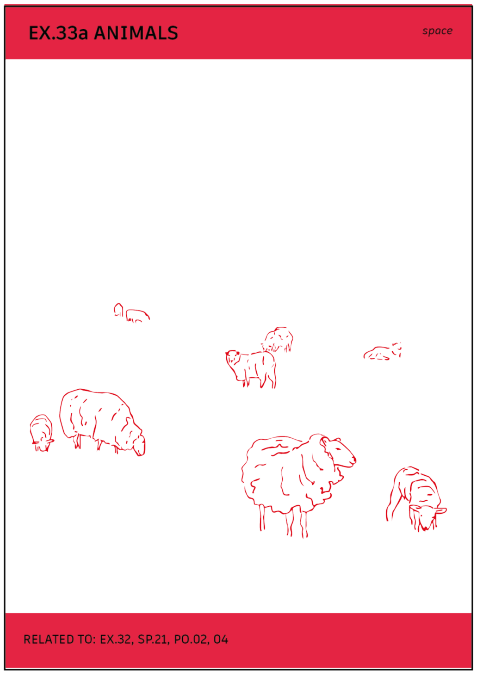
^ By Author

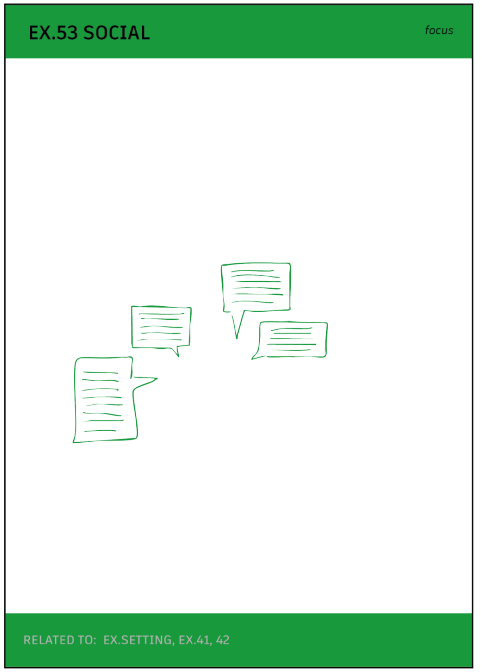
TOOLS

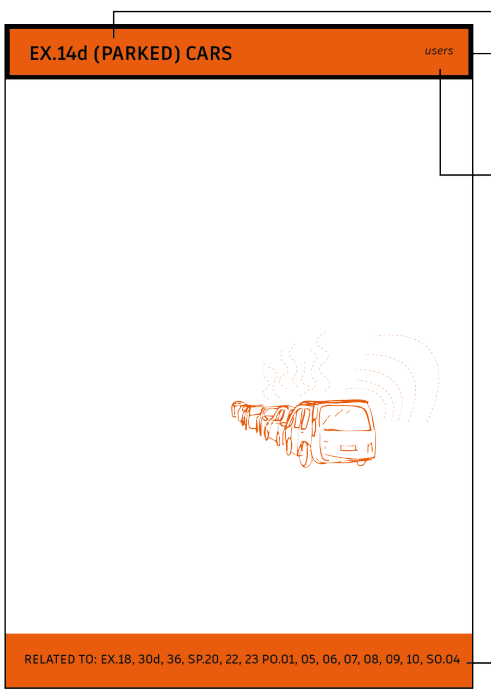

Material
Users
Setting
Space
EX.19a STONES
material
EX.14d (PARKED) CARS
users
EX.44 TRIO
setting
EX.27 FLOWERS
space
EX.58b RAIN
conditions
EX.08a SUBRURBS
place
EX.08a SUBRURBS
place
EX.53 SOCIAL
RELATED TO: EX.18, 30d, 36, SP.20, 22, 23 PO.01, 05, 06, 07, 08, 09, 10, SO.04
RELATED TO: EX.31, SP.02, PO.02
RELATED TO: SP.12, 21, SO.08
RELATED TO: SP.12, 21, SO.08
SO.02
TO: EX.SETTING, EX.41, 42
Place

TOOLS

PATTERNS EX. (EXPERIENCE)





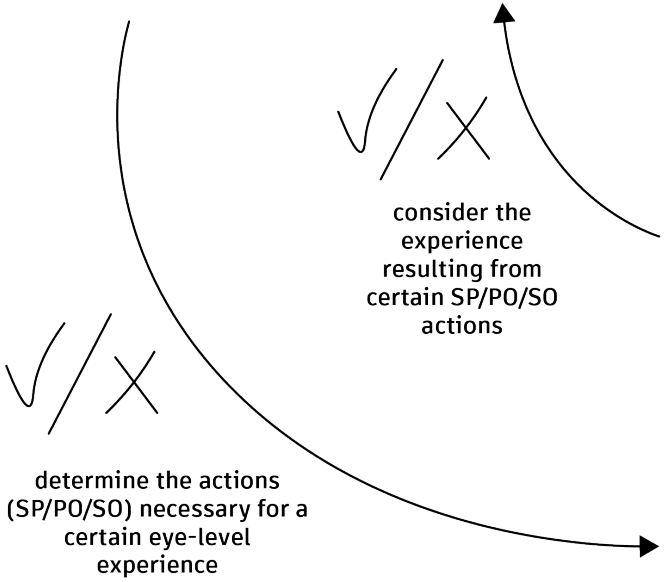


title

back border =
if this pattern is not used, actions needs to be taken

category:
- conditions
- focus
- space
- place
- users
- material
- setting

relationships EX/PO/SO/SP



PATTERNS SP. PO. SO.

