

# European 15

## Charleroi – Belgium - « Porte Ouest » Competition brief



# Contents



## Charleroi – « Porte Ouest » of the city

### Bibliography

p 3

### Sites issues

p 4

### Site particularities regarding the organization of the competition

p 7

### Territorial context

Historical context

p 8

Geographical et territorial context

p 9

The Municipal Mobility Plan

p 10

Landscape context

p 11

City projects

p 12

Cultural context

p 15

### Strategic site

Definition of the strategic site's perimeter

p 16

Le West District

p 17

### Project site

Definition of the project site's perimeter

p 18

Regulatory context

p 21

Master plan

p 21

Landscape issues

p 22

Soft Mobility

p 22

The « invariables » and « variables » of the landscape

p 24

« Carsid » map equipment

p 26

### Economic data

Correlation with the European topic 15 « Productive cities »

p 28

### Socio-cultural data

Context and social interaction of the project

p 28

## **Bibliography**

**“Charleroi Métropole - Un schéma stratégique”** (a strategic outline).

*Written by the Charleroi Bouwmeester (chief architect) in partnership with the City of Charleroi  
January 2018.*

*The references to this work are annotated in “1” in the briefing document.*

**“Charleroi Métropole - Un schéma stratégique 2015 -2025”** (a strategic outline for 2015 – 2025).

*Written under the supervision of M. G. Maillis, Charleroi Bouwmeester (chief architect).*

*The references to this work are annotated in “2” in the briefing document.*

**« Charleroi - Patrimoine & développement »**(heritage &development)

Study of the potential of the industrial heritage of the West Gate

*March 2015*

*The references to this work are annotated in “3” in the briefing document.*

**« CARSID : Pré-étude pour la valorisation du patrimoine dans le cadre de la réaffectation du site »** (pre-study for the valorisation of the heritage as part of the reallocation of the site)

*Written by Chantal VINCENT - Ir. Architect – Urban planner (« Dessin et Construction »)*

*Décember 2014*

*The references to this work are annotated in “4” in the briefing document.*

**« Compétition Brief » European 13 »**

European Belgium

*Mars 2013*

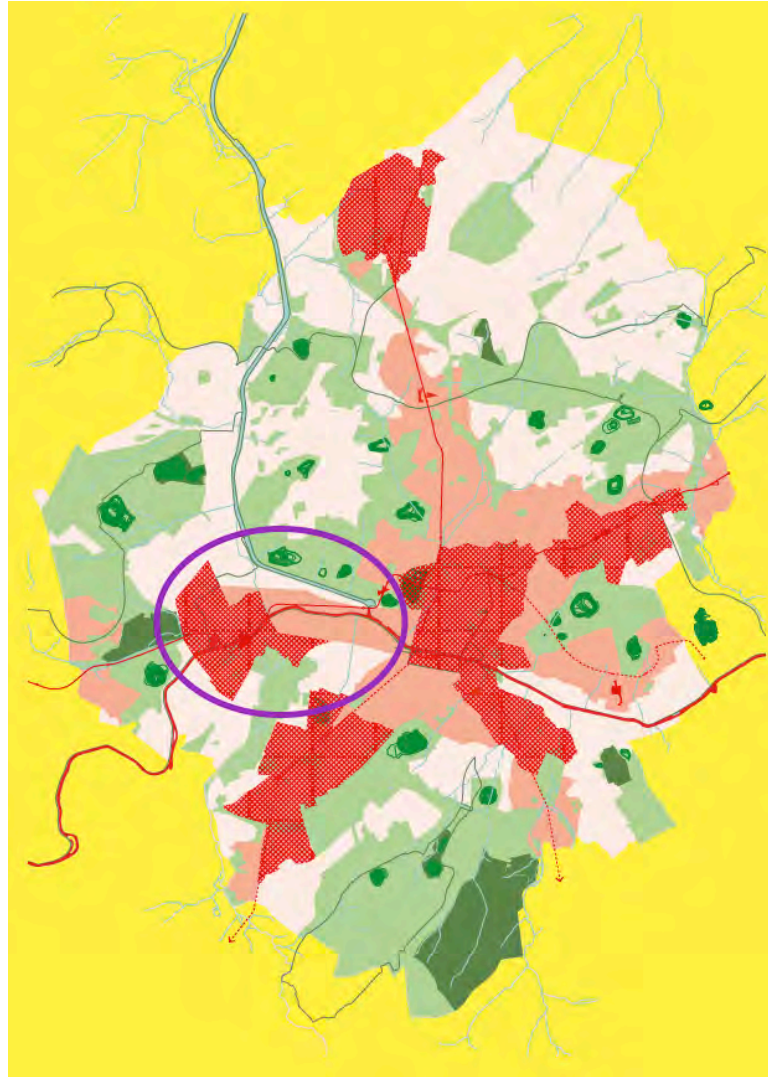
*The references to this work are annotated in “5” in the briefing document.*

**« Charleroi - Projet de Ville 2019-2024»**

<https://www.charleroi.be/projet-de-ville-2019-2024>

## Site issues

### Creation of a productive landscaped park in the “Western gate” district



*Map of urban and landscape intensification (1)*

The site of the “Western Gate” mainly encompasses the municipalities of Marchienne-au-Pont and Monceau-sur-Sambre, situated to the west of Charleroi city centre. It occupies a very specific place in the structure of the city of Charleroi, delineated to the south by the Sambre River, to the north by the Charleroi-Brussels Canal and to the west by the railway.

**The “European site” comprises a strategic portion of this area.**

Indeed, it is this site that the city has chosen, on the one hand, to strengthen its western sector in order to focus on this gateway to the city and, on the other hand, to reconnect and convert the former municipalities deeply affected by the decline of heavy industry that had previously ensured their prosperity.



What is at stake on this site, which currently forms a closed in and inaccessible pocket that is an obstacle to growth of the city centre and interaction with peripheral urban hubs, is to develop its considerable potential for economic conversion aimed at maintaining production activities in an urban environment, a major challenge for tomorrow's cities.

In its master plan, the City of Charleroi intends to take advantage of a vast green space on this site, a veritable green axis towards the city centre. However, it also plans to develop a productive landscaped park which will play host to meeting the challenge of a collaborative neighbourhood between the landscape and industrial elements (for small and medium sized businesses) whose heritage image or resilient productivity will contribute to the sector's appeal.

It is also a question of "economic productivity" but equally of "intangible productivity", through conciliating "economic stakes" and "cultural stakes". Indeed, there is a genuine desire to preserve the place's past by incorporating "invariable landscape elements" (the former blast furnaces, chimneys, industrial gantries, etc.) in order to preserve their historical interest and to harness their tourist appeal.

"Green production" is also one of the stakes that the city wishes to promote, in particular via the creation of a green axis linking the site to the city and the extension of its soft mobility network, called "RAVeL".

This conversion will particularly include reworking the site's landscape and creating new access ways, through focusing on the existing road into the city, its combination with the banks of the Sambre River, the establishment of small and medium sized productive workplaces, in close relationship with the activities retained and in interaction with the city.

