



Guidance on green space for new residential areas

Groen Groeit Mee
(growing green space)
from doorstep to landscape

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Foreword

Developing and safeguarding green spaces with multiple benefits

Living in the province of Utrecht means living in a green environment at the heart of the Netherlands. Green space is a major shared asset. It contributes to quality of life and thereby also to the economy. The province of Utrecht is working to meet a significant housebuilding challenge and recognises the importance of future-proof development, as well as green and blue space that remains visible, accessible and enjoyable for all residents of Utrecht.

The collaborative programme Groen Groeit Mee (growing green space) gives shape to this green ambition, including for new residential areas, where the scale of housebuilding must be balanced with the amount of nature and recreational space to be created. This Guidance on green space for new residential areas provides instruments and a step-by-step plan to support its implementation.

Ambitions and instruments

This guidance sets out the ambitions for green spaces while also offering instruments to help address this task in conjunction with the many other demands on space. These instruments are Groene Schakels van voordeur tot landschap (Green Links – from doorstep to landscape) and Schijf van Vijf (Wheel of Five). When housing plans for new residential areas are developed in accordance with these instruments, it is highly likely that the plans will comply with the provincial environmental regulation (provinciale omgevingsverordening).

Indicative figures are provided for green spaces. These give a general sense of the space required. The actual space required must be tailored to each project and will be assessed for each new residential area using the step-by-step plan

Who is this guidance for?

This guidance is intended for municipalities and project developers. Primarily, it is aimed at spatial development strategists, project leads, project managers, landscape architects and urban planners. They will in any case need to work with the relevant provision in the provincial environmental regulation. The explanation of the provision in the provincial environmental regulation may also be relevant for municipal executives.



Challenges and opportunities for green space

Competing spatial demands

We are living in a time when the demand for space for a wide range of issues is steadily increasing in the Netherlands. The climate adaptation task requires additional space, for example in the form of extra water storage during periods of extreme rainfall, making use of the soil's natural sponge function, and managing water supply during periods of severe drought. In addition, shaded places and routes are becoming increasingly important during prolonged periods of heat. The loss of biodiversity also means that a diversity of green spaces and trees must be created. On top of this, the population continues to grow steadily and the need for recreation in green and blue spaces is increasing.

Additional pressure on space in the province of Utrecht

The province of Utrecht faces particularly significant challenges in this regard. In the population forecast by Statistics Netherlands (CBS) for the province of Utrecht, growth of almost 70,000 residents is expected by 2030, and as many as 220,000 by 2050 relative to 2024. The agricultural sector largely consists of dairy farms, many of which require extensification. There are several unique nature areas, such as the Utrechtse Heuvelrug, which will no longer function as quiet recreational landscapes in the long term if no new recreational green space is added in the province of Utrecht. There is a real risk that each new policy ambition, such as the large-scale housebuilding task in the province of Utrecht, will lead to a 'battle for every square metre'.

Optimal green development offers numerous opportunities

The province of Utrecht aims to encourage optimal development of every square metre of green space when construction takes place in new residential areas. For the local and regional green space that must be developed alongside housebuilding, it is important to combine as many tasks as possible. This supports both efficient use of space and the opportunity to pool different budgets. At present, many tasks are considered separately and have their own earmarked funding. Examples include woodland planting, water storage, green energy, play facilities and infrastructure verges. Multifunctional use of space creates further

opportunities. A pleasant living environment, in which green and blue spaces are used in the right way, can also help address challenges relating to people's health. Think of issues such as obesity, population ageing, loneliness and the decline in mental health.





This guidance supports the optimal development of green space

In practice, multiple value creation for green space has proven feasible

Based on the dilemma of competing spatial demands, the current societal challenges and the solution pathways of 'multifunctional use' and a 'targeted approach to green and blue space', two instruments and a step-by-step plan have been developed. These instruments were subsequently tested with municipalities and project developers in various new residential areas. This has shown that the aim of the province of Utrecht (and of many municipalities) is achievable in practice. Namely, to develop coherent, multifunctional green space that addresses several tasks at once and creates multiple forms of value.

Creating value across the five Ps supports collaboration

The collaborative programme Groen Groeit Mee, in which the province of Utrecht also participates, expresses multiple value creation in terms of creating value across the five Ps simultaneously: People, Profit, Planet, Place and Public. The aim of creating value across the five Ps ensures that interests are considered from multiple perspectives, whether they concern parties directly involved in a housing development or those merely affected by it. Taking these different interests on board in this way can greatly support effective collaboration.

Implementing the Groen Groeit Mee Pact

In 2022, the Groen Groeit Mee Pact was established, setting out the intention to tackle the green and blue space tasks in a multifunctional and collective manner. The Pact has since been signed by more than forty parties, including the executives of all municipalities in the province of Utrecht. This demonstrates the strong level of support for Groen Groeit Mee in our province.