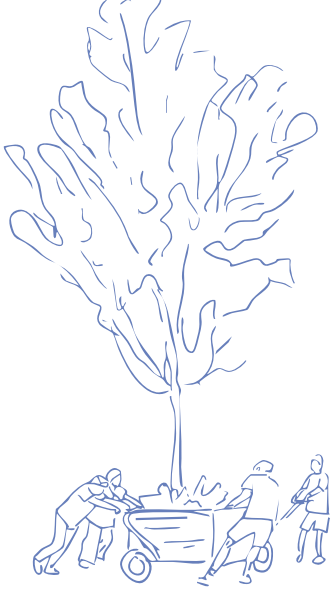
space (SP), policy (PO) or social (SO)

aims

title

relationships PO/SO/SP and EX

DESIGN:
WHO, WHEN, WHAT?



KICK-OFF

- *Addressing challenges and opportunities inherent to the area with small (temporary) projects, allowing people to try out different walking experiences, and passers-by to consider walking*
- *Aiming to shift mindsets by targeting key moments and places in daily life and diverse users (personas)*

BASIS

- *Creating the right conditions: alternatives for fast practices are introduced and made attractive (pull)*
- *Address issues such as equitable access (public transport, cycling, shared mobility) , locality (amenities, housing, jobs) and creating diverse, high-quality walking environments*

We must 'walk the talk': initiating inspiring projects and social activities (like welcome walks in municipalities), and enable others to do the same, via funding and support.

New norms should be set through local policy, focusing on walking standards, mixed-use requirements, and 'performance codes'.

Top-down: municipalities, provinces, the state

Top-down: municipalities, provinces, the state

Funding can come from various sectors (health, climate, mobility, housing), recognising walking's cross-sector value. Shifting state-issued municipal funding from quantity to quality-driven could support more of these projects.

Walking should also be embedded in planning processes. As a low-barrier, inclusive method of engagement, it can attract a wider public, encouraging designs that are both grounded and visionary.

We can play a key role in organising walks, events, and fostering a walking culture.

Moreso, we can simply start walking more. Our individual actions influences our surroundings, and ripple outward through our own roles as parents, teachers, neighbours, friends, children, employees or employers.

Bottom-up, citizens

Bottom-up, citizens

RESTRICT

- *Transform fast spaces, which sustain fast habits, into space for walking or supporting walking (push), to gain time and space for slowness*
- *Address issues such as parking space, logistics, fast biking*

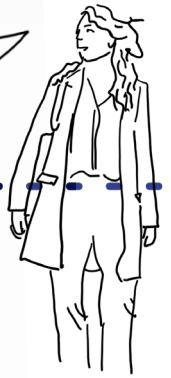
With most land privately owned, we can provide (time-bound) access to walkers, for example opening sports fields, business terrains or orchards.

In that, walking becomes a small, political act of resistance, a practice of going slow in a world that enforces speed.

MAINTAIN

- *Preserve and create diversity in walking options and flexibility in how you walk*
- *Aiming at people to personalise walking and supporting the emergence of subcultures.*

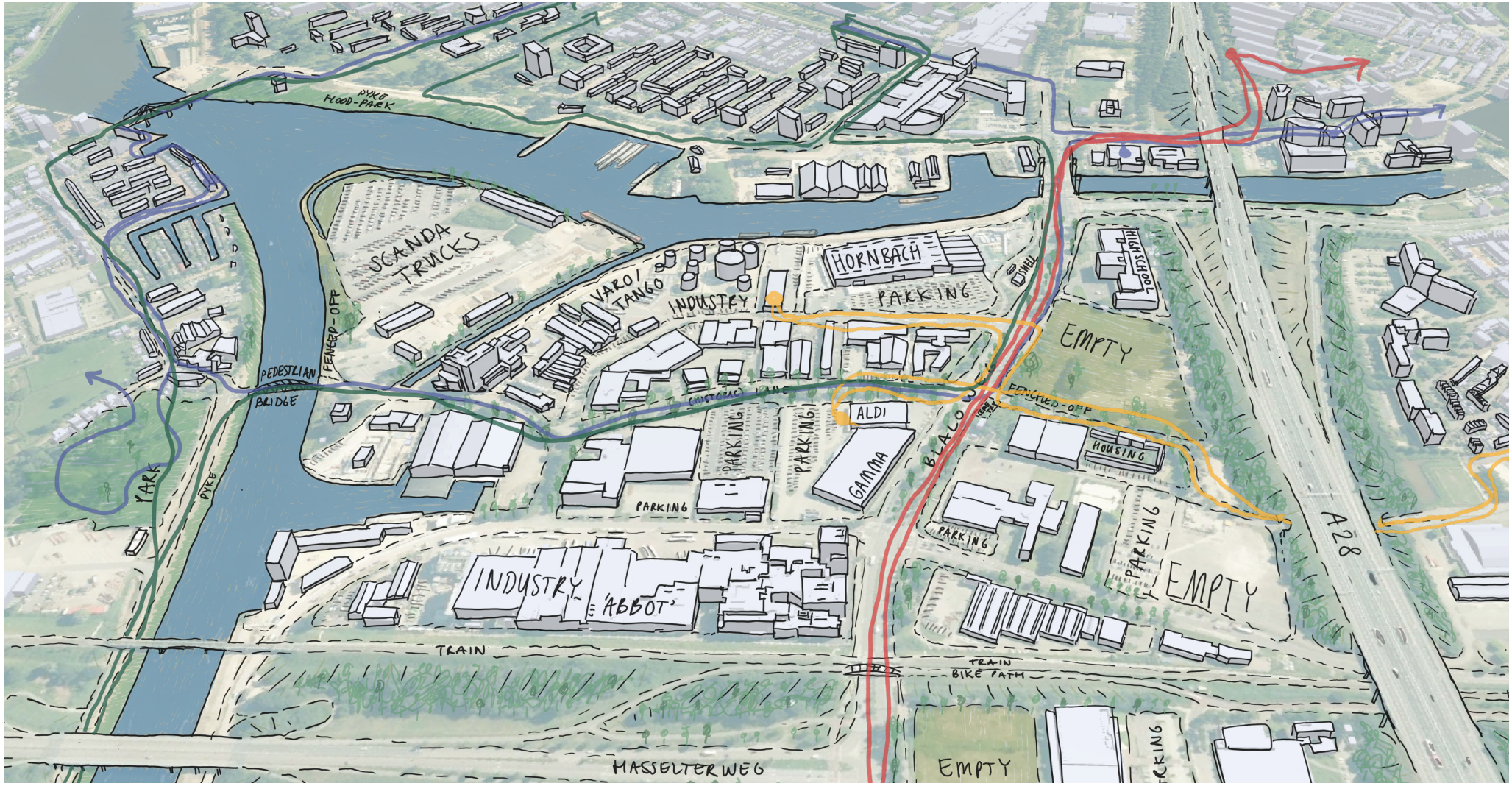
We can also transform our spaces, to enrich both our own and walkers' experiences, replacing asphalt and blank walls with inviting gardens and engaging façades.