It will also be based on the site's past, with an emphasis on the human values deeply rooted in this area.

### **Character of the site**

- A landscaped promenade linking the city of Charleroi to the centre of Marchienne-au-Pont and its neighbouring districts.
- Elaboration of a proposition contributing to the development of Charleroi's identity within the area, at regional level via the principle of unique landscaping.
- A productive landscaped park. The economic activity zones will be sparse, integrated into the landscape and designed to be economical with resources (use of existing facilities, reflection on material life cycles, circular economy + resilience + bio-sourcing).
- An identity based on low-tech / resilient technologies and industries / economical use of resources in terms of the landscape, public spaces and architecture.
- An area of experimentation for the concept of industrial ecology\*.
- Integration of production and storage into the concept of landscaping.
- Using the lessons of the past: drawing on pollution as an educational tool, without necessarily hiding it or removing it.
- Reinforcement of the relationship with water as natural infrastructure and means of mobility.

*\*"Industrial ecology is a recent concept and practice drawn from environmental management aimed at limiting the impact of industry on its environment. Based on the analysis of material and energy flows,*

*industrial ecology seeks to take a global approach to the industrial system by treating it as an ecosystem and by making it compatible with natural ecosystems. Its origins date back to 1989, via an article entitled “Strategies for Manufacturing” by Robert A. Frosch and Nicholas E. Gallopoulos, published in Scientific American 2.” Cf. wiki.*

### **Programme:**

- A landscaped promenade for leisure and intra-urban links.
- A place of experimentation for future biodiversity (the area is left to nature’s devices).
- The city project states that 1,000 trees will be planted per year within the territory of Charleroi (with the opportunity of revising this ambition upwards).
  - Ensure plantations for a future forest that withstands climate change (within and outside to link with the slagheaps + “black loop”).
- Work on the issue of resilience, which is symbolically important in light of the nature of the area.
- There is a need to store old urban sculptures – the city is interested in it becoming a place to receive the dilapidated urban sculptures of Wallonia.
- Soundscape: the place should be considered as one where noise is permitted - cf. Rockerill.
- No conventional industrial estates (zonings), insofar as the existing offering is not saturated.
- Reflection on the issue of tourism in Charleroi focused on its industrial past, as well as the new cultural dimension at regional level.
- Consideration of relationship with the “black loop” (cf. below p21 § 3) and other existing tourist trails.
- Highlighting of the relationship with the city centre, with the improvement of the existing waterway infrastructures. Reworking of the Brussels-Charleroi Canal’s role and that of the upper Sambre River, due to its potential as a “natural infrastructure”.
- Links with existing mobility (parking, public transport, RAVeL soft mobility network, boats).
- Reflection on soft mobility and bringing about permeability of the site.
- Reflection on the role of the road to Mons and its dimensions.

### **Phases:**

- Very short-term project (1 year): handling of the production systems’ transition – reinforcement of the landscape by creating links with hubs.
- Short to medium-term project (3 years); ephemeral, flexible and reduced sized constructions offering space for a circular economy.
- Long-term project (10 years): a landscaped productive park.

## **Site particularities regarding the organization of the competition**

SITE REPRESENTATIVE
CITY OF CHARLEROI & DUFERCO WALLONIE ...
ACTOR(S) INVOLVED
CITY OF CHARLEROI & DUFERCO WALLONIE

TEAM REPRESENTATIVE *
architect
EXPECTED SKILLS REGARDING THE SITE'S ISSUES AND CHARACTERISTICS
architect, engineer, urban planner or landscaper

COMMUNICATION
Communication after the competition
Press, exhibition of national results – date(s) end place(s) to be specified

JURY – 1 <sup>ST</sup> EVALUATION
With the participation of the site representatives

POST-COMPETITION INTERMEDIATE PROCEDURE <b>IN FUNCTION OF THE RELEVANCE OF THE PROJECTS :</b>
Presentation of the rewarded teams to the site representative(s), followed by a discussion.
Direct selection of one winning team for an implementation process.
Workshop onsite with the rewarded teams (winner(s), runner(s)-up, special mention(s)) allowing the site representative(s) to choose a team for the implementation phase.
In the case where site falls under public market regulations, organisation of a 2 <sup>nd</sup> step as a contractual study and/or workshop, involving the rewarded teams to further develop their projects and approaches to changes in various site data and allow the site representative(s) to choose one or more team(s) for the implementation phase.

## Territorial context

### Historical context

“The second youngest city of Belgium, the fortress city of “Charles Roy” – in honour of Charles II of Spain – was founded in 1666 by the Spanish “ ( 5 )..

“Charleroi’s first real urban planning initiative was the construction of the city’s fortress in 1666, which created a strong and diverse potential market in a region that was, at the time, very rural. This led to the development of various economic activities, actively supported by government initiatives, starting at the beginning of the 18th century, to build an extensive transportation network” (1)



“Its location at the point of convergence of coal and iron ore resources between the Sambre and Meuse rivers incited important economic development. Thanks to iron, coal and glass, the city grew gradually during the industrial revolution, when its vast industrial estates, road networks, and the plan of its city centre took shape and its suburbs grew rapidly. Charleroi is a large European city, typical of the triumphant 19th century.

A major industrial city of Wallonia, the territory of Charleroi would be deeply marked by industrialisation, in terms of industrial facilities and of the density of its energy and transport infrastructures. The first industrial axis extended from West to East along the River Sambre and the coal load. It is along this axis that the railway tracks and main road arteries as well as the canal that links Antwerp, Brussels and Charleroi (ABC axis) were developed.

After the merger of municipalities in 1977, Charleroi became the largest city of Wallonia in terms of number of inhabitants. The industrial momentum ran out of steam, however. The coal mines closed and steel making came under strain. Like all the cities that grew rich from heavy industry, Charleroi



went through a slow economic decline and entered a crisis situation with a high unemployment rate. The slow flight of the well-to-do to green suburbs, the transformation of the business activity, the displacement of trade to peripheral commercial centres, the sacrifice of urban spaces to the automobile, the obsolescence of construction sacrificed to property speculation, the many derelict industrial sites and brownfield areas – all these urban pathologies would fray the urban fabric of Charleroi”(5).

## Geographical and territorial context

**Charleroi** is located in the province of Hainaut and the Sambre River flows through it. It is the administrative centre of the administrative district of Charleroi, which covers 14 municipalities and has a total area of 554.55 km<sup>2</sup>.

Charleroi, a major road and rail hub, has a population of approximately 200,000 (425,000 in its wider conurbation – the 5<sup>th</sup> biggest in Belgium – which stretches from Thuin to Sambreville). Consequently, it is the biggest municipality in Wallonia, the second biggest conurbation in Wallonia in population terms and the third biggest municipality in Belgium.



Urban intensification plan (1)

“Charleroi is not organized on a concentric zone model with a succession of urban rings but has a polycentric model. It is therefore essential to develop an urban planning and densification strategy in line with the structure of the area.

