

# The Groningen Business Owners' Agenda



The Groningen Business Owners' Agenda is an initiative of the Groningen City Club, in collaboration with Bedrijvenvereniging West (Business Association West) and in consultation with the collaboration partners in the Koepel Economische Agenda Groningen (Umbrella Organisation for Economic Agenda Groningen).

The parties below support the Groningen Business Owners' Agenda and intend to work together to further develop this agenda.



The Groningen Business Owners' Agenda was drawn up by:



# The Groningen Business Owners' Agenda

## INTRODUCTION

This is the Groningen Business Owners' Agenda, a plan to make the retail sector in Groningen strong, vibrant, attractive, and ready for the future. This is an agenda that not only charts a course for the various themes but, most of all, calls for the parties to roll up their sleeves and get to work on specific actions and projects. The Groningen Business Owners' Agenda is an initiative of the Groningen City Club and Bedrijvenvereniging WEST, in consultation with other business associations and stakeholders. It is the purpose of this agenda to provide a guideline for a collaboration between the business owners and the city of Groningen, Het Fonds, and other partners to ensure a successful future for Groningen as a shopping city. It is no coincidence that Groningen is called the Retail Capital of the North!

## Why a Groningen Business Owners' Agenda?

### 1. National developments ...

Retail is a sector that is undergoing immense change: people are overloaded with news reports on the rise of online shopping, new technological gadgets, the concept of 'experience', the appearance of new brands, old family businesses going under, vacant shops in high streets, and the constant focus on consumer confidence. So many experts, so many opinions: we still don't know what the sector will ultimately look like in the end. It is clear that a lot is changing and that there will undoubtedly be winners and losers.

At the same time, retail is also a sector that affects everyone: we are all consumers and are impacted by developments in the sector. Retail is the driving force behind a lively inner city area that attracts visitors and connects those who live there with each other. In addition, local shopping centres form the lifeblood in the local area and thus make a valuable contribution to the quality of life in those areas. The large-scale shopping locations on the periphery also play an important role in attracting visitors from (outside) the region. And ... last but not least: Retail is an important source of employment! With almost 900,000 employees in retail nationally, this sector accounts for about 10% of the total number of jobs. With more than 16,000 jobs in the retail trade, that share rises to as much as 12% in Groningen.

So that retail in the Netherlands can operate in the rest of the 21<sup>st</sup> century with confidence, a national retail agenda was launched in 2015 initiated by the Ministry of Economic Affairs. The national Retail Agenda is a sector plan that deals with more than 20 aspects: from spatial planning to export and from real estate policy to logistics and human resources. A Northern Retail Agenda has also been launched for the Northern Netherlands (by the SER Noord-Nederland)

### 2. ... with a specific focus on Groningen.

As business owners in Groningen, we appreciate this focus but do not find it sufficiently attuned to the situation in the city of Groningen. Groningen cannot simply be viewed in the same way as other cities or villages in the Netherlands: there is no shrinkage in the city of Groningen, although there is in the area around it; there are few vacant shops in the inner city but they do exist in some places outside the inner city; there is a great deal of (international) talent, lots of cultural events; and Groningen has come a long way in collaboration between businesses, the city, Marketing Groningen and other parties. The result is that now we have a superb shopping city that is doing better than many other cities. But that does not mean we're there yet: we want to continue to invest, stay ahead and improve through collaboration and staying unique. This is the purpose of the Groningen Business Owners' Agenda.

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# The Groningen Business Owners' Agenda



GCC and Bedrijvenvereniging WEST, in consultation with VBZO and VBNO, are taking the first step with the Groninger Retail Agenda by setting out a clear programme for action. The days when business owners simply responded to the initiatives from the municipality have long gone with the introduction of Het Fonds and the Koepel Economische Agenda. This course is continued with The Groningen Business Owners' Agenda: it was developed by the business owners and the associations themselves, and we will further contribute to its development! Of course, collaboration with the municipality and other parties continues to be a fundamental pre-condition for implementation. This document also gives them an important role with regard to the development of the various themes.

## **Building on existing successes**

There are already many positive developments in Groningen. The Groningen Business Owners' Agenda is focused on further reinforcing these developments and introducing new, complementary accents. But that certainly does not mean that we do not appreciate what we are doing already. On the contrary, we believe that Groningen already has a strong foundation and that we are making good progress in different areas. For example, we are extremely proud of the following:

- A fantastic range of shops, a great atmosphere, and excellent cafes and restaurants
- Strong, independent entrepreneurship, full of surprising ideas for shops
- A range of cultural events unprecedented in the Northern Netherlands
- Good association structures
- A properly functioning fund (Het Fonds)
- A fantastic Marketing Groningen, with the best-known slogan in the Netherlands: 'Nothing beats Groningen'
- The nicest goods market in the Northern Netherlands
- Excellent collaboration with the municipality, for instance, in inner city management and in the alliance with the economic programme G-Kwadrant
- An ambitious and large-scale municipal investment programme in both Forum/Oostwand and in public space
- A progressive planning and advertising policy
- The use of tools such as the Servicepunt Detailhandel and the Groninger Retail Academy
- Collaboration between retail, the catering sector, and tourism

## **Process**

The Groningen Business Owners' Agenda that you have in front of you is a product that came into existence last year. About a year ago, the GCC took the first step by establishing an initial strategic Groningen Business Owners' Agenda as a response to the national and northern retail agenda. This document was primarily intended to announce the start of a process. This Business Owners' Agenda is the final result of this.

This agenda was developed in recent months during an intensive process following analyses, discussions, and workshops around the issues surrounding the inner city, local shopping centres and the connection between the inner city and the large-scale clusters.

The GCC study trip to Muenster was also inspirational. All of this resulted in a very rich input of themes, needs, strengths, weaknesses, actions, and projects that we used to develop an agenda that we can support and be proud of. Moreover, all business owners who wished to do so had a chance to contribute their ideas. During the development of the agenda it became clear that there were some large differences between the various areas: whilst we have a vibrant inner city, the situation in the local shopping centres is not always as good. These shopping centres are threatened by a general decline, vacant shops and a lack of interest. This is why this agenda lists a number of specific focus areas for the local shopping centres in addition to recommendations to further improve the general retail sector and the inner city.

## ASSOCIATIONS AS INITIATORS, BUT WE MUST WORK TOGETHER

The Groningen Business Owners' Agenda was an initiative of the business association which continuously aims to achieve added value for the business owners they represent in the city. The development of Het Fonds and the many joint activities are good examples of this. It is a constant ambition and challenge to keep up good communication with those it represents, to articulate what is going on and to encourage the involvement of all business owners in objectives and activities. The Groningen Business Owners' Agenda should also be seen in that light: a course has been formulated following talks, workshops, and discussions. We hope and believe that this will be supported and embraced by all the business owners and will enable us to go further. This also entails an implementation that needs to be taken up by the associations as well as by individual business owners.

The Groningen Business Owners' Agenda is ambitious and multifaceted. Therefore, it will take a lot of work to ensure a successful implementation. Of course, not everything can be done at once: the agenda is focused on defining our activities for the coming years and to keeping us on a fixed course, one that makes Groningen, as the Retail Capital of the North, ready for the future, bustling and economically strong. We will also need the full support from the and Marketing Groningen if it is to be a success. The Groningen City Club and Bedrijvenvereniging WEST are ready to take on the challenge! Will you join us?

On behalf of GCC  
Eric Bos, chairman



On behalf of Bedrijvenvereniging WEST,  
Klaas Holtman, chairman



## READING GUIDE AND STRUCTURE

The follow-up to this Groningen Business Owners' Agenda begins with listing the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats to retail in Groningen (SWOT analysis). This list can be seen as the analytical foundation on which the themes and activities mentioned in the agenda are based. The SWOT analysis is the result of a background document that was compiled for this Groningen Business Owners' Agenda; named 'Situation Sketch of the State of Affairs of Retail in Groningen' ('Situatieschets stand van zaken retail Groningen') (separate attachment). The SWOT analysis is followed by the actual agenda, which consists of three parts or levels.