Private sector

DESIGN EXAMPLE: ZWOLLE

The design example focuses on a monofunctional, car-dominated industrial and business area located between the inner city and suburbs of Zwolle. This area is uninviting for pedestrians, it is primarily a place people pass through, not one to stay in. With its central location and qualities like the waterside, it holds potential to become a place which many routes choose to cross, or even stay. This subcontext was chosen based on fieldwork and exploring daily routes of value-based personas (red, green, blue and yellow).



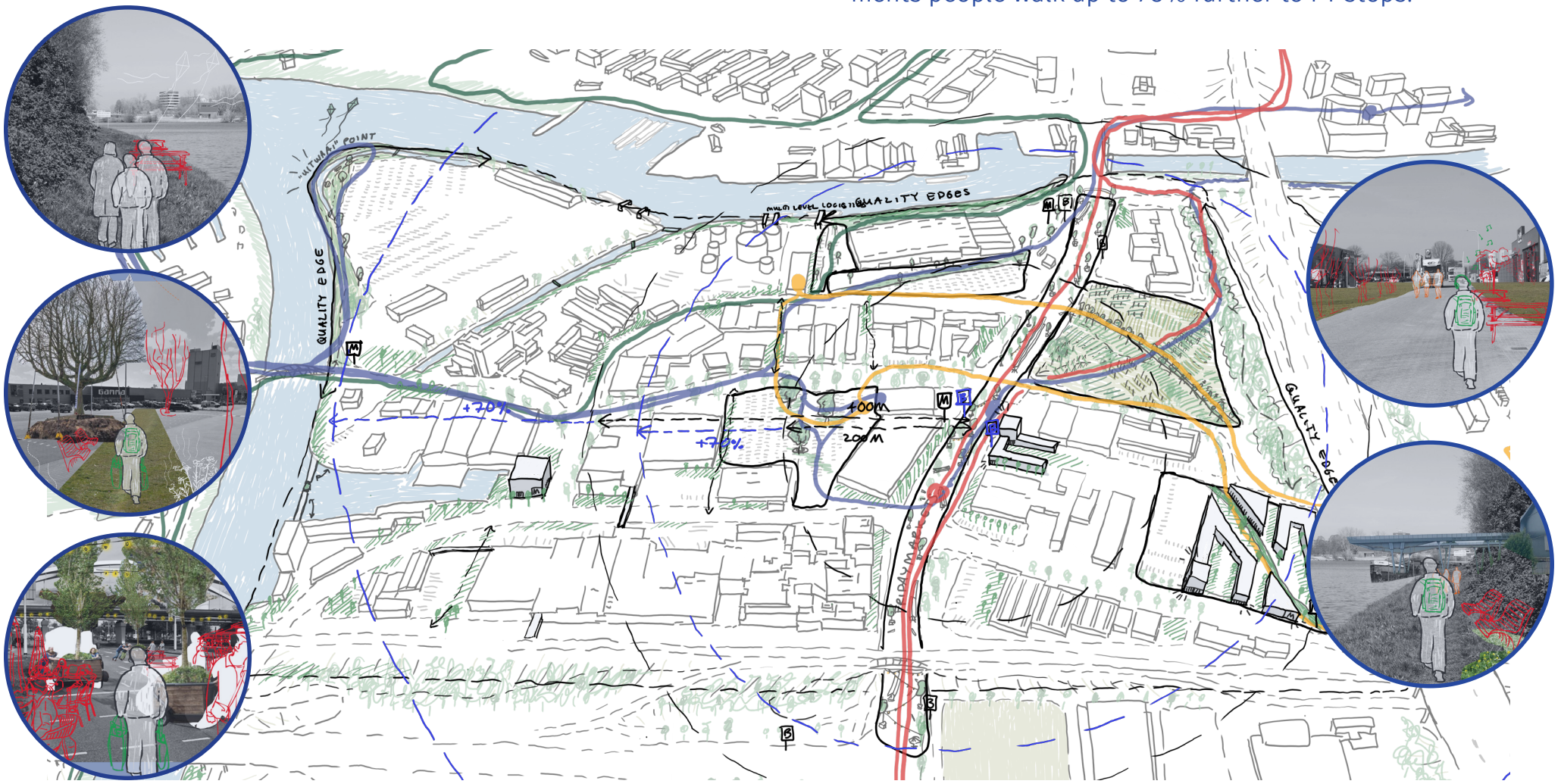
DESIGN EXAMPLE: ZWOLLE

Kick-off

Immediate interventions create walking quality: fast-growing greenery, full-grown trees, improved access to existing quality spaces, and car(e) free days with markets that reclaim traffic space for people. These low-resistance actions spark habit shifts, encouraging residents to rethink their spaces and routines.