With the aim of building the city on the city, urbanization has to be encouraged near the existing urban

centres, amenities, and infrastructure - making the most of them and giving them a new impetus. The urban intensification plan brings together the city's major structural features - the centres of the old towns, the large neighbourhood squares, and the immediate vicinity of metro stations, the major public transport routes, and the Sambre. These elements form a star shape that strengthens the links between the city centre and the surrounding neighbourhoods. This new configuration must be renovated and a qualitative densification process undertaken in order to reactivate its components and reconquer the urban centres by making them more attractive".(1)

## The Municipal Mobility Plan

"To address the key issue of mobility, the City of Charleroi has developed an ambitious Municipal Mobility Plan (MMP). This outlines the City's mobility strategy for the next 15 years, in terms of managing traffic and passenger flows and optimizing public transport, pedestrian and cycling infrastructures.

The recommendations in this plan are divided into 5 categories : improving accessibility in public transportation, managing car traffic, improving pedestrian accessibility, an ambitious cycling policy, and a voluntarist parking policy.

The first stage of the project is already well underway. The Citybus route, revised in collaboration with the Charleroi public transport system, now passes through the commercial centre.

Completed works in the Ville-Basse (both urban renewal and private projects) have given us the opportunity to completely rethink the area's public spaces, optimizing them for more efficient traffic management and improving pedestrian accessibility. In addition to providing more room for cyclists and pedestrians, new public leisure spaces are also being developed. The Ville-Haute will also see an extensive transformation as the Charleroi District Créatif project gets underway, also including a complete renovation of the north- west quadrant's public spaces.

A strong cycling policy is also being put into place: in just a few years, the city doubled the amount of bicycle parking infrastructure downtown.

The voluntarist parking policy is already in place, as the new parking plan (adopted in September 2016) has been in force since 1st January, 2017. This plan aims to facilitate sharing of the road by all users, match the supply of parking spaces with the demand, and limit the use of cars without forbidding them.

The City is hoping that these recommendations and measures will be implemented quickly, to achieve their goals of moderating car use in favour of quality public spaces and more accessible alternative transport methods.

In the southern part of the city, a study for the future Bus Rapid Transit line is also underway.

This line will serve the avenue Paul Pastur and the route de Phillippeville".(1)"

"The urban boulevards of the city centre and the main arterial routes which lead to the city centre (chaussée de Bruxelles, route de Mons, avenue Paul Pastur, avenue Mascaux, chaussée de Philippeville, chaussée de Charleroi à Montignies, and Grand rue in North Charleroi) will be reconfigured to give pride of place to public transport, wide pavements and cycling tracks. Traffic speeds will be strictly controlled. This will make it possible to not only encourage soft mobility from peripheral districts towards the city centre, but also to return their splendour to these boulevards, which boast remarkable architectural heritage that has nonetheless been neglected due to noise and insecurity caused by traffic. Improvement through green developments and underscoring of the city centre's main boulevards and the major routes leading there, as well as the public squares in the centre and in each district, will emphasise the virtues, today scarcely visible, of the architectural heritage and will give a high level of visibility to the overall urban fabric"(2)

## Landscape context



Landscape intensification plan (1)

“Furthermore, Charleroi has a major advantage in comparison with other cities: it has an omnipresent diversity of open spaces which on a larger scale constitute a significant landscape system. These lands should be strategic a characteristic feature of the area, should be protected from being broken up and becoming discontinuous, which urbanization can cause, and be consolidated.

With this aim, the territory project reinterprets the geography to build a landscape that is clear and globally accessible to all: a landscape structured in such a way as to be able to accommodate people-friendly means of establishing links.

This plan consists of the Sambre, the river system (tributaries of the Sambre and Piéton) which has sculpted the territory and the industrial features and systems (railways, slag heaps, the RAVEL -non-motorized traffic routes - and industrial platforms).

The project proposes making six large structures as the foundation of a large-scale park system. This involves consolidating and linking open spaces, based on the river system and the industrial rail network, to form a landscape with a metropolitan scope that will improve the environment”. (1)

## City projects

“Urban renewal works have been undertaken since the mid 2000s. They are now entering into a major phase with the implementation of the “strategic development plan.”

The purpose of this plan is to amplify and accelerate the economic redeployment and urban restructuring projects of Charleroi in order to enable it to regain its metropolitan vocation. Economic geography has to be reconciled with human geography so that the added value created will benefit the city and its inhabitants.



Charleroi Strategic Plan (Housing Plan)

The development plan is based on 3 pillars: the requalification of the city centre, the development of peripheral districts and the redevelopment of economic areas.

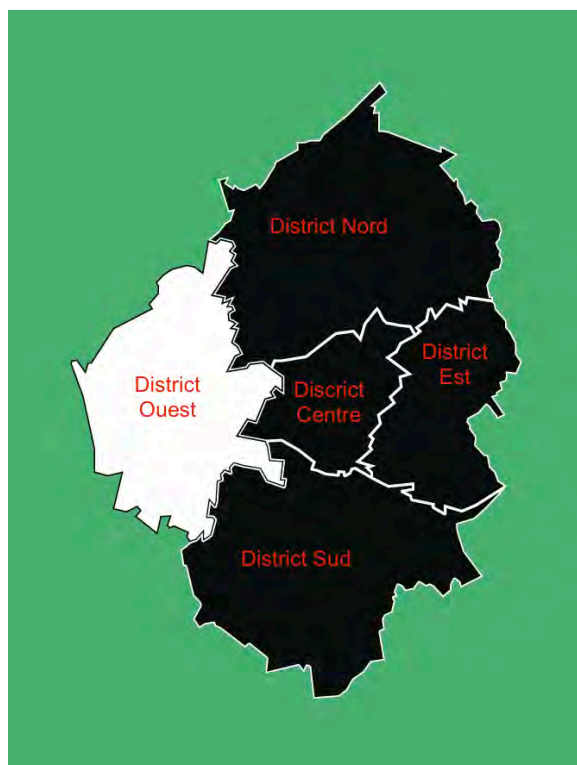


## **1) Requalify the city centre**

Spanning an area of 180 hectares, the city centre is built round two old urban clusters: the commercial lower part of the city along the Sambre, and the fortress, the seat of power, in the upper part of the city. These two parts are connected by a network of boulevards, squares and parks laid out in accordance with a strict town planning scheme dating from the end of the 19th century. After this first transformation, major infrastructure and housing works were carried out in the city in the mid 20th century. The current requalification of the city centre of Charleroi constitutes the third important stage in the history of the city centre.

