

## E18\_Resourcing Amersfoort

Site Visits and Briefing | 27th. Mar. 2025

Amersfoort is participating in European18 with six locations under the central local theme, “**Encounters**” The theme focuses on “the use of existing buildings or spaces to create opportunities for encounters.” The concept of encounters is a key thread in the *Amersfoort 2030-2040 Environmental Vision: Healthy Living Together*. It is one of the pillars of the city’s core development strategies. The international Theme for European 18 is “**Re-sourcing**” At its core is the transformation of the living environment both spatially and economically with a strong awareness that all solutions must address climate challenges.

### Overview

Around 40 to 50 participants gathered in Amersfoort for the afternoon site visits of European18. The event aimed to provide a grounded understanding of six strategic urban locations that align with Amersfoort’s local theme of “Encounters” within the broader European18 framework of “Re-sourcing.” Later in the evening, 50 to 60 attendees joined for in-depth presentations and discussions to further explore the city’s ambitions.

### Afternoon Session – Site Visits

The afternoon began at Stadhuisplein 1, where participants arrived by 2:00 PM. The mood was lively and engaged as the group assembled in anticipation of the site explorations.

#### 14:15 – 15:45: Site Visits – Part 1

The first part of the afternoon included visits to:

- **Stadhuisplein** – A central administrative space with potential for enhanced civic interaction.
- **Otto Scheltusflat** – A residential complex identified for its capacity to be reimaged in the context of social living.
- **Amicitia** – A cultural venue ripe for spatial and programmatic innovation focused on community engagement.

#### 15:45 – 16:00: Coffee Break

Participants returned briefly to Stadhuisplein for refreshments and informal networking, exchanging early impressions and ideas.

#### 16:00 – 17:45: Site Visits – Part 2

The tour resumed with the second group of sites:

- **Flint** – A major performing arts venue, representing cultural infrastructure.
- **Koppelbrug** – A bridge site illustrating infrastructural and connective challenges in urban planning.
- **Kop van Isselt** – A former industrial zone poised for transformation into a lively mixed-use district.

#### 17:45 – 18:00: Transition to Evening Venue

After the second round of site visits, participants moved to Hoog Vuur for the evening’s activities.

#### 18:00 – 19:00: Buffet and Table Presentations

Dinner was served in an informal buffet setting where participants interacted directly with project representatives at designated tables. This setting encouraged deeper discussion and understanding of each site’s potential.















## Evening Session – Presentations and Panel Discussion

Held at **Oude Fabrikstraat 26**, the evening session brought together approximately 50 to 60 attendees for a series of thematic presentations and a panel discussion.

### 19:15 – 20:13: Presentations

**Arno Goossens (Municipality of Amersfoort)** presented the city's Environmental Vision 2030–2040, emphasizing "Healthy Living Together."

The key messages delivered by Arno Goossens during the European presentation on 27 March, where he outlined Amersfoort's long-term urban development vision focused on health, connectivity, and human-scale living.

Amersfoort is confronting contemporary urban challenges—including rising levels of loneliness, obesity, and stress—by rethinking the way the city is designed and experienced. The city is transitioning from the large-scale, car-oriented Vinex development model toward the more sustainable and integrated Novex approach. The goal is to create a healthier, more inclusive city where residents can thrive both physically and socially.

Strategically located in the geographic heart of the Netherlands, Amersfoort benefits from strong transportation connections and proximity to three distinct green landscapes, reinforcing its potential as a model for sustainable urban growth. The city's identity is shaped by a unique combination of a well-preserved historic city center, striking new architectural developments, and a deeply rooted community culture characterized by volunteerism and care.

As presented in the **Masterplan Amersfoort 2030–2040**, the city is committed to pursuing compact, inward-focused development. This involves building within existing urban boundaries, prioritizing walking and cycling, and ensuring that housing, work, and amenities are accessible in close proximity. Public space is viewed as a central platform for social interaction, and urban design is guided by principles of inclusiveness and human scale—with a particular focus on the needs of elderly citizens.

A key concept discussed by Goossens is the creation of a "network of life veins"—interconnected public spaces that facilitate movement, encounters, and community life. This vision supports the development of a **car-free, walkable city center**, where high-quality urban design enables both environmental sustainability and social well-being.

Referencing urbanist Jan Gehl's philosophy, Goossens emphasized that livability is achieved through a chain of well-designed public spaces, not just large-scale infrastructure. While urban planning sets the overarching framework, it is the small-scale, everyday design interventions that shape people's lived experience.