Basis

Accessibility is addressed by using the SSTOMP, an inclusive expansion of STOMP. It promotes staying and slowness (hence the added ‘S’) not merely going and moving, and supports those with mobility limitations, by for example shared walking aids and a focus on public transport. This is supported by creating more walking quality, as in qualitative environments people walk up to 70% further to PT stops.

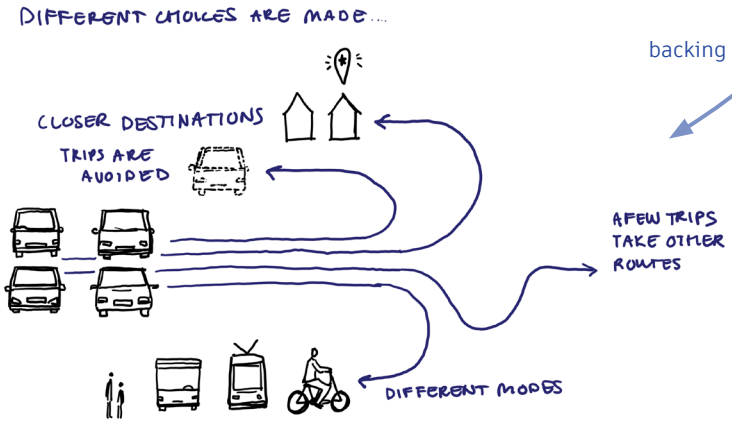


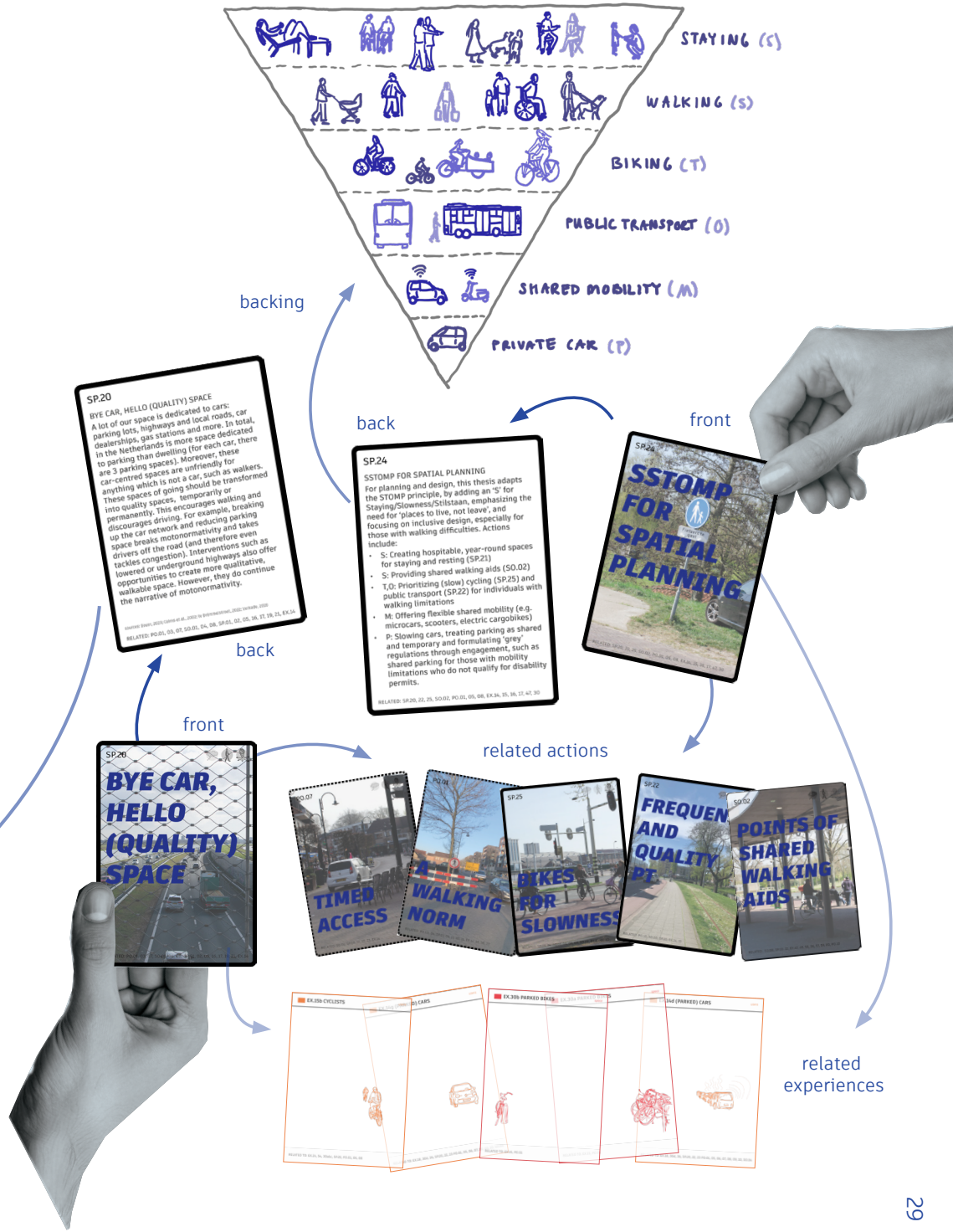
DESIGN EXAMPLE: ZWOLLE

Mixed-use development introduces housing and amenities. This challenges current environmental standards deeming the area unsuitable for residential purposes. However, if an area is deemed unfit for living, why is it fit for working 8+ hours a day? Mix-use development combined with 'performance codes' addresses this issue. These codes are flexible standards that assess liveability and environmental quality, focusing on how spaces function, rather than prescribing exact uses (like traditional zoning does). Here, they support not only walkable environments, but moreover transitions to cleaner industries and more human-centred workplaces.