Initiated in the mid 2000s, the reconfiguration of the centre of Charleroi has now entered an expansion phase. More than 60 major architectural and infrastructure projects are in progress or planned on the total territory of 200 hectares. They constitute one of the most important urban requalification sites in Europe. More than €250 million in public investments have been earmarked to: redevelop public spaces, in particular the embankment of the Sambre with a new footbridge; create a new Cultural Centre; lay out parking facilities; create new office buildings, including the new police headquarters designed by the association Jean Nouvel/MDW Architecture and the extension of the Courthouse; create new housing units. This work will be continued in the coming years through continue to requalify the public spaces and to create new buildings: a Convention Centre, Design Centre, Centre for Trades, office and housing buildings.

## **2) Develop the peripheral districts**



District's map (1)

Charleroi has an opportunity that few cities of the same size have, of not being confined in an enclosed space but of being surrounded by territories that can allow for its urban expansion. Charleroi has 55 quarters, most of them stemming from centuries old villages that have conferred a village look and a green patrimony, and are built for residential purposes. The aim of the second plank of the strategic plan is to regroup these quarters into four districts that surround the city centre and are interconnected with it by major existing and new metropolitan infrastructure and facilities, spread out in a balanced

manner throughout the territory.

The Charleroi inner ring constitutes the Central district. The North district comprises the old villages of Ransart, a part of Jumet and the old, millennial town of Gosselies, which stands as the natural Northern gate to the city. The South district consists of the old municipality of Marcinelle and the old villages of Mont-sur-Marchienne and a part of Marchienne-au-Pont. It is in line with the link of the city centre with the green lung of the South of Charleroi. To the West, the vast industrial areas undergoing reconversion constitute a reserve of land extension, with a surface equal to the historic city centre, which will make it possible to connect the city centre with the village of Monceau and with the millennial town of Marchienne, a secondary urban hub for accessing the city from the West. Together with Goutroux, Roux and Dampremy, these old municipalities form the West District. Finally, the old municipalities of Gilly, Lodelinsart, Montignies sur Sambre and Couillet constitute the East district.

### **3) Redevelop the economic areas**

The third axis of the strategic plan is industrial redevelopment. The old industrial area round the Sambre is undergoing renewal. It comes to an end overall on its East side, which today plays host to conventional metropolitan sites: a treatment plant, recycling sites, the autonomous port and economic activity areas. The redevelopment of its West side is under way. The presence of the Sambre and the Canal, with the towing wharfs and the autonomous network of slow lanes (Ravel), as well as the series of re-wooded heaps and their walking paths will constitute a vast urban park that will create a “blue and green” link between the city centre and the West district.

The second major industrial area of the City of Charleroi consists of the North plateau round the airport in Gosselies and two motorways. Created for the development of industrial aeronautics, this plateau today plays host, in addition to the airport, to major companies from the aeronautics sector and the Biopark, ranked among the top ten in Europe. This industrial estate extends to those of the municipalities of Courcelles to the West and Fleurus to the East, which also host numerous companies.

In conclusion, the aim of the strategic plan is to usher Charleroi into a new phase of its history.

To pursue these different projects through a clear, structured and unifying intent, one that reinforces the identity of Charleroi, the authorities of the city set up the “Charleroi Bouwmeester” office in 2013. Its main objective is to help the city define an urban policy geared to coherence and articulation of the projects that have an influence on the city’s spaces. Another role of the Bouwmeester [Master Architect] is to bring together all public and private stakeholders involved in the renewal of the city to create a distinct quality urban culture for Charleroi”. (5)

## Cultural context

“Charleroi hosts nearly 85 % of its cultural operators in its urban centre.

They play a key role in developing and maintaining urban dynamics. Rather than competing against each other, each of these institutions address a specific creative niche, and have an undeniably positive effect on urban cohesion. Charleroi enjoys a cultural and community fabric that is both reactive and complementary, allowing new generations to develop innovative projects.

In addition to the many urban renewal initiatives that are underway, Charleroi is also making structural changes in various different locations.

Many ambitious projects are emerging, following in the footsteps of successes such as the extension of the BPS 22 art museum, renovations of the public libraries in Roux and Gosselies, renovations of the Charleroi Danse site, the acquisition of an additional building for the Eden cultural centre, and the launch of Quai 10.

The Museum of Fine Arts will soon make its home in the Caserne Defeld building, the Palais des Beaux-Arts will receive an essential upgrade to make it more energy efficient, the Guimbarde youth theatre will have a designated site, and the Théâtre de l’Ancre will undergo sweeping changes, with entirely new facilities on the horizon.

At the same time, the urban space itself will be a creative launch-pad, aiming to bring art to the streets and share it with as many spectators as possible. Many such events have already taken place, with great success: the Smoke on the Water sound and light show, Asphalte, the Art Public event, and the City Sonic festival are some of this initiative’s forerunners.

Charleroi is still a city in its “unfinished state”. It intrigues. Creative people of all disciplines are drawn to the unique urban and human landscape of the City. Its high potential for development is clear. Over time, one of its many ambitions will be to organise this creative energy, with all cultural players working together to make the city a place where artists come to live and create.

These new ideas, alongside the various urban renewal works, contribute to creating the city of tomorrow. These transformations provide art and culture with the opportunity to play a lasting role of great importance”(1).

## **Strategic site**

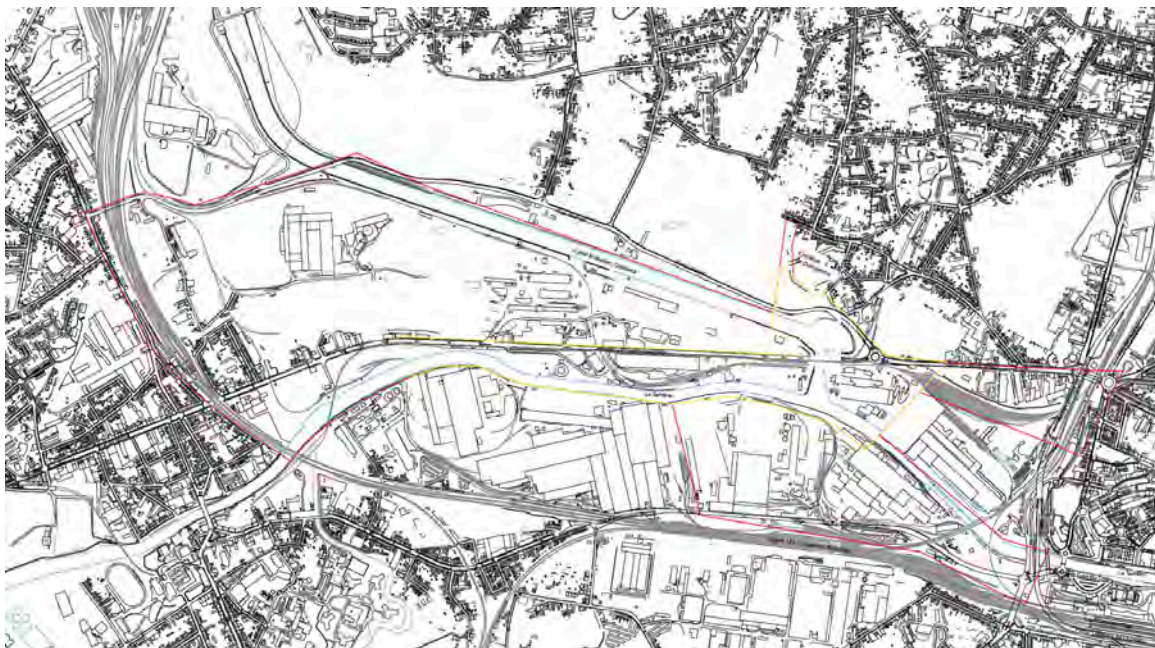
### **Definition of the strategic site's perimeter**

The strategic site (delineated in red on the map)

Northern boundary: the northern boundary runs along the “Route de Mons” (N90), skirts around the start of the “Charleroi-Brussels” canal (road N581) with a wooded area (Dampremy), then follows the road N581.