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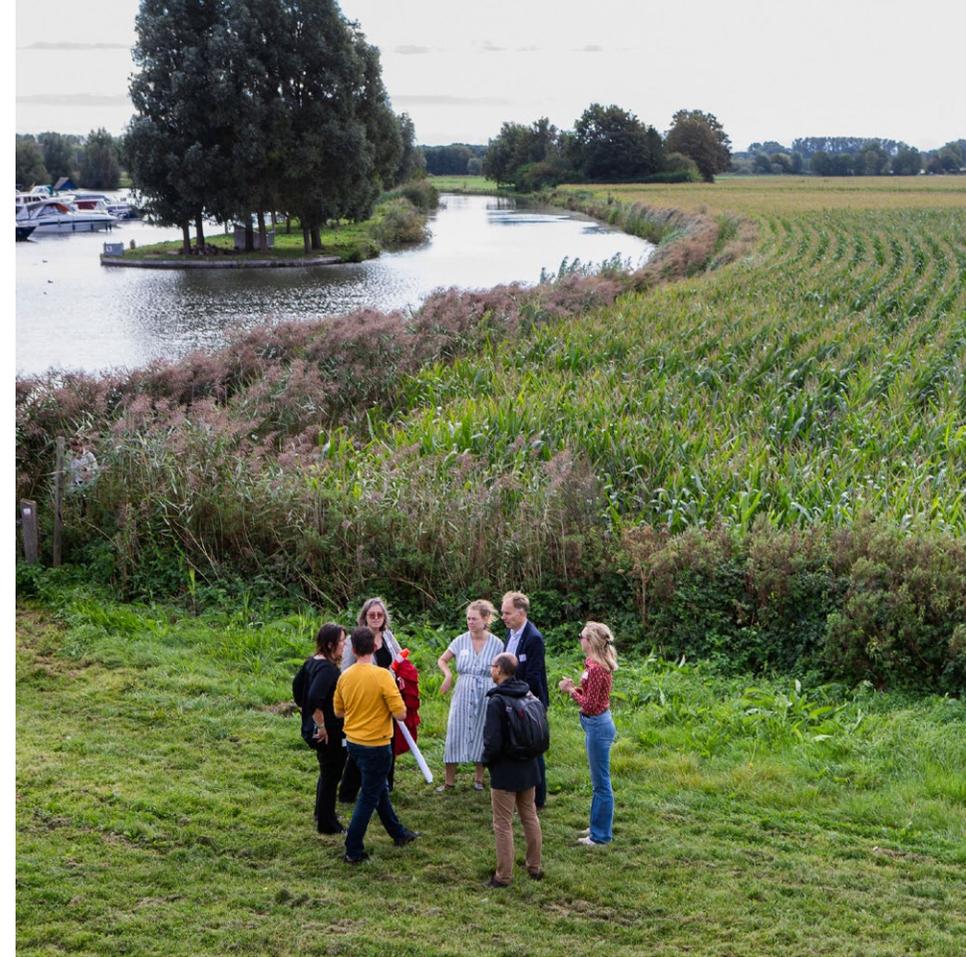
The Pact elaborated in the Groen Groeit Mee Catalogue

The Groen Groeit Mee Pact outlines the green values and green tasks to which the signatories commit themselves. These have been further elaborated in the Groen Groeit Mee Catalogue, where they are linked to the urbanisation task in a series of so-called discussion cards. The spatial requirements and costs of the green tasks have been calculated in broad terms in these cards, to give an indication of how the Groen Groeit Mee Pact can be implemented. The catalogue is particularly useful for developing a shared vision, that is, in the early stages of housing development. This is reflected in step 2 of the step-by-step plan (page 21).

Links

[!\[\]\(feabb98897b440bc8695a03336a6e2df_img.jpg\) Groen Groeit Mee Pact](#)

[!\[\]\(9dfdaff1d86ba3c1f8353b4d1b61b8c5_img.jpg\) GGM Catalogue](#)





Local and regional green space development as a requirement for housebuilding

The provision in the environmental regulation of the province of Utrecht

The provincial environmental strategy (provinciale Omgevingsvisie) sets out the ambition and vision for the physical living environment. Part of this ambition and vision has been elaborated in the collaborative programme Groen Groeit Mee. For housebuilding locations outside existing urban areas (new residential areas), the instruction rule in the provincial environmental regulation on the balanced growth of green space alongside housebuilding also applies.

Article 9.15 Instruction rule for housebuilding in new residential areas, permitted subject to the following conditions:

- d.** housebuilding is developed in conjunction with local and regional green space development, in which the scale of housebuilding is in a balanced proportion to the amount of nature and recreational space to be created; and
- e.** the creation of nature and recreation, and their sustainable maintenance, is secured;



Link

[Environmental regulation of the province of Utrecht](#)

In the next chapter, we explain what is needed to meet this requirement for new residential areas.



What is needed to meet the ‘green space development’ requirement?