Restrict

Car-centric infrastructure is transformed:
Parking lots become homes, inviting entrances and pocket parks, the Blaloweg becomes a pedestrian promenade with cafés, kiosks, markets, and the high frequency bus line, the A28 highway is reimagined as a green city boulevard and Scania's truck park is turned into an "uitwaai" roofpark.
These changes follow the logic of traffic evaporation: when space for cars is reduced, congestion doesn't simply shift, it often disappears as people adjust their behaviour, choosing different modes, closer destinations or not going at all.

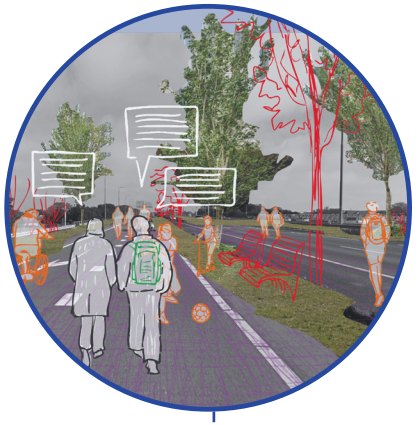


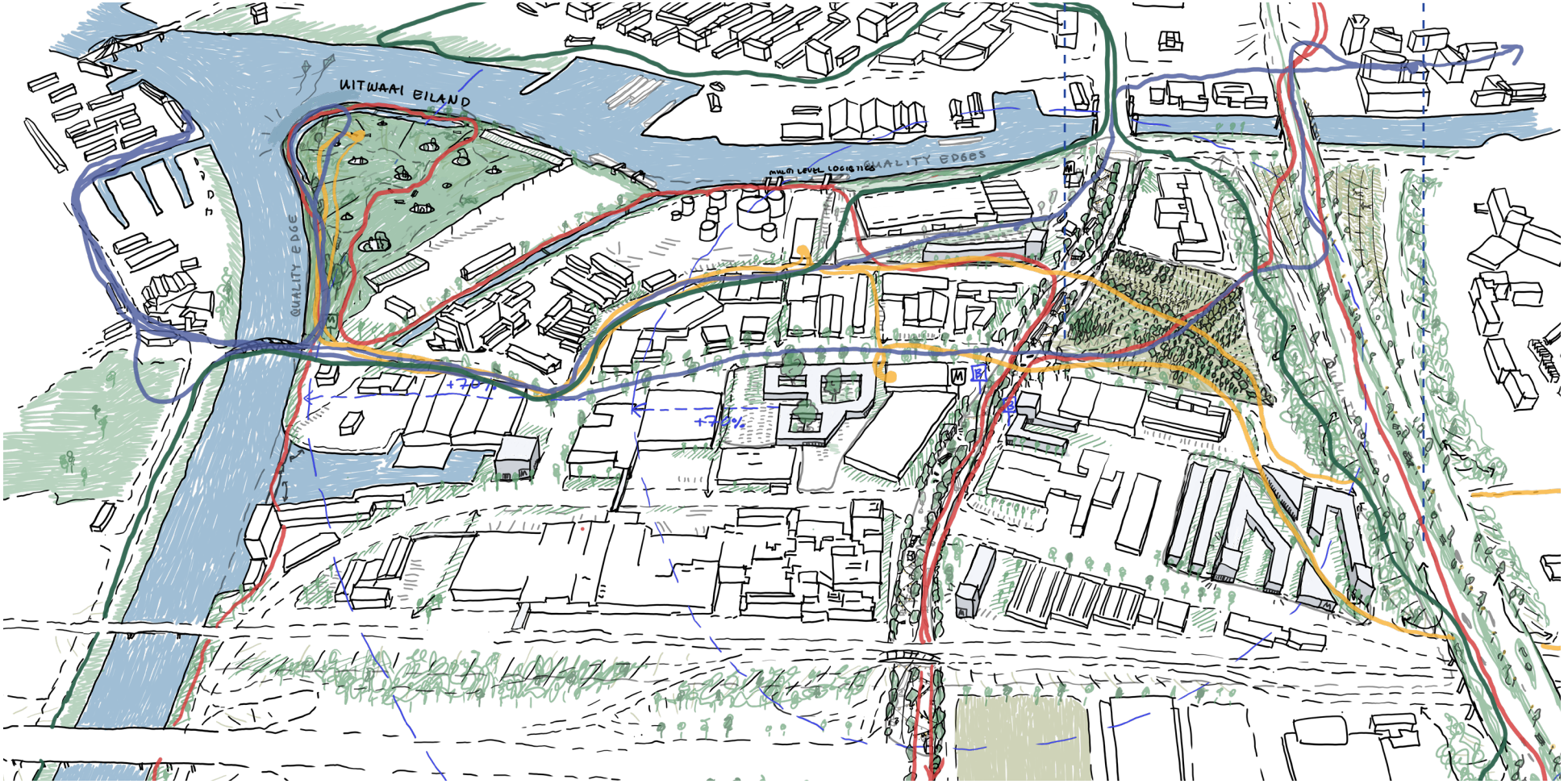


DESIGN EXAMPLE: ZWOLLE

Maintain

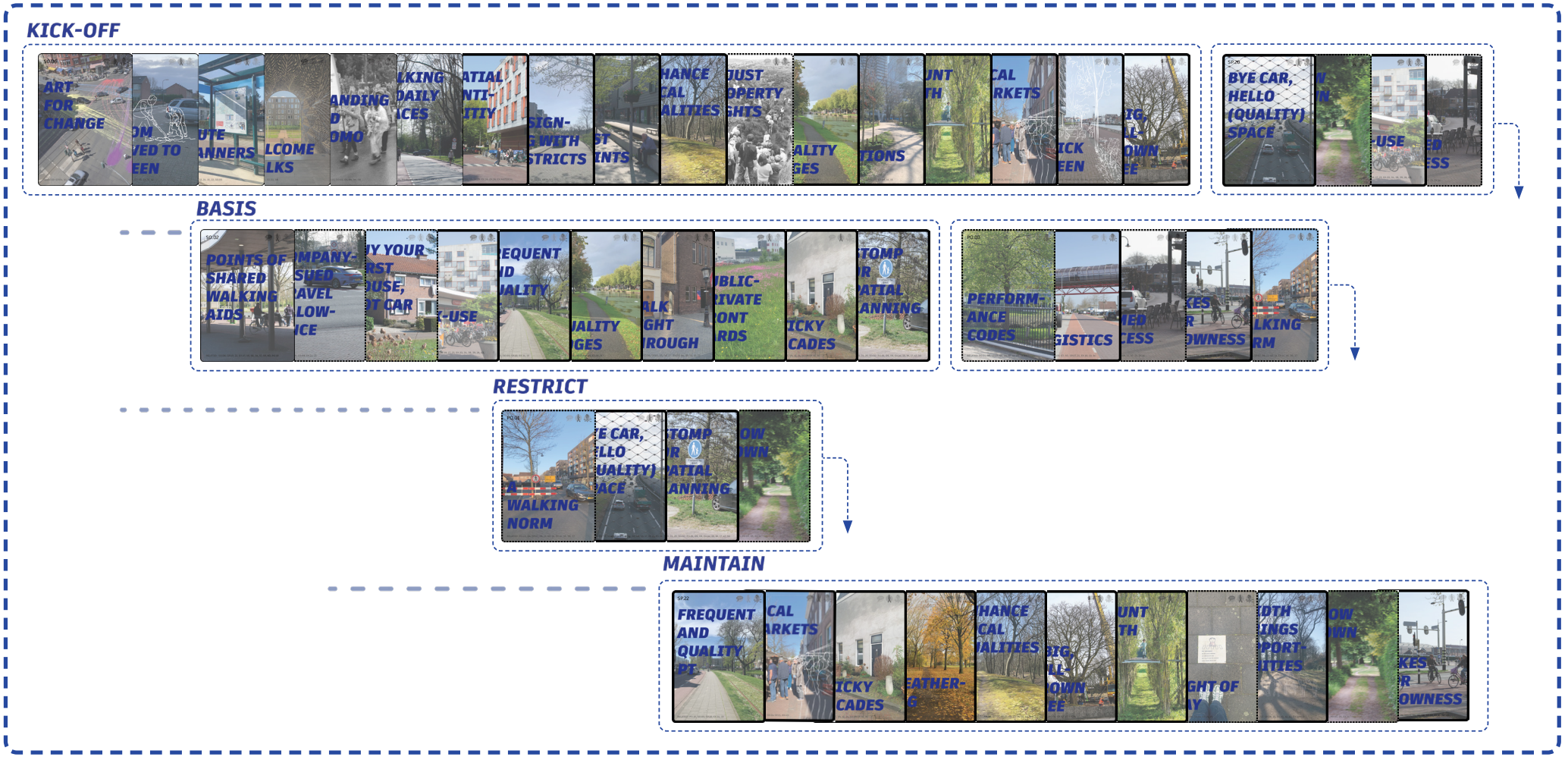
Walking is supported not just by space , but by social habits and culture. The spaces support diverse walking options, which lets people personalise how and why they walk. This fosters the emergence of walking subcultures over time. With local, high-quality routes throughout, walking becomes possible anywhere, anytime.