- 1) city-wide themes
- 2) inner city themes
- 3) local shopping centres themes

Every theme is accompanied by an explanation as to why it is important, how it can be taken up, by whom and with what priority.

It is important to mention that the above division is not always clear cut or cast in stone: some themes overlap with each other, and some apply to multiple levels. The choice indicates primarily the level on which a theme has the most priority and that emerged most prominently from the talks and workshops. The focus of a number of themes is on the inner city, but that does not mean that these themes apply only to the inner city. One example is theme 7 – 'Facilitate the new shop': this theme and the accompanying implementation can also be applied to a local shopping centre or a large-scale retail trade cluster. It is exactly the purpose of this agenda for certain themes to cross over into different areas as good examples are often followed by others. For this reason, the classification is primarily intended as a reading aid and certainly not as a hindrance.

# SPAAK

## KOFFIE & KOERS

SINCE 2016

66

### OPENINGSTIJDEN

maandag	maandag
dinsdag	9.30 - 18.00
woensdag	9.30 - 18.00
donderdag	9.30 - 18.00
vrijdag	9.30 - 18.00
zaterdag	9.30 - 18.00
zondag	9.30 - 18.00

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# Strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats

## MERGING

### STRENGTHS ( + )

- A comprehensive range of shops in the inner city.
- The character of the inner city through unique shop concepts and independent enterprise
- The historical character and atmosphere of the inner city.
- Many small shop units suited for independent enterprise.
- A strong representation in the 'In and around the home' sector
- Large PDV/GDV clusters
- Strong and growing representation of the catering sector (including outside seating areas)
- A strong dynamic in the existing shops, many new establishments
- No serious competition close by.
- Low vacant shop percentage
- Intricate local shopping structure
- Presence of city district shopping centre Paddepoel
- Long average stay of visitors
- High consumer appreciation for range of shops and atmosphere
- Strong goods market
- A wide range of high-quality cultural activities
- Large and varied range of events
- Strong associations structure
- Good collaboration with city
- Presence of business owners' fund, National Diploma in Business Studies, RetailAcademy,
- Progressive economic, planning, and advertising policy
- Presence of a strong CityMarketing organisation
- Major employers established around the inner city area
- Presence of P+R locations around the city
- Large amount of data (including numbers of passers-by, questionnaires)
- Student presence

### WEAKNESSES ( - )

- High parking fees
- Small range of large shop units at A locations.
- Small local shopping centres
- Many shops isolated from other shopping areas
- Degree of large chains is considerable, while collaboration with branches in the city is limited
- The appearance and cohesion of Hoendiep furniture strip
- Limited quantity of shops in the 'fashion and luxury goods' sector.
- Limited connections between downtown, Sontplein, and Hoendiep
- Low consumer ratings for accessibility and parking
- Large differences in visitor numbers between A locations and lower
- The Diepenring is not attractive in most places
- Large differences in efforts by street associations and local shopping centres
- Lack of a market hall/food court complex
- Not much collaboration between city and region/province
- Lack of a vision for use of business owners' fund
- Lack of a centre manager
- Budget cuts for the inner city campaign
- Vacant shops and the atmosphere of Binnenstad-Oost shopping streets, especially Gelkingestraat, Carolieweg, Steenstilstraat

# to retail in Groningen

## EXTERNAL FACTORS

### OPPORTUNITIES ( + )

- Consumer confidence and turnover are on the rise
- Investment by the city in public space in the inner city
- Possibly improved pedestrian access to Sontplein
- Fast growth in city population
- Growth in one-person households of people who want to live in the city
- Strong local purchasing power in inner city.
- Substantial spending by visitors to the region
- Focus on Groningen by large (international) chains when expanding
- Many start-up businesses among the young population
- Growing international attention and facilities
- Growing importance of knowledge/emotion/ craftsmanship/hospitality in shop
- More attention and room for 'blurring'
- Application of new technologies in shops
- Large web stores that have Groningen as their home basis.
- Omni-channelling
- Groningen is seen as 'destination'
- Ageing population (threat or opportunity)
- Better collaboration between catering-tourism-retail
- Development of Forum/Nieuwe Markt
- Development of residential locations Meerstad and possibly Suikerunie
- Involvement of local real estate parties
- German visitors
- Consumer has a growing interest in sustainability

### THREATS ( - )

- Business costs are rising faster than turnover
- Many independent business owners are suffering financially
- Decline in population in surrounding region
- Low parking fees in surrounding centres
- Low average disposable income in the city and surrounding area
- Limited spending by city population
- Growth in online retail spending
- Dejuvenation
- Ageing population (threat or opportunity)
- Major infrastructural works around the city.
- Lack of involvement of institutional real estate investors
- Discussion on Factory Outlet Centres in, among others, Assen, Winschoten, Zuidbroek
- Due to (continuously) increasing rents, it is becoming more difficult to introduce new ideas to the market, especially by independents.

For a detailed explanation of this point and an analysis, please see appendix 1: Situation Sketch of the Groningen Business Owners' Agenda.



# The Groningen Business Owners' Agenda: themes and projects

## PREVIOUSLY EXISTING STRUCTURE AND PLANS AS STARTING POINT

In its approach to the structure of the shopping city Groningen this agenda uses three levels.

- The inner city, including Westerhaven
- two large-scale retail trade clusters on the periphery of the city centre's western and eastern sides, respectively:
  - The Groningen furniture strip (Hoendiep/Peizerweg)
  - Sontplein
- an intricate network of relatively small local shopping centres spread throughout the city, with one city district shopping centre (large local shopping centre with a large non-food element), namely, Paddepoel.

The choice for this structure is obvious: it is explicitly mentioned as such in the city retail trade policy, for example. The Groningen Business Owners' Agenda follows this classification and is of the opinion that this existing structure is sufficient for Groningen to accommodate the city's growth and consumer need. In the coming years it would make sense to invest in the existing shopping areas instead of focusing on the expansion and development of new shopping areas.

The city has substantial investment plans for the inner city. The Agenda generally supports these plans. A number of the themes and implementation ambitions of the Groningen Business Owners' Agenda are closely connected to these plans. A master plan and vision for the future have also been drawn up for Sontplein and Hoendiep, which are aimed at the continued development and redevelopment of the areas, with the objective of constructing compact, connected, attractive areas with a sound economic future. The Groningen Business Owners' Agenda considers these plans to be a starting point for the further development of the areas and for the city as a whole and therefore also as the starting point for this agenda. With this in mind, the authors of this agenda urge the city and developing parties to realise these future plans, both in Hoendiep and Sontplein.

With respect to local shopping centres, there are development plans for a number of locations, such as Overwinningsplein and, most prominent, Paddepoel, but these plans have still not been realised. It merits attention and urgency, also on the basis of this agenda, to determine the reasons for this and if this agenda gives any ideas to speed up some of these developments.