Expanding the process to include the surrounding area

An important requirement set by the province of Utrecht for building in rural areas is that local and regional green space must be developed in conjunction with housebuilding, and that its realisation and long-term maintenance are safeguarded. This means that the scope of the housebuilding process must be extended to the area surrounding the housing development site. This requires a process that also involves key landowners and land managers of the surrounding rural landscape.

Groen Groeit Mee always requires a tailored approach

To meet the requirement set out in the provincial environmental regulation, while also delivering on the ambitions of the Groen Groeit Mee Pact, two instruments have been developed: the Groene Schakels van voordeur tot landschap (Chapter 5) and the Schijf van Vijf (Chapter 6), which outline the aspects that can be incorporated into green space development. These instruments provide straightforward guidance for achieving multiple forms of value and multifunctionality in green space.

Two instruments for achieving optimal green space development

Om invulling te geven aan de regel in de provinciale Omgevingsverordening en tegelijk de ambities uit het Groen Groeit Mee Pact waar te maken, zijn twee instrumenten ontwikkeld: de ‘Groene Schakels van voordeur tot landschap’ (Hoofdstuk 5) en de ‘Schijf van Vijf’ (Hoofdstuk 6) met aspecten die een plek kunnen krijgen in een groenontwikkeling. Deze instrumenten geven eenvoudige handvatten voor het bereiken van meervoudige waarde en multifunctionaliteit van groen.

Step-by-step plan based on practice and research

At present, it is not yet common practice for municipalities to examine the area surrounding a housing development site and to create green space development in collaboration with the relevant landowners and land managers. However, this is an implicit consequence of the rule in the provincial environmental regulation on regional green space development, unless the municipality itself owns the land surrounding the housing development site. For this reason, the province of Utrecht developed a step-by-step plan as an instrument for the process involving the various stakeholders. The step-by-step plan has been elaborated on the basis of three forms of practical experience.

1. A trial year for new residential areas

During a 'trial year', the province of Utrecht worked with municipalities, project developers and landowners to gain experience through practical cases. This taught us, among other things, how parallel steps in the process can accelerate progress – and, above all, what must not be forgotten in order to meet the requirement in the provincial environmental regulation within a limited timeframe.

2. Practical experience with the Zandlopermodel (hourglass model) for co-creation

In numerous projects, various municipalities, including those in the province of Utrecht, have worked with the Zandlopermodel for co-creation in spatial planning projects. This model starts 'wide', involving a broad range of stakeholders and interests, and then narrows to the 'waist' of the hourglass, where unusual suspects are brought in – parties who can help move the process forward rather than slow it down. These may include public authorities, organisations or individuals from elsewhere who have an interest in playing a role in the area, such as prospective homebuyers, private individuals or parties wishing to initiate developments in the area. After this phase, the process widens again, involving all the parties from the initial stage.

3. Research on accelerating housebuilding (2023)

In 2023, the Ministry of Housing and Spatial Planning published Plan van aanpak versnellen processen en procedures van de woningbouw (Action plan for accelerating housebuilding processes and procedures). It identifies five actions. Two of the most important actions align seamlessly with the practical experience gained: 1) Taking steps simultaneously rather than sequentially (as experienced during the trial year) and 2) Participation that gives prospective homebuyers a voice and a face (the benefit of which became clear through use of the Zandlopermodel).



Link

Action plan for accelerating housebuilding processes and procedures



Instrument 1

Groene Schakels van voordeur tot landschap

The instrument **Groene Schakels van voordeur tot landschap** (Green Links: from doorstep to landscape) ensures that continuous structures of green space, blue space and recreation are developed in conjunction with housebuilding. It is an instrument for municipalities and project developers to help shape regional and local green space, which must be developed in conjunction with housebuilding.

Different levels of green space: Groene Schakels

The Groene Schakels van voordeur tot landschap (hereinafter: Groene Schakels) represent different levels of green space in the context of housing development: doorstep green space, neighbourhood green space, district green space, urban-rural green space and landscape. The purpose of the first three links speaks for itself. Urban-rural green space refers to the transition from the housing development site to the surrounding area. The landscape link refers to larger, continuous areas of nature and recreation. To achieve multiple value creation and multifunctionality in green space, each link must meet the five aspects of the Schijf van Vijf:

- **Water balance:** the capacity to cope with both dry and wet periods.
- **Biodiversity:** both resilient ecosystems and species richness.
- **Accessibility:** from doorstep to landscape for people.
- **Healthy people:** physical, mental and social health.
- **Identity:** the genius loci – the distinctiveness, history and experience of a place – is tangible and perceptible.

See [page 15](#) for a further explanation of these aspects.

A framework of blue space, green space and recreation

It is crucial that the Groene Schakels are connected to one another to provide continuous structure for water systems and ecological links from the dwelling to the landscape.

The Groen Groeit Mee Pact also states that green space must be visible, accessible and enjoyable for all residents of Utrecht. People should be able to

reach the landscape directly and recreationally from their homes. This means that a framework of green space, blue space and recreational paths from doorstep to landscape is needed – both within the Groene Schakels themselves and between them.