Western boundary: N 581 (alongside the railway).

Southern boundary: via the Sambre River, then the boundary crosses the industrial site to encompass the “Haut Fourneau 4” site, before running along “Rue de Marchienne”, crossing the Sambre again at the Charleroi ring and re-joining the Porte Ouest district, not including an area on which there are industrial buildings (“Thy Marcinelle”) in activity.



Map provided by “Charleroi Bouwmeester”

The European strategic site “stretches” the zone of study:

To the north east: by connecting it to the city centre.

To the south east: by encompassing the former site of blast furnace No. 4.

To the west: by encompassing a major part of the remaining industrial zone and by connecting it to the rest of the municipality of Marchienne-au-Pont.

### **Perimeter of the Porte Ouest district**

“This study site falls within the perimeter of the “Porte Ouest” district, located at the convergence of three valleys:

- The Sambre Valley.
- The Eau d’Heure Valley.
- The Piéton Valley running from Brussels to Charleroi.

The relief is chiefly dominated by the Sambre Valley and its broad alluvial plateau. This zone is acts as a crossroads between the upper and lower Sambre Valley.

Along the Charleroi to Brussels canal, slagheaps with varying relief form a significant green backdrop” (3).



## The western district

More generally, the site is included in the greater western district of the city.



West district (1)

“The Western district is a land of many contrasts, as it connects the territory’s most significant wooded and agricultural areas, most exceptional park, largest brownfield area, and river.

The renewal of more than 100 hectares of brownfield areas, currently underway, aims to bring together various cutting-edge economic initiatives in a majestic post-industrial landscape. The challenge is to create an environment that takes into account industrial spaces in operation, the natural environment and the urban fabric of surrounding neighbourhoods.

This can be accomplished by creating lively neighbourhoods, introducing workplaces in the heart of the urban areas, and by developing large transportation infrastructures in the city (a station, highways, railroads, ports, etc.) that connect it to the rest of the world.

Mainly made up of large industrial buildings and infrastructure, as well as a chain of slag heaps, this area is a key characteristic of the landscape of Charleroi. In addition to this, the transformation of former factories into cultural centres and the renewal of former town centres make this district one of the most dynamic and multicultural in the region” (1).

## Project site

### Definition of the study site's perimeter

The study site (delineated in yellow on the map)

Northern boundary: the northern boundary runs along the “Route de Mons” (N90), skirts around the start of the “Charleroi – Brussels” canal then joins and runs along the N90.

Western boundary: a virtual boundary that crosses the Sambre River (roughly at the level of the former “Rockerill” workshop which has now been assigned to other use)

Southern boundary: the Sambre River.

Eastern boundary: the boundary crosses the Sambre River and joins the N90 to the north, running along the derelict factories.

The approximately 35-hectare project zone is a slender zone including a portion of the derelict facilities at the former CARSID\* factories.

The entire site needs to undergo depollution.

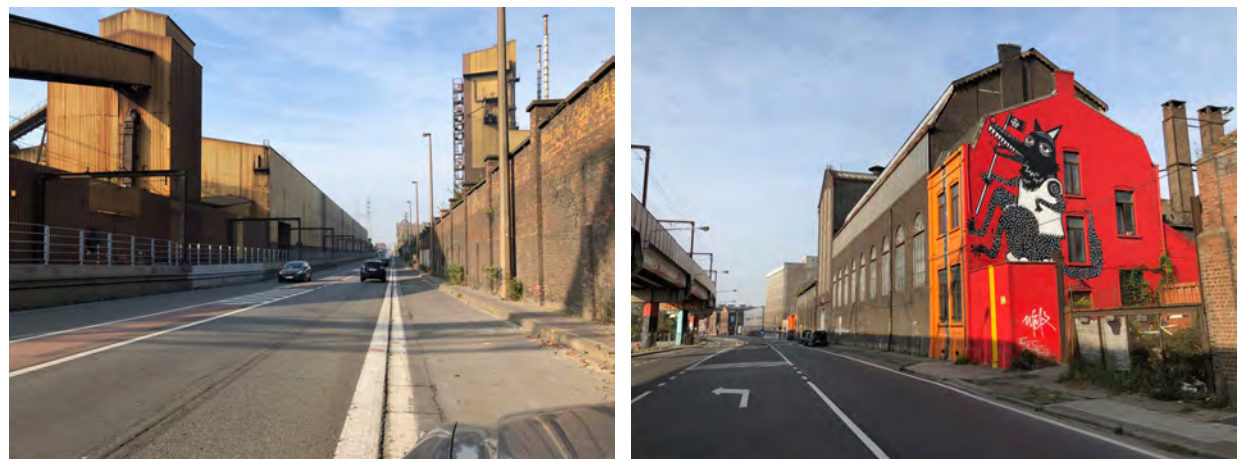
\*: name of the steelmaking site (a contraction of “Charleroi” and “sidérurgie”, which means steelmaking in French).



The grounds are currently polluted. Their level of depollution will be more or less important according to the projects developed.



1 **The Route de Mons** is the urban link between these two hubs. This axis is essential within the mobility network. It must remain operational and efficient in terms of size and fluidity of traffic, but must also be secure” (4).

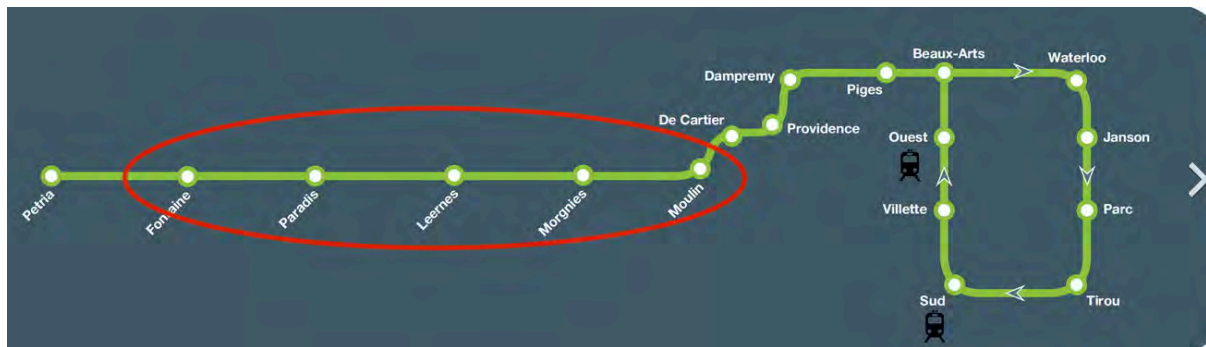


RN 90

19

### 3. The Charleroi soft Metro

The line located on the European site serves 2 metro lines whose frequency is 2 / hours during the week.