# City-wide themes

## 1. The Groninger Retail Consultation

<b>What</b>	A structural and regular consultation between representatives from the various areas and levels on the state of retail in the city: inner city, local shopping centres, Sontplein, Hoendiep, possibly supplemented by other parties.
<b>Why</b>	<p>Business owners in Groningen will benefit from an excellent shopping city on all levels: a flourishing inner city, thriving local shopping centres, attractive (thematic) shopping areas Hoendiep/Peizerweg and Sontplein. These areas should support and supplement each other; together they constitute 'the department store' of Groningen and the calling card for the city.</p> <p>We think it is an outdated idea that it should be the municipality alone who has responsibility for retail policy in the city. As business owners in the city, we want to discuss the retail structure, identity and branch mix in the various areas and the (positive or negative) consequences that this has for other areas in the city. After all, it is us as individual businesses and collectively who have the most interest and expertise in this area.</p> <p>Through proactive consultation, we can share knowledge, talk about conflicts and make plans which we can share with others such as the municipality. This will foster mutual understanding and logical coherence and therefore contribute to an improved shopping city. The whole is more than the sum of its parts!</p> <p>The joint effort that led to the development of the Groningen Business Owners' Agenda must be continued and turned into a permanent mutual dialogue. The consultation can also be an ideal way to monitor progress of the Groningen Retail Agenda.</p>
<b>How</b>	<p>The Retail Consultation Groningen is set up on the basis of the Groningen Business Owners' Agenda: a (roughly) semi-annual consultation between the important retail areas in the city. The purpose of the consultation is:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ to discuss relevant developments in the city, the consequences this has for other areas in the city and to make relevant agreements about that;</li> <li>▪ to work out joint initiatives (such as marketing or physical projects, such as the flyover);</li> <li>▪ to exchange information;</li> <li>▪ to determine priorities for strengthening the structure and quality of the retail areas in Groningen;</li> </ul>
<b>When</b>	Priority 1: start in 2018
<b>Who</b>	<p>Representatives of the various retail areas in the city, with participants from at least:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. the inner city</li> <li>2. one or several local shopping centres</li> <li>3. Groningen furniture strip (Hoendiep/Peizerweg)</li> <li>4. Sontplein</li> </ol> <p>In addition, it makes sense to invite the municipality (as participant or observer) and, depending on the theme, specific business owners, real estate owners, representatives/advocates or experts.</p>

## 2. Shopping city in the region

<b>What</b>	More interaction with the region and the provinces of Groningen, Drenthe and Friesland
<b>Why</b>	<p>Groningen is, without doubt, the best shopping city in the Northern Netherlands. Things are going well in Groningen at the moment, at least in large parts of the city. But that does not mean that there are no challenges in the individual areas or that the world outside the city does not impact retail in the city.</p> <p>The city of Groningen has always pulled its own weight in the area of retail; the provincial government has left the city 'alone' for the most part. However, there are a number of themes at the moment which call for more regular dialogue with the province(s):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ although the city can compete with Factory Outlet Centres (FOC), a better mutual arrangement between the provinces of Groningen and Drenthe and the cities of Assen and Groningen is absolutely desirable;</li><li>▪ although we can hardly speak of a surplus of shops in inner city Groningen, a surplus does exist in other areas; particularly in Hoendiep. However, for the time being, Hoendiep is excluded as a focus for the province of Groningen, which is increasingly focusing its attention on encouraging the restructuring of shopping areas outside the city;</li><li>▪ Various local shopping centres in Groningen can be compared, with respect to size and population in the service areas, to small to medium-sized centres in the province; The proactive approach to restructuring and continued development that the province initiates in these centres could eventually also play a role in the continued development of some local shopping centres;</li><li>▪ With respect to establishing new supermarkets, discussions between the city of Groningen and neighbouring municipalities play a role; on this, see theme 3 of the theme of local shopping centres;</li><li>▪ The business owners in the city have a great deal of expertise in the above area(s) and can offer best practices to their fellow business owners in the surrounding areas.</li></ul>
<b>How</b>	On the basis of this agenda, business associations, together with the municipality, want to enter into a proper dialogue with the province of Groningen about the above themes. A dialogue with the province of Drenthe and the city of Assen should also be started. Of primary importance here is a good arrangement about matters like an FOC and redevelopment programmes, but we also want to indicate that business owners in Groningen are also prepared to help their colleagues outside the city.
<b>When</b>	Prioriteit 1: 2018
<b>Who</b>	Bedrijvenverenigingen willen samen met gemeente optrekken richting provincie(s) en andere gemeenten.



# Themes for the inner city

## 1. Surprising small-scale range of cultural attractions

<b>What</b>	Mobile compact podiums on which artists can display their talents to the shopping public. It creates a place where debates can be held (reference Speaker's Corner) and where there is always something to see and do.
<b>Why</b>	Groningen is bustling, growing and flourishing, not least in the arts (music, design, literature, debate, etc., etc.) in the various institutions in the city. However, these are happening in separate worlds. This agenda gives rise to the ambition to show these talents to visitors to Groningen's inner city as well. The benefits are twofold: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ People will have the ability to experience unique and unexpected high-end things in the city. This is relevant in a time when people go to the city looking for 'experiences'</li> <li>▪ It will give artists and performers the chance to gain exposure with the audience</li> </ul>
<b>How</b>	<b>Physically:</b> by developing a moveable stage, and/or a fixed location. In terms of the programme: GCC (together with the municipality, where applicable) will contact art institutions (e.g. Minerva, USVA, the Conservatoire, dance schools, music schools, the University of Groningen's Faculty of Arts) and will offer them a stage on 'koopzondagen' (Sundays when the shops are open), for example. <b>Marketing:</b> Marketing Groningen will promote Groningen as a city in which culture and retail go hand in hand, a city with plenty of amazing activities that will never fail to surprise you!
<b>When</b>	Priority level 1 Start in early 2018
<b>Who</b>	GCC will be the initiator and, possibly, the developer and owner of a stage. The municipality will provide the locations. Together they will approach cultural institutions to develop a programme. Marketing Groningen will promote the programme in city marketing.

## 2. Professional, welcoming and unique

<b>What</b>	Focusing on the quality of entrepreneurship in shops in various areas: customer focus and hospitality (including for non-native speakers), presentation, shop experience, uniqueness, blurring, craftsmanship, appearance.
<b>Why</b>	The most important aspect of a shopping street is, of course, the shops. That is where customer contact, customer loyalty, customer experiences – and possibly purchases – are created. There is nothing more volatile than the world of retail; nowadays, in order to attract customers to your shop and generate turnover, you have to distinguish yourself on various fronts. The view among business owners is that the quality of entrepreneurship in Groningen still varies greatly in terms of concepts and customer service: from outstanding formulas to concepts with room for improvement. This agenda aims to further increase the quality and uniqueness of shops in Groningen by supporting business owners in this area. We focus in particular on independent, local entrepreneurs whose businesses give the inner city a unique, local flavour.
<b>How</b>	Our aim is to develop products that will stimulate and support entrepreneurship in the next few years. A good example of this is the Groninger Retail Academy, a project in which the GCC, together with the Hanze University of Applied Sciences, already offers workshops and courses on a variety of topics to enhance the quality of the retail trade. MKB Noord has also developed a suite of support products. Over the next few years, our goal is to further enhance professionalism in entrepreneurship by focusing on, for example: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Customer focus in an international city</li> <li>▪ The power of originality and craftsmanship</li> <li>▪ The presentation and profiling of shops (physically and in social media)</li> <li>▪ The importance of storytelling</li> <li>▪ The pros and cons of new technologies</li> <li>▪ The possibilities offered by blurring</li> </ul>
<b>When</b>	GCC also wants to explore the possibility of developing an instrument that allows shops to be 'screened' for the quality of their products, story, appearance, set up/shop window, uniqueness, etc. Priority level 1 Start in 2018
<b>Who</b>	GCC in collaboration with parties such as the Hanze University of Applied Sciences and MKB Noord, and supported by specialists and specialist agencies in various fields.