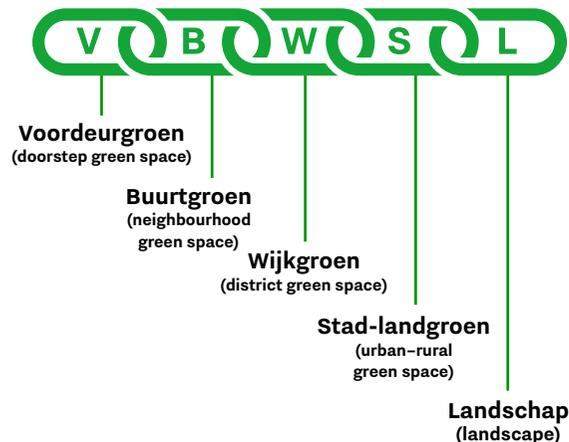
In smaller housing developments, some of the links may overlap. District green space and urban–rural green space, for example, may coincide.

Distance from the dwelling to the Groene Schakel

To make green space inclusive – that is, accessible to everyone – it is necessary to work with maximum distances to areas of green space for use and recreation. This ensures that even young children and people with limited mobility, whether or not using a walking frame, can reach them on foot. For the neighbourhood green and district green links, the recommended distances from various recreation studies (see page 16, Indicative benchmarks for green space) are adopted. This means a maximum distance of 150 metres from the dwelling to neighbourhood green space, and 300 metres from the dwelling to district green space. The distance from the dwelling to urban–rural green space is relative and depends on the size of the housing development site. The recommended distance from the dwelling to the landscape is three to five kilometres. In the instrument Groene Schakels van voordeur tot landschap, this recommendation is applied less strictly. A reasonable distance may depend, for example, on the nature of the route to the landscape: is it level, or does it involve many gradients? The three to five kilometres from dwelling to landscape is therefore an indicative figure in this instrument.



The interconnected links of green space



Below, the different types of green links are shown: doorstep green space, neighbourhood green space, district green space, urban–rural green space and landscape. Under each link, the maximum distance from the dwelling to that link is shown. We also list several examples, key considerations and tips for the concrete incorporation of blue space, green space and recreation. Photos and descriptions of examples can be found in Chapter 10, Inspiration (from page 32).

V Voordeurgroen (doorstep green space)



The system of green space and blue space starts at the doorstep: the building and the garden. Examples, including:

- green roofs and façades
- delivering the garden with topsoil and native hedges and trees
- capturing rainwater in the garden
- reusing rainwater in the dwelling or for planting

B Buurtgroen (neighbourhood green space)



Everyone must be able to reach neighbourhood green space. Distance from the dwelling: maximum 150 metres. Examples, including:

- a traffic-free or low-traffic and shaded route to it
- natural surveillance
- seating and picnic areas
- capturing and storing rainwater
- reusing rainwater for planting
- combining water storage and play
- diversity in planting

W Wijkgroen (district green space)



District green space has multiple functions. Distance from the dwelling: maximum 300 metres. Examples, including:

- integrating a framework of blue space, green space and recreation
- flexibility of use for the future
- capturing and storing rainwater
- combining water storage and play
- play and movement circuits
- edible public green space

S Stad-landgroen (urban–rural green space)



District green space has multiple functions. Distance from the dwelling: maximum 300 metres. Examples, including:

- integrating a framework of blue space, green space and recreation
- flexibility of use for the future
- capturing and storing rainwater
- combining water storage and play
- play and movement circuits
- edible public green space

L Landschap (landscape)



Make urban–rural green space more accessible or create it. Distance from the dwelling: approximately five kilometres. Examples, including:

- extending blue space and green space into the wider landscape
- reassessing accessibility of opened-up NNN areas through zoning
- making national heritage accessible and easy to experience
- redesigning poorly used recreational areas
- creating combinations of nature and recreation
- creating woodland and/or food forests
- creating a swimming lake



Instrument 2

Schijf van Vijf

According to the ambitions of Groen Groeit Mee, several tasks need to be accommodated within green space. With all current claims on space, it is essential to link these tasks together. For green space in and around new residential areas, the province of Utrecht developed the Schijf van Vijf (Wheel of Five).

Five aspects for value creation and multifunctionality

When regional and local green space is developed according to the Groene Schakels, and when each Groene Schakel incorporates the following five aspects, this leads to multiple value creation through green space. These five aspects are:

- **Water balance:** the capacity to cope with both dry and wet periods.
- **Biodiversity:** resilient ecosystems as well as species richness.
- **Accessibility:** from doorstep to landscape for people.
- **Healthy people:** physical, mental and social health.
- **Identity:** the genius loci – the distinctiveness, history and experience of a place – is tangible and perceptible.

