SUMMARY

With an expected growing city population, growing number of households and an optimal international position as a port- and services city, Rotterdam has many potentials to be lively and economically viable. However, the inner city image and quality are lagging behind to benefit optimally from this perspective. The city center determines the attractiveness of the city towards the public, and is therefore of great importance for the economic strength of the city.

The center of Rotterdam is relatively sparsely populated. Main streets are dominated by wide traffic streets which separate parts of the city center. On top of that, very central streets in Rotterdam are monofunctional places which lack the diversity of use to stay active during the whole day. Governmental interventions to increase liveliness in the center are in process, but since the economic crisis struck, it has become very difficult to drastically increase the number of mixed-use buildings and add residential housing to increase activity in the streets.

This is why another focus is necessary to increase liveliness and activity in the city center. The opportunity for intervention lies in the lack of attractiveness of the public space. Many places of potential in the city center lack the quality and human scale that is necessary to invite people to stay and create the dynamics of people interacting with each other. Attractive public space can increase the amount of visitors and extend the period of residing in the city, which is good for commercial and cultural facilities. Eventually, good quality and image of the city center is vital for attracting new people and inhabitants, businesses and investors. If nothing is done, Rotterdam might lose the competition between Amsterdam and Utrecht, and stay behind in socio-economic perspective.

This thesis is about the spatial conditions for a more vital and attractive city for people to stay, live and work in. The goal eventually is for Rotterdam to be better able to attract new people and businesses and become more economically viable.

The design intervention implements spatial conditions to create an attractive inner city public space in the main boulevard of Rotterdam, the Coolsingel. The goal was to show that with a different traffic strategy for the city center, a large part of the Coolsingel street can be transformed into an attractive and more vibrant urban space, which can improve the image of the center of Rotterdam.