### 3. Time for a break

<b>What</b>	<p>A plan to create resting areas at a number of inner city locations, where visitors and consumers can take a break.</p> <p>The following categories are needed specifically:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ A place to relax as a “break from shopping”, where families with children, for example, can unwind and let their children play (combination with priority 1)</li><li>▪ Strategically located seating areas (benches) in the inner city, allowing people to take a break or have something to eat/read/etc., without having to go to a cafe or restaurant</li><li>▪ For the future: a strategic replacement/eye catcher for the Information Centre steps</li><li>▪ For convenience’s sake, resting areas like these should include adequate public toilets</li></ul>
<b>Why</b>	<p>We have a lively inner city, something this agenda is proud of. Lively can be tiring at times, however, for families with children, for the elderly – in fact, for everyone! Groningen currently has relatively few areas where people can sit down for a minute, either to relax or to let their children run around for a bit, to eat something or just to have a chat, to hang out or to ‘chill’. Consciously creating space for this will make the inner city more attractive for everyone, which will benefit retail.</p>
<b>How</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ Together with the municipality, GCC will look for a location that is best suited as a ‘resting area’ (possibly in combination with play options for children). This location will be specifically designed for this purpose in the inner city renewal plans. For example: Martinierkhof, A-Kerkhof</li><li>▪ Together with the municipality, GCC will develop a ‘master plan’ for benches which focuses on strategic locations and recognisable, eye-catching, yet useful design. Sponsoring may be used for financing</li><li>▪ The steps at the temporary Information Centre on the Grote Markt are currently highly appreciated. GCC and the municipality will look for a location and a way of creating a similar site</li><li>▪ In collaboration with both the municipality and commercial parties, GCC wants to explore the possibilities for more and better public toilets in the inner city</li></ul>
<b>When</b>	<p>Priority level 1 Start in early 2018</p>
<b>Who</b>	<p>GCC and municipality will together determine the locations and the approach towards creating places to relax and seating areas. The implementation can take place within the framework of the inner city renewal plans.</p>





## 4. A child-friendly inner city

<b>What</b>	<p>Interventions, investments, initiatives and actions aimed at the target group of <b>young families with children</b>. This might include projects such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ The development of a structural playground for children, possibly in combination with a place to relax/sit down (“a break from shopping”)</li> <li>▪ Working on an initiative for a childcare facility in the inner city (reference: Smaland IKEA, MonkeyTown)</li> <li>▪ A more structural activities programme for children including a bouncy castle festival, Parades, small-scale children’s events (balloons, face painting, etc.), to let parents know there are frequent/regular activities for children</li> <li>▪ A sandpit or water park in summer, as a warm-weather counterpart of the ice rink</li> </ul>
<b>Why</b>	<p>Young families from Groningen and the region have substantial purchasing power and purchasing needs, and are important to business owners in the city. At the same time they are often busy, have to look after their children and are easily persuaded by the opportunities offered by online shopping. The inner city must offer more reasons to attract young families to the city and facilitate them in doing so. This can be achieved by means of new high-profile initiatives (that children like) and by making things easier for families. In the end, this will benefit retail turnover figures.</p> <p>We can safely say that currently, very little is being done for children in the inner city. There are no childcare facilities, no playground, and children’s activities are not always structured/programmed logically or communicated well enough.</p>
<b>How</b>	<p>By creating an actual children’s playground located in the public domain. To be developed in the overall renewal plans for the inner city. A combination with a work of art might be an option (reference: the aardvark sculpture in Arnhem), or with a stage.</p> <p>Childcare facilities: bringing together the initiator and the real estate owner Structuring of activities: focusing on children’s activities when programming events. Focusing on child-friendliness in Marketing (including in shops, e.g. Musjes)</p>
<b>When</b>	Priority level 2 Start 2 <sup>nd</sup> half of 2018
<b>Who</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ GCC will call on the municipality to develop the children’s playground sub-project</li> <li>▪ For the childcare facility, GCC will bring together the real estate owner and initiator</li> <li>▪ Marketing Groningen will develop a warm-weather counterpart of the ice rink and structural programming of children’s activities, and will focus on this in the marketing campaign</li> </ul>

## 5. Embracing tourists

<b>What</b>	A plan aimed at making tourists feel welcome in Groningen, inspiring and pampering them, and providing them with activities they can undertake and combine.
<b>Why</b>	<p>Tourists are an important target group and income generator for the retail and hospitality sectors in the inner city. According to recurring research by the Groningen municipality, overnight tourists alone (those who stay in Groningen for at least one night), as a group, spend tens of millions of euros in the city, which figure does not even include ‘day trippers’.</p> <p>Groningen is already welcoming to tourists, and Marketing Groningen has been developing campaigns to attract and inspire tourists for years. This agenda is of the opinion, however, that the city can do even better, in particular when it comes to retail.</p>
<b>How</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ This agenda aims to align opening times (mainly during weekends) with the schedules of visitors. This refers in particular to Sundays, when (German) tourists often arrive early and when there is not much to do for overnight tourists, especially in the morning+</li> <li>▪ Additionally, it would be advisable to develop arrangements that focus on the connection between culture/cultural tourism and shopping. This includes the connection with arrangements outside the city, not only in the province of Groningen, but also in Drenthe and possibly Friesland+</li> <li>▪ We want to specifically show tourists the unique and novel shopping concepts the city has to offer. This can be achieved by actively approaching tourists, via hotel magazines for example (e.g. ‘24uur in Groningen’ with a suggested programme for spending a day in the city, or a printed version of the ‘Oogst-Groningen’ blog full of new, hip developments in the city)</li> <li>▪ Our goal is to guide tourists through the inner city with more awareness and we are exploring the possibilities to achieve this. Proper signage is essential, but we could also look at more active solutions: digital solutions (apps or augmented reality) or solutions in the public domain (reference: Freedom Trail Boston)</li> </ul>
<b>When</b>	Priority level 2 Start 2 <sup>nd</sup> half of 2018
<b>Who</b>	GCC and Marketing Groningen are primarily responsible. A commercial party (e.g. NDC Media) could potentially take on the development of a magazine.