Helps address other housebuilding-related challenges

These five aspects were not chosen solely based on the ambitions of the Groen Groeit Mee Pact. They were also selected because this approach almost automatically provides an integrated solution for other housebuilding-related tasks and ambitions, such as:

- requirements set by water authorities
- [📄 The European Nature Restoration Law \(2024\)](#)
- [📄 Convenant Toekomstbestendig Bouwen \(Future-proof Building Covenant\) \(2024\)](#)
- [📄 Landelijke maatlat voor een groene, klimaatadaptieve, bebouwde omgeving \(National framework for a green, climate-adaptive built environment\) \(2023\)](#)
- Healthy urban living, including reducing obesity, loneliness and burn-outs

Just like the Groene Schakels, this instrument is a tool for municipalities and project developers. It is also an instrument of the province of Utrecht for the regional and local green space that must be developed in conjunction with housing development. To make optimal use of space and unlock the full value of green space, it is important that all five aspects are met simultaneously in green development.

Explanation of the Schijf van Vijf

On this page, we explain each aspect of the Schijf van Vijf. We describe what to consider when planning green space. In brackets, we indicate which of the five overarching Ps (People, Profit, Planet, Place and Public) gain direct value when the respective aspect is fulfilled.

Water balance – the capacity to cope with both dry and wet periods (People, Planet, Profit, Public)

A good water balance means being able to absorb extremes for people, plants and animals: buffering water in wet periods, but also retaining it during dry periods. Alongside preventing flooding of vital and vulnerable functions, consider the concept of ‘the city as a sponge’. An aspect of healthy people that clearly applies here is ‘water for cooling’. Equally essential is the role of ‘visible water’. This goes hand in hand with nature-inclusive residential areas: rainwater and ditches follow their course above ground rather than through underground pipes. Naturally, water quality must comply with the standards set by the water authorities and the province of Utrecht.

Biodiversity: both resilient ecosystems and species richness (Planet, Public)

The definition of biodiversity is as follows: “The variability among organisms from all over the world, including terrestrial, marine and other aquatic ecosystems, and the ecological relationships of which they are part; diversity concerns the variation within species (genes), between species and between ecosystems.”* First, you must ensure that ecosystems can develop and connect with other ecosystems. This means developing green and blue space as systems that extend from buildings into the landscape’s green-blue structures (in line with the underlying groene schakel concept) and that align with the green and blue systems of neighbouring districts or villages. Green space should be designed for a diversity of locally appropriate species and variation within species. In the Covenant Toekomstbestendig Bouwen (Future-proof Building Covenant), nature-inclusive building/biodiversity is further specified through indicators and guidance for three ambition levels.

Accessibility from doorstep to landscape for people (People, Public)

Making places accessible for everyone truly means everyone. For example, people with reduced mobility and children must be able to reach neighbourhood green space easily and safely, and people with a limited budget must be able to access the wider landscape as well. It is useful to link cycling and walking routes to both existing and newly created green–blue structures, as this immediately makes these green and blue spaces easy to experience. Water structures can be made accessible for water-based activities, thereby fulfilling an important recreational function. The landscape may consist of cultural landscapes with historical or narrative value, but also of nature areas. For nature areas, accessibility must be tailored to the specific situation. The target species in nature areas determine the degree to which human access is appropriate. In some cases, access is not desirable at all for reasons of ecological value, while in other cases limited or more intensive use may be possible. Accessibility along a continuous landscape area is also regarded as ‘accessibility’ when the cultural landscape or nature area can be experienced from its edges.

Healthy people: physical, mental and social health (People, Profit, Public)

To promote people’s health, it makes sense to ensure good air quality and to prevent heat stress by providing sufficient shaded areas and routes, and by creating opportunities for cooling. In addition, designing spaces for play, sport and low-threshold recreation is essential for stimulating sufficient physical activity. Quiet spaces are also important for mental health – places where people can withdraw, that are relatively quiet, or that are experienced as calm. The Groene Schakels must be designed in such a way that all target groups will use them, and that social interaction occurs naturally in these spaces. Finally, consider the importance of healthy food and drink, and whether this can be facilitated and encouraged within green space.

Identity – the genius loci – is tangible and perceptible (People, Place, Public)

Genius loci is Latin for ‘the spirit of the place’. It refers to the character, distinctiveness and atmosphere of a place. These are shaped by various factors, such as the physical context and appearance of the location, its history, local stories and the social context. The genius loci forms the guiding principle for the new identity of the place, and should be tangible and perceptible within the green space.



Indicative figures for green space

To provide guidance on the amount of green space required, the province of Utrecht looks at the recommendations of the Dutch national government as well as various regional studies on recreational green space. In this guidance, we use two indicative figures on that basis: 75 square metres of green space per dwelling for residential green space, and 500 square metres per dwelling for regional green space. The term 'green space' always includes water (blue space).