In conclusion, the presentation underscored **that the future of Amersfoort lies in creating a city that is accessible, compact, and socially connected—designed not just for efficiency, but for human flourishing.**

**Christina Gamboa (Iacol.coop)** shared case studies on cooperative urbanism and collective ownership.

Christina Gamboa, outlined the work and vision of Iacol a non-profit cooperative of workers focused on sustainable architecture and community-based housing solutions.

The presentation highlighted how Iacol addresses the challenges of systemic economic crises by proposing alternative models of cooperation and provision in architecture, management, and urban development. Iacol operates within four main fields: architecture, housing models and policies, energy transition, and construction management. Their central mission is to create infrastructures that support the sustainability of life, positioning these efforts as essential tools for eco-social transition through the integration of cooperativism and participatory processes.

The presentation showcases several key projects and cooperative housing initiatives, such as LaBorda (2014–2018), LaMorada (2019–2024), LaBalma (2017–2021), LaRaval (2019–2024), and LaBombeta (2023–2026), as well as competition entries like LaXalana. These projects are characterized by collective ownership, participatory design, and



ecological awareness. Supporting initiatives like Coopolis, a social economy incubator (2016–2019), and LaComunal, a cooperative culture hub (2017–2020), illustrate Lacol's broader commitment to social and solidarity economies.

The presentation also emphasized the measurable impact of cooperative housing, contrasting conventional and cooperative models through social, economic, and environmental metrics. Strategic lines of action—such as habitability, mobility, participation, water management, energy use, biodiversity, and material recycling—are integrated into each project. A metabolic analysis presented demonstrates dramatic reductions in environmental impact—up to 96%—through proposed interventions. The Energy Community of LaBordeta (launched in 2023) serves as a recent example of this integrated, community-driven approach to sustainability. Overall, the presentation frames Lacol's work as a holistic, scalable model for cooperative urban transformation.

**Mendel Robbers (Schipper Bosch)** offered insights on public-private collaboration in city-making.

The PowerPoint presentation delivered by Mendel Robbers of Schipper Bosch, titled **"The Economic Canary in the Spatial Coalmine"**, explores the evolving relationship between economic systems, urban development, and architectural practice.

Drawing on philosophical and artistic references such as William Blake's "God as an Architect" (1794), Robbers invites reflection on the historical and cultural forces that shape the built environment. Robbers critiques the tendency of professionals—architects, designers, and developers alike—to exclude complexity and restrictive conditions from their projects. Instead, Robbers advocates for embracing these complexities through a "stratification strategy," which involves a **holistic analysis of interests and needs already present in a site**. This approach allows for the recognition of a site's latent qualities, transforming it from a blank slate into a rich context full of social and economic relevance.

Robbers highlights the importance of **collaborative relationships** between various roles in development, including contractor-developer, architect-developer, and designer-developer partnerships. He illustrates this with visual metaphors and examples, such as the juxtaposition of public space typologies like picnics and concert halls, emphasizing flexible and multifunctional urban uses.

A key case study in the presentation is *De Nieuwe Stad* (The New City) in Amersfoort, developed in 2019, which exemplifies how Schipper Bosch integrates creativity, community, and adaptive reuse into its urban redevelopment projects. The recurring phrases "LET IT GO!" and "PLEASE PROTECT US" point to the tension between letting go of outdated paradigms and safeguarding meaningful aspects of place and community. Overall, Robbers' presentation urges stakeholders to recognize the existing potential in urban environments and to approach development as an art of collaboration rooted in confidence, context, and care.





### 20:30 – 21:00: Panel Discussion

A well-rounded panel addressed the theme "Ambitions and Opportunities in Amersfoort and Europan."

- **Rutger Dijksterhuis** (Aldermen Amersfoort)
- **Christina Gamboa** (Iacol.coop)
- **Micha de Haas** (City Architect, Amersfoort)
- **Arnoud Gelauff** (Europan NL / Arons en Gelauff architecten)

Key topics included climate resilience, the social potential of public spaces, and the role of young designers in shaping future cities.





### **21:00: Closing**

The event wrapped up with informal conversations and networking, concluding a day rich in inspiration, insight, and opportunity.

### **Reflections**

- The sunny weather provided ideal conditions for site visits, boosting engagement and energy.
- The range of sites presented a well-balanced challenge between transformation, reuse, and innovation.
- The evening sessions offered valuable context, inspiration, and frameworks for creative exploration in the competition phase.

### **Conclusion**

The European18 site visit day in Amersfoort successfully combined spatial discovery with conceptual depth. Participants left well-prepared and inspired to respond creatively to the design challenges ahead, making this a strong kickoff to the European18 competition.