## 6. Facilitating new shops

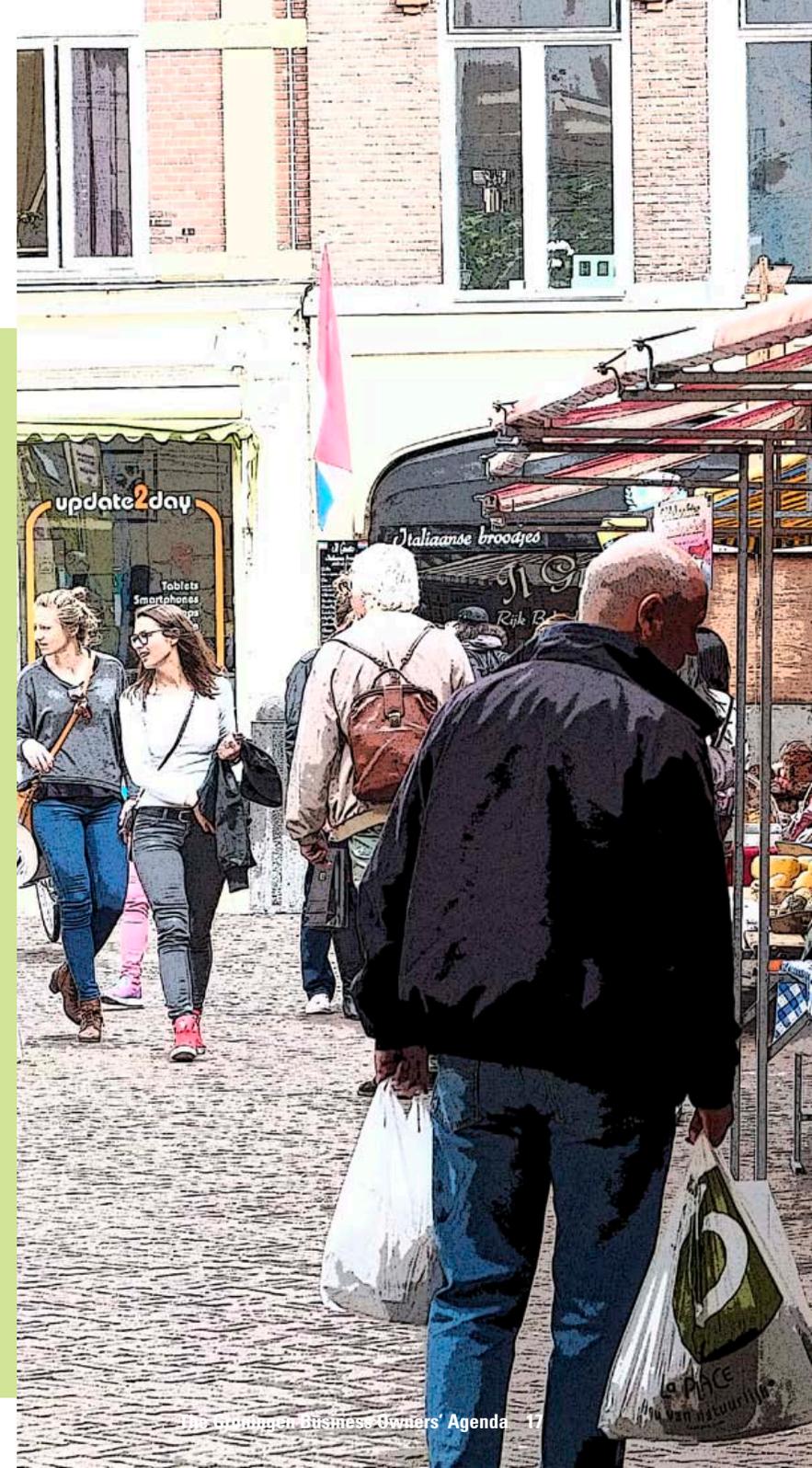
<b>What</b>	A strategic real estate plan for the inner city to facilitate and attract new shops, both for A locations (prime locations) and beyond.
<b>Why</b>	<p>Retail can be quite dynamic; shops come and go. Currently there is a great need for large retail outlets in A locations (the busiest areas in the inner city), while the demand for retail space in the adjoining areas is much smaller.</p> <p>Accommodating the right shop at the right location and enticing the right shops to establish (or relocate) themselves in Groningen will strengthen the inner city retail area as a whole.</p>
<b>How</b>	<p>With this agenda, we want to focus on the following themes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Finding the best possible way of accommodating chains looking for large retail spaces (350-500m<sup>2</sup> of shop-floor surface area or more) at A locations. The lack of available space requires creativity – connecting premises, for example. In this process it is crucial to work closely with the municipality (especially where the heritage value of a building is involved), the real estate owner, the real estate agent and the retailer. Inspiration from architects/designers may be helpful.</li> <li>▪ Together with the municipality and the owners we want to be actively involved in the talks about a new northern façade of the Grote Markt as a crucial part of the retail area</li> <li>▪ Coaching independent entrepreneurs who are relocating or starting up their business or helping them develop their ideas, if required</li> <li>▪ Setting up a strategic real estate team consisting of business owners, real estate owners, real estate agents and the municipality that will actively contribute to establishing the right shops at the right location. It is important to remember that, in this case, the final outcome must always be market-based</li> <li>▪ Joint action is particularly relevant at B and C locations (such as the adjoining streets). It has potential benefits for both parties when local parties such as real estate owners and business owners come together to discuss repurposing options for vacant properties</li> <li>▪ The development of a bid book on retail in Groningen (with facts, figures, enticement and perspective) provides parties who are in contact with potentially interested retailers with an easy and complete way of presenting the proposition for the inner city of Groningen</li> <li>▪ The development of relocation schemes, incentive schemes and, if needed, a vacancy regulation, can further strengthen the above collaboration</li> </ul>
<b>When</b>	<p>Priority level 1</p> <p>Start in early 2018</p>
<b>Who</b>	GCC, commercial real estate agents, real estate parties and business owners must work together to improve the retail structure of the inner city.

## 7. Show and tell us who you are

<b>What</b>	A stronger focus in city marketing on the inner city's uniqueness, both on the inner city as a whole, in particular after the investments done by the municipality, but on the various parts of the inner city as well.
<b>Why</b>	<p>Groningen is a city to be proud of. This is well communicated via the Marketing Groningen campaigns. There is so much going on at the moment, however, that there will be a completely new inner city in a few years' time. That is remarkable and must be promoted.</p> <p>But it is not just the inner city as a whole that deserves to be in the spotlight. In recent years, inner city streets have increasingly started developing their own DNA. Examples of this are the Folkingestraat, the Oude Kijk in 't Jatstraat and the Zwanestraat. Reflecting on, shaping and promoting that DNA is an important task in the further reinforcement of Groningen as a retail city.</p>
<b>How</b>	<p>As indicated, Marketing Groningen's city marketing is working very well. It goes without saying that all focus areas in this Groninger Retail Agenda must be included in any future campaigns. We would like to stress, however, that more could be done to market the city as a whole, not just the inner city, but the 'meubelboulevard' (homeware shopping strip) and the Sontplein as well. In addition, this agenda would like to see more efforts in reaching German visitors.</p> <p>This agenda also suggests to once again nominate Groningen as a candidate for the title of 'Best Inner City in the Netherlands', once the investments in the inner city have been completed and the Forum/east façade has been delivered.</p> <p>At street level, we want to encourage business owners to get together and reflect on their DNA and their profile, and on how to continue shaping those. We want to support this where possible, by means of research and support, for example.</p>
<b>When</b>	<p>Priority level 2</p> <p>Start in 2019</p>
<b>Who</b>	Marketing Groningen, GCC and the municipality must join forces to promote the inner city and work together on the title of 'Best Inner City' once that event draws near. The responsibility for building the DNA of a street or an area rests with the businesses or street associations themselves, with support from GCC.

## 8. Accessibility and a parking-friendly city

<b>What</b>	Focusing on accessibility and parking fees
<b>Why</b>	<p>Even though a large part of visitors of the inner city arrive by bicycle or public transport, a significant proportion (over 20%) still arrives by car. Parking facilities, parking fees and accessibility therefore remain important focus areas. This also applies to solutions for inner city bicycle parking, which currently causes problems at various locations.</p> <p>With both the renewal plans for the southern ring road and the investments in the inner city, accessibility of the inner city will be a key focus area in the next few years.</p> <p>The high parking fees in the city are structurally poorly rated, in particular because of the parking fees in Ommeland. This is likely to cause a loss of turnover, even though the exact amount of that loss cannot be calculated.</p> <p>Accessibility is not just about cars, bicycles and public transport, however. With this agenda we want to stress the importance of the city being accessible to everyone as a place to shop, work, meet others and enjoy, including to visitors with disabilities who rely on wheelchairs, blind-guide support or other types of support.</p>
<b>How</b>	<p>The municipality is already very conscious of the need to keep the city accessible with the Groningen Bereikbaar ('Groningen Accessible') project. We support this. In addition, extra efforts will need to be made over the next couple of years to keep both business owners and consumers well informed on the consequences of the inner city renewal plans. To make sure this message reaches as many people as possible, effective communication by the municipality is required. The GCC also sees a role for itself in this process, by ensuring that business owners in retail streets are familiar with all plans. To achieve this, we propose setting up an 'accessibility ambassador' for each street, who keeps all business owners informed. They, in turn, will be able to properly advise consumers in their shops.</p> <p>Regarding parking, we want to resume talks with the municipality on the possibility of parking discounts. This includes exploring, and, where possible, implementing ideas such as discount cards or a structural parking savings scheme when customers purchase something in a shop. In terms of bicycle parking, we are continuing our talks with the municipality with the aim of finding good, innovative solutions to tackle bicycle parking issues within the inner city renewal plans.</p> <p>As far as accessibility for people with disabilities is concerned, together with the municipality, we want to further develop and implement the 'City Accessibility' plan, in particular by creating awareness among business owners and highlighting opportunities and best practices.</p> <p>There might also be possibilities for further improvement of the bus connection between Groningen and Leer/Oldenburger/Bremen. This will be explored based on this agenda.</p>
<b>When</b>	<p>Priority level 1</p> <p>Start in early 2018</p>
<b>Who</b>	It is primarily up to the municipality to ensure effective communication regarding accessibility. As GCC, we want to play an active role in this. We want to be the driving force where parking is concerned. In terms of accessibility for people with disabilities, the municipality will be the main driving force, with GCC's role being that of creating awareness among business owners.