It is important to emphasise that these are indicative figures. The instruments focus primarily on creating meaningful, coherent structures of blue space, green space and recreation. That comes first. Studies of the area in which the new residential area will be located then provide an indication of the amount of green space per dwelling needed for local and regional green space.

Indicative figure from Nota Ruimte applied to residential green space

The indicative figure of 75 square metres of green space per dwelling, taken from Nota Ruimte (National Spatial Strategy) (2004) for green space in residential neighbourhoods, is still applied widely by municipalities and in plans for new residential areas. In this guidance, we adopt this indicative figure for residential green space. Residential green space is considered to include all unpaved areas. This is supported by one of the structuring choices for built-up areas in the Kamerbrief Water en Bodem sturend (Letter to the House of Representatives: Water and Soil Leading): "We, as public authorities, aim for as little soil sealing as possible." Residential green space typically includes the three Groene Schakels doorstep green space, neighbourhood green space and district green space, as well as part of the framework of continuous structures of blue space, green space and recreational paths.

Doorstep green space is, of course, counted only when it is genuinely green and remains that way. This can be organised effectively in new developments. There are various examples of front gardens being delivered as green spaces, with the project developer arranging maintenance for the first three years. The maintenance of the green space is then included in the purchase agreement.

Studies on green space connected to residential neighbourhoods

Over the years, various studies have been carried out on green space that connects to, or is located near, residential neighbourhoods. These studies consistently point to the same indicative figure: approximately 500 square metres of green space per dwelling. In 2023, the Dutch national government commissioned a study into the spatial and financial impact of 'green urbanisation' at the scale of the entire Netherlands. This study examined two different options: 350 square metres and 500 square metres of green space per dwelling.

The conclusions of that study align seamlessly with the approach to green space set out in this guidance: ensure multiple value creation and multifunctionality of green space, provide the right connections and make a distinction between where each type of green space is required.

Indicative figure for regional green space

In this guidance, the indicative figure of 500 square metres of green space per dwelling is adopted from these studies, and this is considered regional green space. This typically includes the two Groene Schakels urban-rural green space and landscape, and a large part of the framework of continuous structures of blue space, green space and recreational paths. The way regional green space is designed depends on the existing and desired qualities of the area. This may be achieved by redesigning green space to increase its value, by opening up valuable green areas that are currently inaccessible – for example, places of cultural and historical significance – or by creating paths along valuable, accessible green space and by realising new green space.

Natuurnetwerk Nederland areas

Natuurnetwerk Nederland (Nature Network Netherlands, NNN) areas may, under certain conditions, be counted as regional green space. This naturally depends on whether it is possible to include an NNN area – or its edges – as part of the Groene Schakels. It is also important that the area can be designed in such a way that it meets the Schijf van Vijf requirements without compromising its ecological value.

This will always require a tailored approach. It depends, among other things, on whether the area forms part of an ecological main structure, on the existing or potential target species, and on the desired habitat for those species. Not all nature areas are the same, and by directing slightly more intensive use to one area, it can be ensured that another area is visited less or not at all. The possibility of counting NNN areas as regional green space, in accordance with the rule in the provincial environmental regulation, applies to both existing and newly created Natuurnetwerk Nederland areas. The Handreiking bij de regels ter bescherming van het Natuurnetwerk Nederland (Guidance on the rules for protecting the Nature Network Netherlands) provides support for this.

Indicative figure for residential green space: 75 square metres per dwelling

- All public space that is unpaved.
- Private green space that is legally secured.

Indicative figure for regional green space: 500 square metres per dwelling

- Redesigning existing green space in line with the Schijf van Vijf.
- Opening up or making accessible green space with multiple forms of value.
- Creating new green space.