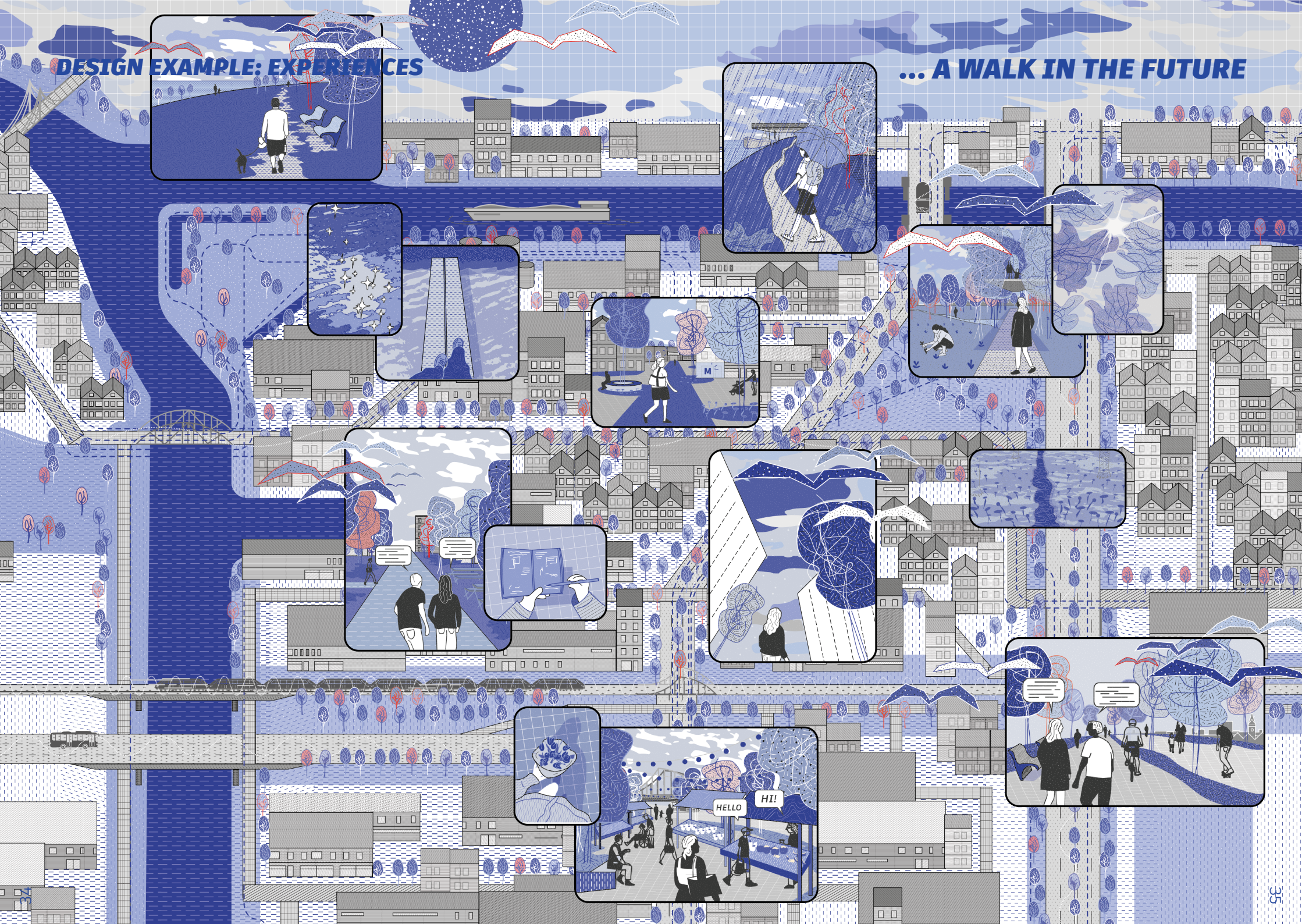
DESIGN EXAMPLE: PATTERNS

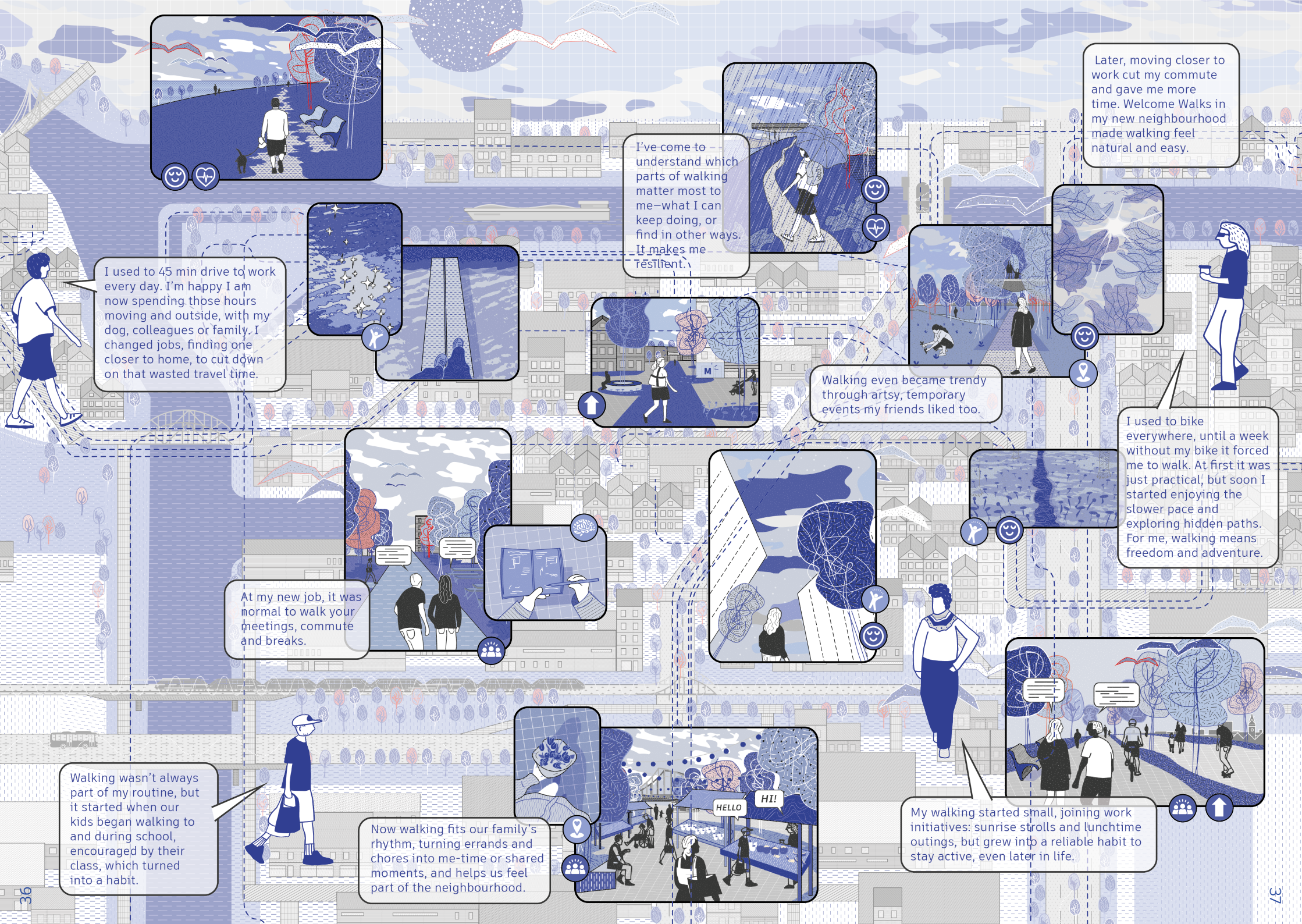
The scheme shows the patterns used for the design proposal in Zwolle. The patterns are documented in detail in the thesis ‘Steps towards slowness’, which holds their development, backing and relationships.