## 9. Leading the way in Digital Innovation

<b>What</b>	A plan for Groningen to lead the way when it comes to the integration of digital technologies and omnichannel in retail.
<b>Why</b>	<p>Technology, online and omnichannel are radically changing the world of retail. The latest trends and gadgets keep popping up everywhere. At the same time, many retailers are very doubtful of how they could or should use all these new possibilities. Leading the way in the application of digital technology and omnichanneling (to reinforce, rather than take away, the physical shopping experience) is a chance for the city of Groningen to distinguish itself.</p> <p>Groningen is also a city where several large web shops are located. It is remarkable that there is little or no collaboration between the Groningen retail sector and these parties. It would be an obvious choice to explore how we can reinforce each other, learn from each other and help each other.</p>
<b>How</b>	<p>By developing modules together with experts (e.g. commercial parties or industry associations) to inspire local business owners in the application of new technologies and omnichannel strategies.</p> <p>By exploring whether streets are interested in becoming the most technologically advanced retail street in the Netherlands and developing a plan to achieve this.</p> <p>By organising a platform where physical retailers and web shops can meet, exchange knowledge and discuss how their different activities can reinforce each other.</p>
<b>When</b>	<p>Priority level 2</p> <p>Start in 2019</p>
<b>Who</b>	GCC wants to be an initiator in this process, together with local retailers and web shop entrepreneurs. Support by experts from interest groups or commercial parties will be necessary to shape and define digital applications and omnichannel strategies.

## 10. Collaboration based on involvement and responsibility

<b>What</b>	To increase the already high level of collaboration in the inner city to an even higher level, by involving all parties in the inner city and by giving business owners responsibility.
<b>Why</b>	<p>Together, we are what makes the (inner) city. In recent years, we have seen the city grow stronger through collaboration, involvement and responsibility. The collaboration between business owners and the municipality, the deployment of Het Fonds ('The Fund'), and the experiments in the Zwanestraat, for example, all serve to show us that joint <b>involvement and responsibility</b> is the right way.</p> <p>Our goal is to keep this collaboration at a consistently high level as well as to involve those parties who, at the moment, lack some involvement, such as branches and real estate owners.</p>
<b>How</b>	<p>This agenda aims to focus on the following elements:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Ongoing dialogue with the municipality, particularly where the upcoming investments in the inner city are concerned</li> <li>▪ Firmly embedding the Inner City management ('Binnenstadsmanagement') as the 'cock-pit' from which we work together on the city</li> <li>▪ Promoting an organisational structure (street association) where no structure exists</li> <li>▪ Improving the involvement of branch stores, both by calling on local branch managers and by exploring whether involvement of head offices would be of value</li> <li>▪ Improving the involvement of real estate owners, by actively engaging them in dialogue and by giving the most involved owners a role in the activities in the inner city</li> <li>▪ We want to actively promote the personal responsibility of streets, which has produced great results in the former experimental zone in the Zwanestraat (e.g. displays and advertising policy). We want to explore the possibility of using this kind of personal responsibility in other areas as well</li> </ul>
<b>When</b>	Priority level 2 Start in 2 <sup>nd</sup> half of 2018
<b>Who</b>	<p>GCC and the municipality of Groningen are the driving force behind the dialogue, including in Inner City Management. GCC will take the initiative to improve the involvement of branches and real estate owners, together with national branch organisations (such as INRetail), if necessary.</p> <p>Together with the municipality, GCC will explore the possibility of further developing the concept of personal responsibility.</p>

## 11. Working on an even more beautiful city

<b>What</b>	Instruments to make the city even more beautiful and welcoming.
<b>Why</b>	<p>We are proud of Groningen's beautiful inner city, and we are pleased that the municipality has decided to invest generously in the city's public spaces. We wholeheartedly support this, in particular in areas such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ space for pedestrians</li> <li>▪ plans to address Grote Markt en Diepenring</li> <li>▪ plans to address bicycle parking</li> <li>▪ more green spaces in the inner city</li> </ul> <p>But there is more to the city than public spaces alone: the city is shaped by the buildings, the façades and the shop windows in the various streets. In many places the property and character is of good quality but, unfortunately, that is not the case everywhere. The GCC wants to play an active role in making any unsightly locations beautiful and contribute to the character of the shopping city Groningen.</p>
<b>How</b>	<p>The GCC wants to develop an initiative to list a number of unsightly locations in the city and to work with others to improve them. This includes things such as: blank walls, inadequate sight lines, dead parts of streets, property in a bad state of repair, poor shop windows. These type of places can be improved by the implementation of, for example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ vertical greenery</li> <li>▪ lighting</li> <li>▪ art (reference work of art Gelkingestraat or professional graffiti)</li> </ul> <p>A smart approach could possibly transform these places into sites that are remarkable exactly because of their positive contribution to the city centre.</p> <p>For this purpose, certain means are required. Therefore, we would like to explore whether the development of a façade fund (to which the owner, the municipality, as well as Het Fonds contribute) is a possibility.</p>
<b>When</b>	Priority level 2 Start in 2 <sup>nd</sup> half of 2018
<b>Who</b>	The GCC is the initiator of the project. Obviously, the real estate owner must be willing to cooperate: the initiator will have to present the inspiration. This can happen, for example, by asking artists or specialised agencies to create a design. For possible financial stimulation in the shape of, for example, a façade fund, we aim to cooperate with the municipality.



## 12. Logistics

<b>What</b>	Active focus on the theme logistics/delivery
<b>Why</b>	<p>Logistics is a central theme for a shopping area: shops need to receive deliveries, rubbish needs to be removed. Simultaneously, there is a certain tension between the delivery vehicles and people in the street: consumers, passers-by, etc. That can result in conflicts. Moreover, sustainability is a point of interest.</p> <p>Groningen is actively thinking about city logistics: the delivery hours were altered some time ago. Furthermore, we are exploring to what extent deliveries with hubs on the outskirts of the city and smaller transportation (electric, bicycle, etc.) to the individual consumers is possible.</p> <p>Considering the interests, ambition and potential tension, the GCC wants to play an active role in the theme of logistics.</p>
<b>How</b>	<p>The GCC wants to work with the entrepreneurs and play an active role in thinking about future logistics solutions. That does not only entail deliveries, but also services to the shopping public, such as a grocery service that delivers products purchased in the city to a parking location.</p> <p>Furthermore, the GCC believes the current delivery hours do not suit the natural behaviour of entrepreneurs, nor the periods in which consumers are walking around in the streets. An alternative arrangement for delivery hours should be developed.</p>
<b>When</b>	<p>Priority level 3 Start in 2019</p>
<b>Who</b>	<p>The GCC, entrepreneurs, municipality and logistics parties need to collectively consider the implementation of delivery hours and future forms of logistics that do justice to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ The entrepreneur's position</li> <li>▪ The consumer's well-being</li> <li>▪ The logistics party's business model</li> <li>▪ A sustainable society</li> </ul>