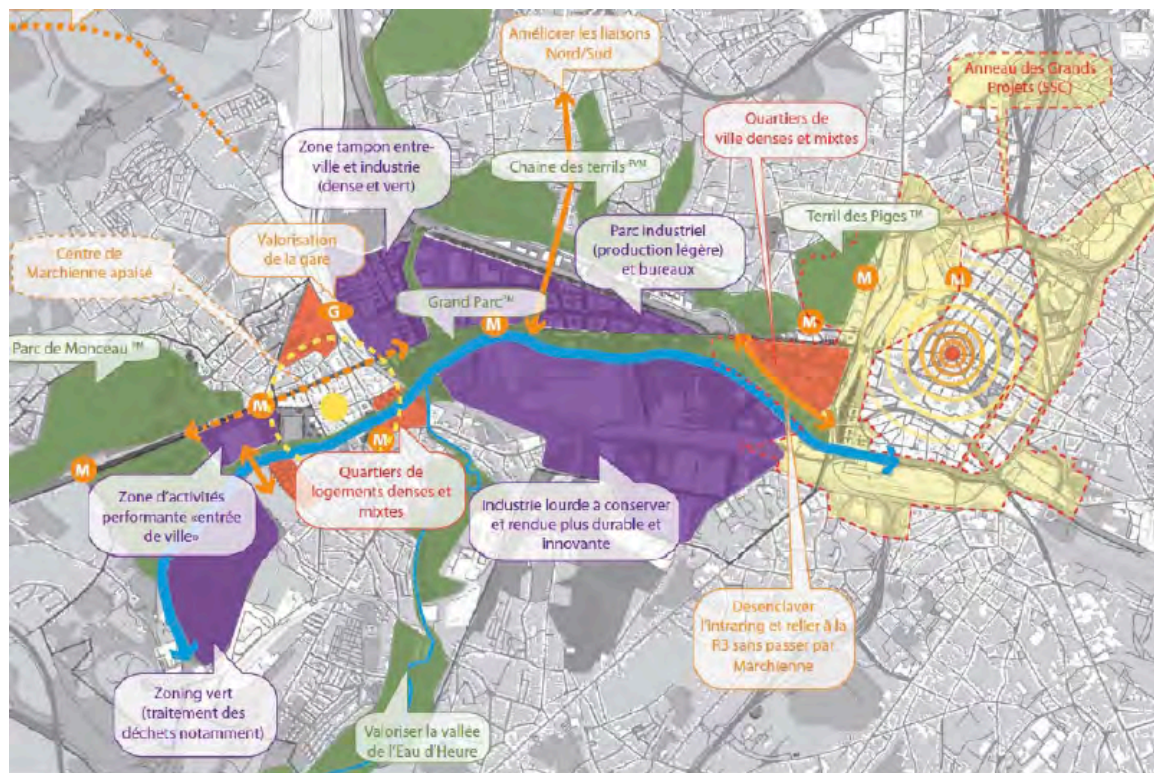
## Regulatory context

According to the sectorial plan, the zone is classed as an industrial zone.

The site is included in the SFD ("Site For Development) inventory, so as to modify its usage as defined in the sectorial plan, but to date no modification has been ratified.

## Master plan of Charleroi's Porte Ouest district

"The scope of the Master plan for Charleroi's Porte Ouest district primarily encompasses the former municipalities of Marchienne-au-Pont and Monceau-sur-Sambre, spread over an area of 8 km<sup>2</sup>. The City of Charleroi has decided to focus specific attention on this area in order to improve the living environment for its inhabitants, which has been considerably degraded by the development of industry and then its departure."(3)



Carte schématique des lignes directrices du Master Plan

"The master plan puts forward a structural option for the area, based on the creation of a landscaped link that follows the Sambre River and links Charleroi to Marchienne-au-Pont. The "Europain" site should emerge as a green axis connecting the city centre of Charleroi to the urban centre of Marchienne-au-Pont.

However, the city authorities do not merely intend to install a major park. They are also wishing for small and medium sized businesses to set up there in conjunction with the existing industries.

## Landscape issues

“The landscape that can be found on the way out from Charleroi city centre is not a continually built-up landscape, but one made up of factories and slagheaps. It is indisputable that this proximity feeds the city’s collective imagination. Their physical shapes, mass and scale are striking. The slagheaps are a form of imposing natural relief that today are seen as natural heritage, whilst the factories, these giants of heavy industry, are perceived as industrial heritage”.  
(3)

## Soft mobility

### RAVEL (*Réseau autonome de voies lentes*, a soft mobility network)

In Belgium, the “RAVeL” is a Walloon region initiative that aims to create a network of routes reserved for pedestrian, cyclists, persons with reduced mobility and horse riders, as and where possible.

It is extensively developed in the territory of Wallonia and is often installed on former disused railway lines or canal towpaths, thanks to their topography which is adapted to walking and riding, as well as due to the landscape perspectives that they offer to users.

Charleroi, and particularly the Porte Ouest site, is surrounded by such a network. As regards the study site, the main green way can be found alongside the Sambre River, on the opposite bank to the project site.