Useful studies and research on green space

- [!\[\]\(7867ccc96698fb002c5a60a3a1283862_img.jpg\) **Rood en groen in balans | Een verkenning van groennormen en alternatieve benaderingen**
\(Red and Green in Balance | An exploration of green standards and alternative approaches\) Stichting Recreatie](#)
- [!\[\]\(a185bcb38fbd8d6a6b157b5cb0e840ca_img.jpg\) **Omgevingswetprogramma Recreatie & Toerisme 2022-2025**
\(Environment and Planning Act programme for recreation & tourism 2022-2025\) Provincie Utrecht](#)
- [!\[\]\(b79b73ff9ead1814a78b53ea2d18c90e_img.jpg\) **Opgaven in Beeld \(Challenges mapped out\)** Bureau BUITEN, commissioned by Groen Groeit Mee \(June 2021\)](#)
- [!\[\]\(3c7c24054aff510f76df765f5a91d4d3_img.jpg\) **Ruimtelijke opgave Groen & Landschap \(Spatial task: green space & landscape\)** U10](#)
- [!\[\]\(e27d67c24591503e4b715d11a0d5d7c5_img.jpg\) **Utrecht Buiten | Groene recreatie voor gezond stedelijk leven**
\(Utrecht Outdoors| Green recreation for healthy urban living\) Bureau BUITEN in samenwerking met Track Landscapes](#)
- [!\[\]\(760f40a3a5a0721d7af6ae10e9ec6b79_img.jpg\) **Amersfoort Buiten | Knelpunten en kansen voor recreatie in Regio Amersfoort**
\(Amersfoort Outdoors | Bottlenecks and opportunities for recreation in the Amersfoort region\) Bureau BUITEN](#)
- [!\[\]\(7f6dca7cf0d5f7731b36cbba92104dfb_img.jpg\) **Het NVTO** Inzichten uit het Nederlandse Vrijtijdsonderzoek - Insights from the Dutch Leisure Survey\) - NBTC](#)
- [!\[\]\(6fb940e025b25e265e1e6c05048714ef_img.jpg\) **Groene verstedelijking | Onderzoek naar de ruimtelijke en financiële impact van buitenstedelijk groen – Deel 1**
\(Green Urbanisation | Study on the spatial and financial impact of peri-urban green space – Part 1\)
Flux Landscape Architecture bv and Bureau BUITEN, commissioned by the Dutch Ministry of Agriculture, Nature and Food Quality \(LNV\) and the Dutch Ministry of the Interior and Kingdom Relations \(BZK\)](#)
- [!\[\]\(30999d3f052e3d8334e85823fb3cefe3_img.jpg\) **Groene verstedelijking | Onderzoek naar de ruimtelijke en financiële impact van buitenstedelijk groen – Deel 2**
\(Green urbanisation | Study on the spatial and financial impact of peri-urban green space – Part 2 Flux Landscape Architecture bv and Bureau BUITEN, commissioned by the Dutch Ministry of Agriculture, Nature and Food \(LNV\) and the Dutch Ministry of the Interior and Kingdom Relations \(BZK\)](#)
- [!\[\]\(1b03e6bdecac5774b55baa0e64950333_img.jpg\) **Handreiking Groen in en om de Stad 2024 \(GIOS\) \(Guidance on green space in and around the city 2024 \(GIOS\)\)**
The Dutch Ministry of the Interior and Kingdom Relations \(BZK\) and the Dutch Minister for Nature and Nitrogen Policy](#)
- [!\[\]\(ddb222bca4d858d192d97981d656f7ca_img.jpg\) **Handreiking bij de regels ter bescherming van het Natuurnetwerk Nederland 2024 \(Guidance on the rules for protecting the Nature Network Netherlands 2024\)** Province of Utrecht](#)
- [!\[\]\(ba5a94485f9c47ce80aab6ec4a73b6c9_img.jpg\) **Kamerbrief Water en Bodem sturend 2022 \(Letter to the House of Representatives: Water and Soil Leading 2022\)**
Dutch Ministry of Infrastructure and Water Management \(IenW\)](#)



Step-by-step plan

When this step-by-step plan is followed in relation to the two instruments for green space, it fulfils the rule from the provincial environmental regulation stating that 'housing development must be carried out in coherence with local and regional green space development'. And this approach offers additional advantages. The step-by-step plan helps accelerate the process, build support, and enable effective cooperation between the parties responsible for realising (regional) green space.

The step-by-step plan consists of four steps.

Step 1

Organise the collaboration

Step 2

Explore the potential for Groene Schakels and Schijf van Vijf

Step 3

Formulate realistic opportunities based on design-led research

Step 4

Define specific interventions for green space, blue space and recreation, and record these

Step 1

Organise the collaboration

To achieve a high-quality result for green space in housing development plans in the shortest possible time, it is essential to work out both regional and local green space development for a residential area in an integrated manner. This can only be achieved through close cooperation with current and future stakeholders. Naturally, you involve the people and organisations that are affected, as well as those who can play a role in realising the green opportunities in and around the housing development site.

Actions

1. Determine the geographical scope of the project.

Use, as guidance, a radius of three to five kilometres from the housing development site (the distance to 'landscape' as defined in Groene Schakels).

2. Identify the stakeholders who are affected and who can play a role in creating the green space, such as landowners and land managers in the immediate surroundings of the development site.

3. Identify the unusual suspects: authorities, parties and individuals from elsewhere who have an interest in contributing to the area. Use the scope of the 'discussion cards' from the Groen Groeit Mee Catalogue for this.

4. Make procedural agreements with the province

For example, agreements on 'stop moments' during the process, where the province, municipality and any developing parties come together for a mutual check-in.

Hulpmiddelen

 [Groen Groeit Mee Catalogue](#)

Process accelerators

Tips

- Appoint a project manager for the housing development (the housing development site and its surroundings) who has an affinity with area development.
- Invest additional time in reaching and involving a broad cross-section of potential stakeholders.
- Make use of the knowledge and expertise of the stakeholders.
- Develop a high-level participation plan for the housing development area in advance. The co-creation process with the stakeholders forms part of this.
- Have the participation plan adopted by the municipal council and document all participation moments.