## 13. Attention for the entrepreneur

<b>What</b>	Development of an approach in which there is attention and support for the entrepreneur behind the shop
<b>Why</b>	<p>Running a shop is definitely not an easy task: getting started can be a challenge, on the way it is possible that you are no longer conceptually or financially on the right line and quitting is also not always easy.</p> <p>The GCC is not only an organisation that cares about drawing in more visitors, creating more vibrancy and more profits, but it also wants to look out for the (specifically self-employed) entrepreneur behind the company and offer them support.</p>
<b>How</b>	<p>With the introduction of buddy and coaching systems, we want to match self-employed entrepreneurs that are getting started or whose company can use a revival to experienced and successful (ex-) entrepreneurs who can teach them the tricks of the trade. Moreover, we want to offer personalised support to entrepreneurs in trouble and in the case of company termination. We want to further investigate whether this should happen through peer support from other entrepreneurs or through specialised agencies.</p>
<b>When</b>	Priority level 2 Start in 2nd half of 2018
<b>Who</b>	<p>The GCC wants to introduce buddy and coaching systems. For that purpose, it wants to approach (ex-) entrepreneurs that are prepared to dedicate time and energy to accompanying other entrepreneurs. Furthermore, the GCC wants to determine to what extent they can offer a specific role for entrepreneurs with financial problems or in the case of company termination.</p>



## 14. Measuring and knowing

### What

A coherent way of monitoring data and assessments

### Why

Together with parties in the city centre we have managed to achieve a lot of positive improvements although not always on the basis of hard data. We collect data in various places, such as the municipality, but also in chains, for example. However, these data are not yet entirely and structurally used for the collective construction of a continuously improving city centre. We want to use the available data more consciously in order to map the developments and effects of specific action lines.

Moreover, as stakeholders, we have lots of conversations with each other. But that way we sometimes neglect the consumer: in the end, they are the ones we are doing this for.

### How

The municipality has recently delivered the 'Groningen City Index', a dashboard with all the available relevant data collected by the municipality. We are positive about this new tool and want to determine in agreement with the municipality what data are relevant for the city centre and its entrepreneurs. A specific 'city centre dashboard' may well be an option within the Groningen City Index. Accessibility (open data) is the starting point, as much as possible.

Furthermore, we want to set up a consumer panel, possibly linked to the Retail Trade Monitor, which we will regularly interview about the developments in the city centre and the benefits and drawbacks of various interventions, activities and projects. In cooperation with the municipality and the province of Groningen, it is useful to take a look at the purchasing flow study for the local centres in the city of Groningen.

### When

Priority level 2  
Start in 2019

### Who

In the meantime, the municipality has delivered the Groningen City Index.

The GCC and municipality have to explore together whether it is possible to create a city centre dashboard. The GCC will set up a consumer panel. The province of Groningen can possibly facilitate a municipal purchasing flow study.



# Local shopping centres

## 1. Municipal investment programme local centres

<b>What</b>	An investment programme for spatial reinforcement of a couple of local shopping centres.
<b>Why</b>	<p>The city centre may well be the city's 'show-case', but local shopping centres can also play a crucial role in the quality of life and connection in the districts. Local shopping centres create more opportunities to meet people and are important in the fight against loneliness. In the future they will have more and more potential as a local centre with room for various activities, such as care and advice in addition to being a retail function. We have noticed in various locations throughout the city that there are physical pressure points in the local centres. Moreover, facilities in a couple of local centres are becoming run down: in the past few years, there have only been very limited investments in the local shopping centres. In the city centre, 30 million euros will be invested in the next couple of years to make the city centre future proof. Therefore, we are in favour of developing an investment programme for the local shopping centres. That way, they will once again become attractive, functional and modern. They will be able to function as powerful centres for the districts. Depending on the functioning and potential of the local shopping centre in question, this investment can be combined with expansion or redevelopment.</p>
<b>How</b>	<p>As the Groninger Ondernemers Agenda, we specifically foresee a role for a municipal investment programme. But in that regard we look at co-creation: we want to explore in cooperation with the municipality to what extent local real estate owners and entrepreneurs (through Het Fonds) can contribute to the enhancement of their own area. The Groninger Retail Overleg, which has to be set up, should play a central role in that regard.</p> <p>In terms of the areas that are most in need of an investment, the Overwinningplein, Hoogkerk and Beijum specifically come to mind. Obviously, the plan development in Paddepoel should also be facilitated further.</p> <p>An integral approach is important in the management and enhancement of programmes: commercial activity, public space, traffic, pedestrian, allocation, setting. In the past few years, there have been too many interventions from an ad hoc approach.</p>
<b>When</b>	<p>Priority level 1</p> <p>Start in early 2018</p> <p>In consideration of the new local elections in spring 2018, we don't expect that the current council and board will have room to start running an important course of this kind. In the build-up to the elections, we want to draw the attention of various parties to the importance of investing in a modern, powerful local shopping structure.</p>
<b>Who</b>	We suggest creating a complete programme in cooperation with the municipality, organisations and property parties. In terms of financing, we specifically see a role for the municipality, supported by local real estate parties and entrepreneurs through Het Fonds.





## 2. More coherence and cooperation between the local shopping centres

<b>What</b>	<p>Closer cooperation between the local centres, both intrinsically and structurally</p>
<b>Why</b>	<p>Fortunately, every sizeable local shopping centre in Groningen has its own local shop association. Most of these local shop associations are only carried by a few shop owners, which creates several capacity problems. Simultaneously, local shopping centres often have the same questions, such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ How can the municipality help us create a better organisation of the area?</li> <li>▪ How do we organise our organisation structure, activities and marketing?</li> <li>▪ How do we put applications to Het Fonds to good use?</li> </ul> <p>The following is true for all these questions: it is not useful to reinvent the wheel every time. During the development of the Groninger Ondernemers Agenda it became clear that local shopping centres do not see each other as competitors, but as colleagues. They wish to come closer together: to learn from each other's experiences, knowledge and best practices. Getting further together, making a fist and maybe even pick up projects together.</p> <p>Moreover, not all local centres are part of one large business association in terms of fund allocation. To be more precise, a large number of centres belong to the business association WEST, which therefore pays a lot of attention to the needs of the local shopping centres. A smaller number is part of VBNO, which focuses much more on the industrial estates in the area. For organisational reasons, it appears to make sense for the local shopping centres to be part of one association. This logic also applies to Het Fond since this would enable a more efficient use of the funds.</p>
<b>How</b>	<p>Business association WEST already organises regular meetings which are attended by almost all local shopping centres. WEST also offers help to local centres by supporting the Service Punt Detailhandel, e.g. for requesting means of Het Fonds. All of this needs to continue and be reinforced. In that respect, we are considering launching a 'platform local centres', in which the local centres can help each other (with support). For example, by organising thematic sessions ('how do you do that'), visiting each other, developing a manual, etc.</p> <p>Structurally, we care about the fact that the local centres in Noord-Oost indicate that they don't feel very involved with VBNO's fund consultations. We are investigating whether it's possible for the local centres concerned (either officially or not) to join the other centres so that they can really feel like there is a place for their questions and needs in terms of Het Fonds.</p>
<b>When</b>	<p>Priority level 1 Start in early 2018</p>
<b>Who</b>	<p>Business association WEST and Servicepunt Detailhandel will continue and enhance the current activity. We will look for initiators for an active platform local shopping centres Groningen. In terms of the inclusion of local shopping centres from Noord-Oost, there will be a consultation between the local centres concerned, business associations and the board of Het Fonds.</p>

### 3. Regional agreement about the supermarket structure

<b>What</b>	A guaranteed regional agreement about the retail trade structure and size, e.g. in the region Groningen-Assen
<b>Why</b>	<p>Currently, there is a specific issue in Groningen-Zuid and the district Ter Borch in the municipality of Tynaarlo with regards to the addition of a supermarket in Ter Borch. That addition has an effect both on the municipality of Tynaarlo as the city of Groningen, for established entrepreneurs and investment plans. Nevertheless, there is no (or hardly any) communication between the two municipalities. A similar situation could arise in the following years for the development Meerstad in relation to Slochteren/Harkstede. Another obvious example is the discussion about the possibility of a Factory Outlet Centre at the TT circuit in Assen.</p> <p>It is remarkable that the region Groningen-Assen does manage to create agreements about the contingents residences and industrial estates that can be added to the current stock, but not about the number of retail trade indicators. This clearly shows that the market is in need of public direction. That kind of agreement is also encouraged by national and regional retail agendas; they even recommend creating regional retail trade visions.</p>
<b>How</b>	As the Groninger Ondernemers Agenda, we suggest creating more regional agreements in terms of retail trade structure and new retail trade developments. We are in favour of regular agreements between the municipalities and provinces of the region Groningen-Assen about the retail trade structure. This can happen in a similar way to property construction/industrial estates: by having access to the facts and figures through regular research and by discussing new developments together.
<b>When</b>	Priority level 1 Start in early 2018
<b>Who</b>	Municipality of Groningen, Province of Groningen, Municipality of Tynaarlo, Province of Drenthe and parties in the region Groningen-Assen