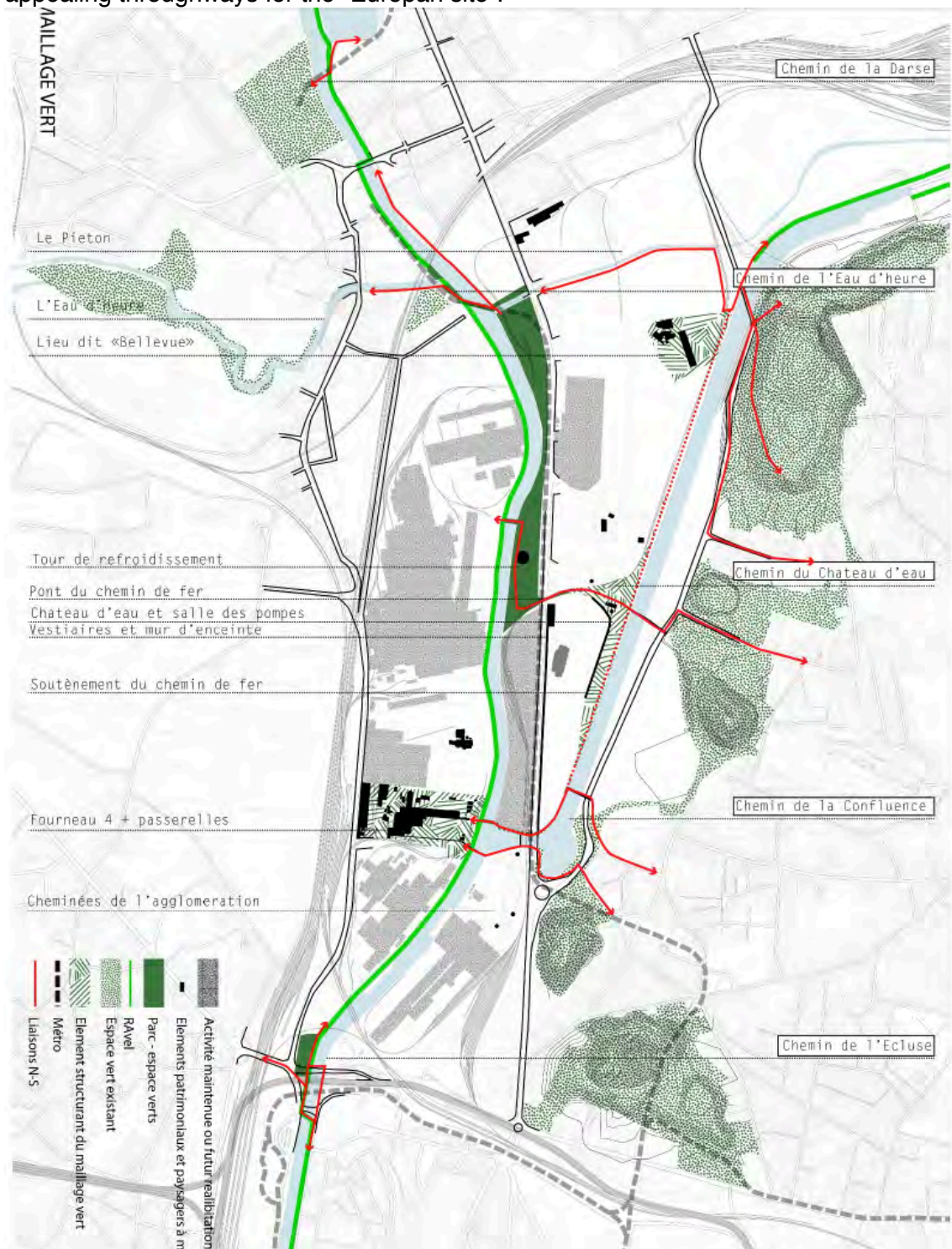
At city level, it is also a strong link (of approximately 4 km) between Charleroi and Marchienne-au-Pont.



Google RAVeL



The diagram above suggests the creation or rehabilitation of connections that could become appealing throughways for the “European site”.



NB: this proposition comes from a report drawn up by Mrs Ch. Vincent, an urban planning architect, following work in citizens' focus groups (4).

A spectacular urban hiking trail (GR 412 or Boucle Noire), beginning in the downtown core and stretching over 20 km, allows hikers to discover industrial and post-industrial landscapes in the Western district. The trail follows the Sambre, weaves alongside industrial monuments, traces former railway lines and offers stunning views of the city from atop the slag heaps.

[https://cheminsdesterrils.files.wordpress.com/2016/08/boucle-noire-gr412\\_carte-web.pdf](https://cheminsdesterrils.files.wordpress.com/2016/08/boucle-noire-gr412_carte-web.pdf)

## The “invariables” and “variables” of the landscape

The factory chimneys, blast furnace towers, walkways and other monumental industrial elements were built on the former CARSID site spread over almost 200 hectares, and have been etched onto the minds of the inhabitants of Charleroi.

These elements are part of the landscape, just like the former slagheaps. “Removing the totality of these landscape components could be perceived as a means of erasing the city’s past and eradicating testimonials to the last century’s technological progress” (4) The dimension of such know-how, closely linked to the social dimension through the toil of engineers and workers from generation to generation, has built up this heritage. No future museum could have such a lasting impression as the imposing edifice of the blast furnace. These elements have become landmarks in a similar way to monuments, such as the former belfry of the City Hall or, more recently, the tower at the Charleroi police headquarters, designed by the architect Jean Nouvel.

Many reactions from citizens have been raised in defence of such heritage. The City of Charleroi has tasked a working group, made up of administrative representatives (city authorities, land planning, heritage, etc.), technicians and members of the “save blast furnace No. 4” support committee, with assessing the site’s industrial heritage and the possibility of reintegrating these industrial remains. Blast furnace No. 4 (strategic site), 3 chimneys and 3 walkways have been defined as “invariables of the landscape” earmarked for conservation.



Blast furnace No. 4



3 chimneys



3 of the 11 walkways



However, other industrial constructions on the site, whether listed or not and referred to as “variables of the landscape” could also continue to feature as part of the landscape (the cooling tower - water tower (strategic site), changing rooms, halls, boundary walls, etc.).



CARSID cooling tower

Many examples of how such testimonies to the past can be showcased exist throughout Europe. Indeed, they are tourist attractions that contribute to the local economy (Uckange in France, Belval in Luxembourg, Hattignen, Duisburg and Dortmund in Germany, Gand in Belgium, etc.)