DESIGN EXAMPLE: EXPERIENCES

... A WALK IN THE FUTURE




I used to 45 min drive to work every day. I'm happy I am now spending those hours moving and outside, with my dog, colleagues or family. I changed jobs, finding one closer to home, to cut down on that wasted travel time.
I've come to understand which parts of walking matter most to me—what I can keep doing, or find in other ways. It makes me resilient.
Later, moving closer to work cut my commute and gave me more time. Welcome Walks in my new neighbourhood made walking feel natural and easy.
Walking even became trendy through artsy, temporary events my friends liked too.
I used to bike everywhere, until a week without my bike it forced me to walk. At first it was just practical, but soon I started enjoying the slower pace and exploring hidden paths. For me, walking means freedom and adventure.
At my new job, it was normal to walk your meetings, commute and breaks.
Walking wasn't always part of my routine, but it started when our kids began walking to and during school, encouraged by their class, which turned into a habit.
Now walking fits our family's rhythm, turning errands and chores into me-time or shared moments, and helps us feel part of the neighbourhood.
HELLO
HI!
My walking started small, joining work initiatives: sunrise strolls and lunchtime outings, but grew into a reliable habit to stay active, even later in life.

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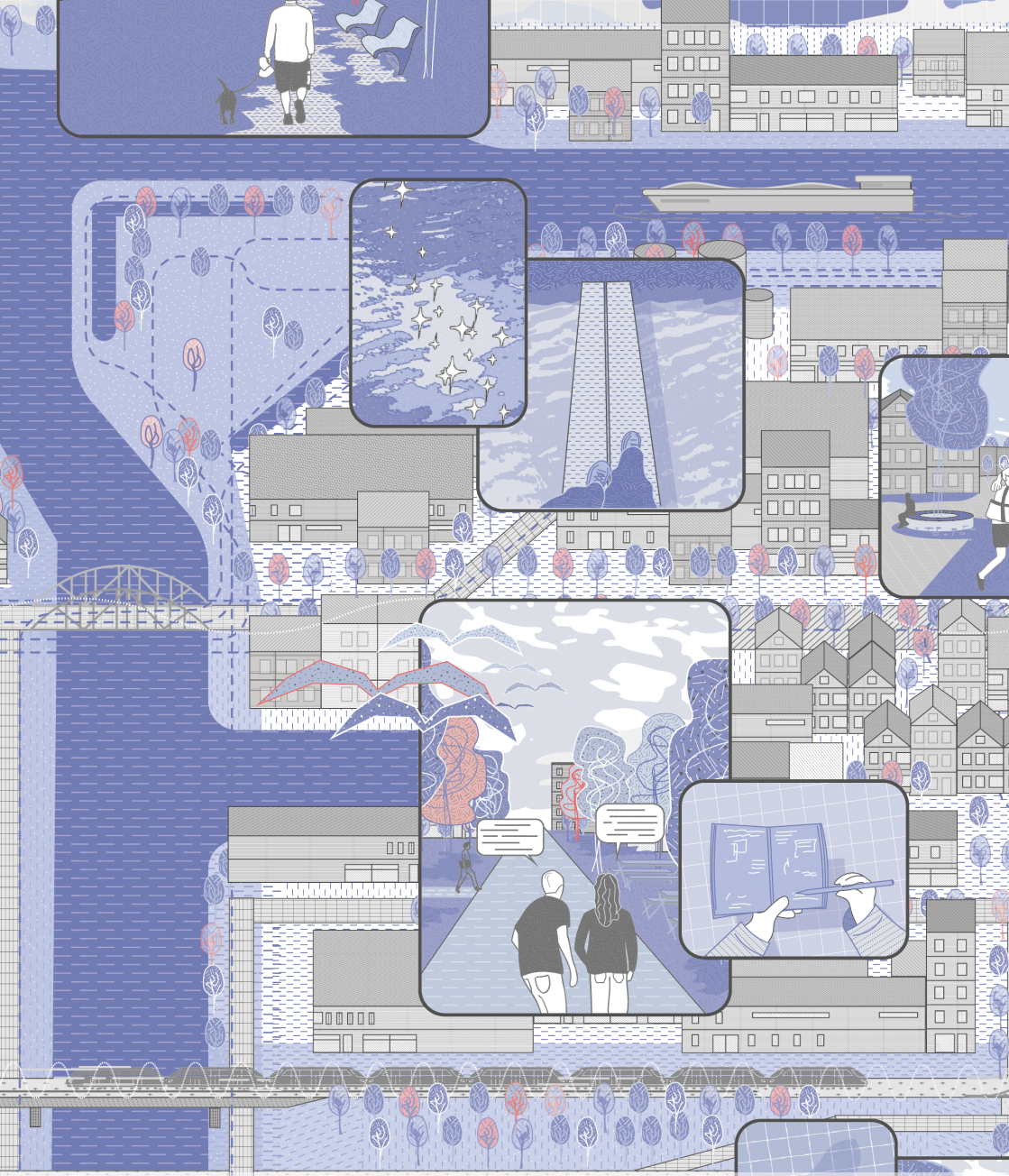

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The full thesis is available on the repository of the TU Delft.

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