### 4. Knowledge and insight in care area, target group and approach

<b>What</b>	Support per local shopping centre in developing a target group approach, determining the right offer and matching marketing proposition
<b>Why</b>	<p>What determines whether a shopping centre functions well or not? This is largely determined by the question whether a consumer is prepared to come to the shopping centre. In order to offer the consumer what they ask for, it's important for a local shopping centre to wonder:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ What is my (potential) care area?</li> <li>▪ Who are my customers (target group) and what do they want?</li> <li>▪ What do the current purchasing flows look like?</li> <li>▪ Do the shops I provide offer the services and facilities my (potential) target group asks for?</li> <li>▪ Who are my competitors and what do they offer?</li> <li>▪ How can I improve my offer?</li> <li>▪ How do I enhance my position with marketing, activities and events?</li> <li>▪ Could an (extension) of the goods market in my local shopping centre enhance my position?</li> </ul> <p>For a local shopping centre with various owners and entrepreneurs, it is not always easy to free up time and capacity for answering those questions. As the Groninger Retail Agenda, we want to support the local shopping centres in answering those questions.</p>
<b>How</b>	We want to have a module developed with which we can support local shopping centres in formulating their target group approach, chosen corresponding offer, and marketing proposition and mix. This module can be used by local shopping centres that are open to this through financial support from het Fonds. The purpose of the module is not only to gain insight and determine a position, but also to formulate tangible actions that contribute to this position. In that process, a new purchasing flow study in the municipality of Groningen will play an important role, as it will visualise the purchasing power of local and other customers for separate local shopping centres.
<b>When</b>	Priority level 2 Start in early 2018
<b>Who</b>	Business association WEST, in cooperation with local shop boards and external experts. The province of Groningen can possibly facilitate a new municipal purchasing flow study.

## 5. Improving involvement

<b>What</b>	Specific attention for involving a larger part of shopping companies in a local centre.
<b>Why</b>	The association structure in the local shopping centres is generally good but vulnerable: it is driven by a couple of active (mostly self-employed) shop owners, who run the association, the contacts and all the activities. Furthermore, there is a large group of shop owners who either follow or don't participate in anything. This is sometimes true for self-employed shop owners, but often also for chains (franchisees, e.g. in the supermarket sector there are explicit exceptions to this, by the way) and the property owners. The challenge is to involve them more. Not only to achieve more and reap the full benefits from the activities, but also to remove the pressure somewhat for the current initiators, who are sometimes almost too much in demand, not only in their own shopping centre, but also in the external dialogue (e.g. towards Het Fonds or the municipality).
<b>How</b>	<p>The Groningen Retail Agenda wants to create an approach to activate entrepreneurs who are reluctant to participate. Both enticement and obligation can have a stimulating effect in that respect. Good ideas and best practices will be a part of this. A good example is the landlord who specifies in a lease that the entrepreneur is obliged to contribute to the activities organised by the shop owners' association.</p> <p>We will pay specific attention to the sometimes 'hard to motivate' category of chains. A new approach initiated from head office might be best in this case. Obviously, this will be connected to theme 10 of the city centre themes.</p>
<b>When</b>	Priority level 2 Start in 2nd half of 2018
<b>Who</b>	Business association WEST will be the initiator in developing a plan.. WEST and the GCC will determine the best strategy to approach chains (e.g. through head offices in cooperation with national branch organisations such as INRetail).

## 6. Tackling parking and traffic problems

<b>What</b>	A more coherent and solution-focused approach to tackling parking problems around the local shopping centres in the city
<b>Why</b>	<p>Every local shopping centre has its own dynamics. Some problems surface in various places, but there is one aspect that occurs in almost every local shopping centre, which is the parking and traffic problem: almost every area has a lack of parking spaces and/or the problem of unsafe or illogical traffic situations.</p> <p>We have come to the conclusion that the municipality of Groningen does not seem to prioritise this problem in certain cases. Pressure points are not being addressed; probably because of cost considerations or other reasons. Furthermore, parking tools that could provide a solution in certain cases, such as creating blue parking zones, are not pursued because of the cost.</p>
<b>How</b>	<p>The Groninger Ondernemers Agenda recommends, in line with theme 1 of the local shop structure, that the municipal places a greater priority on the traffic and parking situation around the local shopping centres and the corresponding implementation of funds and capacity. A coherent approach of the traffic and parking situation, together with the other aspects of the cluster, are essential.</p> <p>Furthermore, we argue that use ought to be made of the tool of blue zones. The argument that maintaining a blue zone is a costly affair without any revenue is understandable. Nevertheless, we believe a tool is allowed to cost money if it serves a social purpose.</p>
<b>When</b>	<p>Priority level 1 Start in early 2018 In line with theme 1, we believe this complete approach needs to happen, specifically after the new city council elections (spring 2018).</p>
<b>Who</b>	The municipality, in consultation with the local shopping associations and business associations concerned.

## 7. Consistent approach from the municipality in addressing problems and initiatives

<b>What</b>	Agreements with the municipality of Groningen about a consistent approach of the mentioned problems and suggested initiatives.
<b>Why</b>	<p>The local shopping centres are of the opinion that the way in which the municipality deals with the problems identified and the associated communication could do with improvement. We are in favour of a clear protocol in which problems and initiatives are dealt with quickly, transparently and pro-actively by mutual consultation.</p> <p>The Groninger Ondernemers Agenda believes that it is important that the municipality has a constructive and flexible approach towards parties who submit initiatives/applications and a firm approach with parties that simply go ahead without permission.</p> <p>This entails that a new policy, such as the Reclamenota that was arranged in 2016, is shared more structurally with those involved and explained to them. This creates more understanding about the policies and corresponding backgrounds and encourages implementation.</p>
<b>How</b>	<p>As the Groninger Ondernemers Agenda, we want to create agreements with the municipality of Groningen so that initiatives and reports are handled by the whole city and the whole municipality in an identical and transparent way. Therefore, we support an open, constructive and productive dialogue.</p> <p>Furthermore, we believe that parties that submit new initiatives to the municipality of Groningen should not be treated more firmly than parties that go ahead without a licence. In other words, we want more recognition of new initiatives and a stronger enforcement.</p> <p>Lastly, we are in favour of an approach in the municipality in which new policies are shared pro-actively with the parties involved (in the case of a new advertising policy: entrepreneurs, e.g. in retail). This can happen by means of meetings, flyers, notifications on relevant websites or an explanation by account managers.</p>
<b>When</b>	Priority level 2 Start in 2nd half of 2018
<b>Who</b>	The business associations will discuss the aforementioned matters with the municipality of Groningen and strive for agreements.





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**BROEKHUIS RIJS ADVIESING**  
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An aerial photograph of Groningen, Netherlands, showing a mix of traditional European architecture and modern buildings. The foreground features a large, leafy green tree and a cobblestone square with people and bicycles. In the background, a tall, modern brick building stands out against a cloudy sky. The title 'The Groningen Business Owners' Agenda' is overlaid in a light green, sans-serif font across the middle of the image.

# The Groningen Business Owners' Agenda