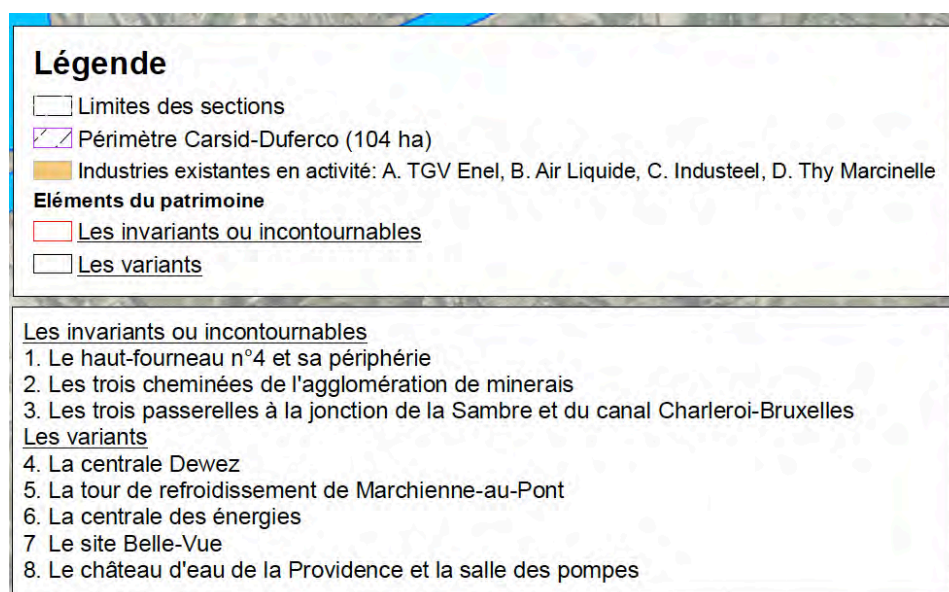
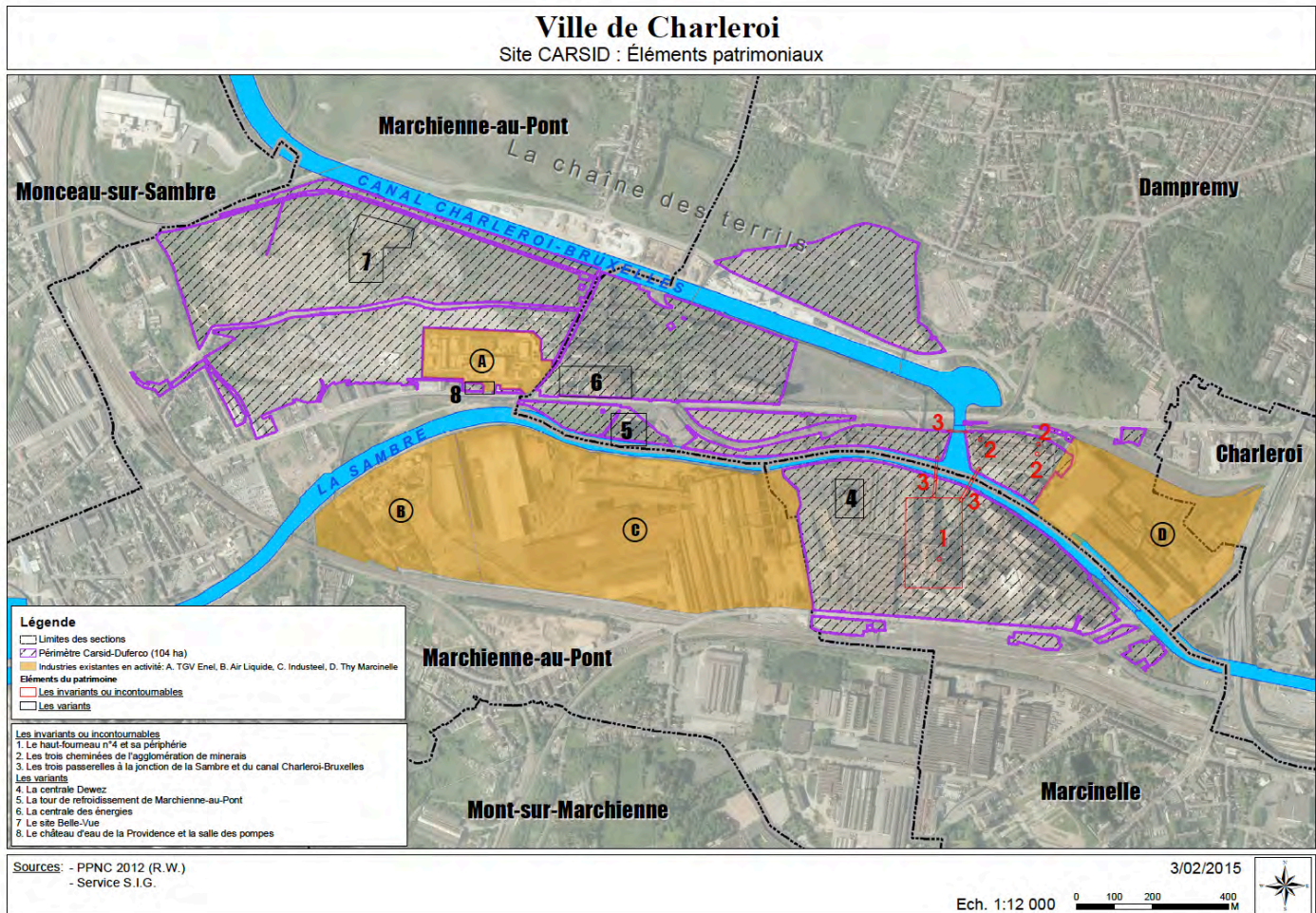
Gand (Belgium)



Duisburg - Latz park

## “Carsid” map equipment

The map below details the boundaries of the former peripheral municipalities and the Duferco site. It also identifies the industries still in activity as well as “invariable” elements (in red) and certain “variable” elements



**Key**

Section boundaries

CARSID-Duferco perimeter (104 hectares)

Active existing industries

**Heritage elements**

Invariable or indispensable elements

Variable elements

Invariable or indispensable elements

1. Blast furnace 4 and its surroundings.
2. The three ore agglomeration chimneys.
3. The three walkways at the intersection of the Sambre River and the Charleroi-Brussels Canal.

Variable elements

4. The Dewes plant.
5. The Marchienne-au-Pont cooling tower.
6. The power plant.
7. The Belle-Vue site.
8. The Providence water tower and pumping station.



## **Economic data**

“Following the decline of heavy industry that severely blighted the city and damaged its image, the local authorities took action. As of the 1990s, a strategy for economic regeneration was put in place: the construction of an international airport, the reclamation of industrial waste lands; the deployment of new economic activity zones – around aerospace and biotechnologies – which are established chiefly in the North of the City, near the Lille-Aachen Eurocorridor. Its Health cluster and its status of social capital of Wallonia also provided thousands of public and private jobs.

At the heart of a living area of 600,000 inhabitants, Charleroi has emerged one of the two major economic hubs of Wallonia again, and provides thousands of jobs to a basin that exceeds its metropolitan area by a long shot. Crossed by the River Sambre, endowed with one of the country’s major train stations, a ring road and major international arteries, a light metro (tram), and an international airport that serves more than 8 million passengers a year, the city is easily accessible, and this feature is one of the winning assets for its renewal” (5).

On the European site, new business zones are intended, for use by the small and medium sized businesses (SMBs) that will provide a new economic boost to this zone in concert with the industries in the surroundings that are still active. The ambition is to incorporate resources and functions that give rise to synergies and new interactions with the existing environment, in order to work towards putting in place a circular economy. In light of its preferential logistical situation, recycling and waste treatment activities could be promoted. On this obsolescent site, the challenge will be to create new production facilities in resonance with the concept of ecological transition, based on the attention focused on proper management of resources (water, air, soil, energy, etc.) and mobility compatible with productive facilities and urban life.

## **Socio-cultural data**

As described above, the European site will be a physical link between the former municipality of Marchienne-au-Pont and the city centre of Charleroi.

“The city authorities intend to redefine these former hubs which have gradually become impoverished and in which a considerable portion of the population worked at the CARSID site. It could be expected that a majority of the population in the greater Charleroi area have at least one family member who was employed as a steel-worker. It is not an exaggeration to say that Charleroi is entirely steeped in an industrial working culture that is a key element of its deeper identity” (3).

The social purpose of the European site will be to recreate a new link between the former municipality and the city centre, as well as providing the population with job opportunities within their neighbourhood in a quality setting.

This new “productive park” also aims to be a place for relaxation and recollection, providing social cohesion.