Outcomes

- Possibility to work with less planning capacity within the municipality and/or the project developer.
- The municipal council will make decisions more quickly during the process.
- Little to no objections to the final housing development plan.
- A strong likelihood of a justification that will withstand review by the Council of State.



Use the Schijf van Vijf to identify the stakeholders

To achieve green space development that meets the objectives of the two instruments – green space that is coherent, multifunctional and creates multiple types of value – input is required from many disciplines and a wide range of organisations. Naturally, the province and the developing parties play a role in an early stage (see also Action 4 on page 19). But it is equally important to consider the following list of potential stakeholders. This list was compiled with the help of practitioners in the field. They can provide substantive input and/or contribute to both the realisation and maintenance of green space. Above each stakeholder, a colour indicates which aspect of the Schijf van Vijf the stakeholder is particularly relevant for within Groen Groeit Mee.



Land- en Tuinbouw Organisatie Nederland (Dutch Federation of Agricultural and Horticultural Organizations, LTO)

Many housing development sites border agricultural land. To realise the framework of blue space, green space and recreational paths from doorstep to landscape, it is essential to make good (financial) agreements with farmers at an early stage. Umbrella organisations such as LTO can help with this.



Collectieven voor agrarisch natuurbeheer (agricultural nature management collectives)

In various areas, farmers are on waiting lists for agricultural nature management. Many more farmers would be willing to participate, provided the compensation can form part of their business model. Together with the collectives, it can be explored whether this offers mutual opportunities for green space development in relation to housing development.



Residents of adjacent neighbourhoods + future residents

It has proven effective not only to involve the immediate neighbours, but also to engage an entire neighbourhood or village with stories and ideas that can strengthen the identity of the green space, and thereby the identity of the new neighbourhood. In addition, giving potential future residents an equal voice alongside current nearby residents is an effective way to accelerate the process.



Land managers, entrepreneurs and residents who actively contribute to promoting, among other things, biodiversity, green space and health

Everyone has a profession, passion and expertise. Make use of this in the process. It reduces the capacity needed and simultaneously creates support. Use the geographical scope of the project, as defined in the first action, to determine who could usefully be involved.



Public health services (GGDs) of adjacent villages or neighbourhoods

To generate meaningful proposals for how green space development can improve people's health, it is essential first to map the current situation and the developments that can be expected. The GGDs monitor many aspects of public health and therefore have a very clear picture of these issues.



Experts in health and green space

Many spatial projects currently encounter the same problem: the outcome is often not a living environment that actively improves the health of the people who need it most. The knowledge of the GGDs is very helpful in this regard. But after that, experts are needed who have practical experience in translating that knowledge into precisely the right green space interventions. Examples include Natuur en Milieu-

federatie Utrecht (Utrecht Nature and Environmental Federation, NMU) and public space designers.



Experts in soil, hydrology and biodiversity

When assembling a team for the housing development, keep in mind that you need experts in soil, hydrology and biodiversity to properly integrate the biodiversity and water balance aspects. Make use of the knowledge and experience of nature organisations, for example.



The water authority

Naturally, it is necessary to involve the relevant water authority at an early stage. Not only to understand the guidelines for the area, but also to identify whether promising plans or projects exist that could contribute to Groen Groeit Mee or to the identity of the area.



Experts in current and future recreation

There is extensive research available on recreation. But it is also important to involve experts who understand trends and developments in recreation. There may be new ideas on how recreation can support healthy people and what 'recreation' actually means in that context.



Step 2

Explore the potential for Groene Schakels and Schijf van Vijf

After organising collaboration in Step 1, you work through the Groene Schakels and the Schijf van Vijf with the relevant stakeholders in Step 2. This is the inventory and analysis phase and can be seen as a 'pressure cooker' process, with in-depth individual conversations and integrated working sessions taking place in parallel. It is a process step with many advantages.

Actions

1. Identify the existing values of green space, blue space, recreation and identity in the area.
2. Map the current state of physical, mental and social health of people in the area, as well as the expected characteristics of the target groups for whom the housing will be built.
3. Examine the relationship between the Groene Schakels and the Schijf van Vijf and municipal visions, such as recreation, climate adaptation, social policy or rural-area visions within the municipality.
4. Compile an overview of the planned implementation projects in the area. From solar parks and the transformation of farmyards to footpaths and nature areas: everything that could potentially contribute to the Groene Schakels van voordeur tot landschap, and the Schijf van Vijf.
5. Find a skilled facilitator and organise integrated working sessions with the relevant stakeholders to gather input and jointly define the tasks and potential for the Groene Schakels and the Schijf van Vijf.

Tools

Tool 1

Challenges formulated by the regional partners:

 [U16 Ruimtelijke opgave Groen & Landschap \(U16 Spatial task: Green Space & Landscape\) 2020-2040](#)

 [Handelingsperspectief buitengebied regio Amersfoort \(Action perspective for the Amersfoort rural area\)](#)

 [Regio Foodvalley](#) (under development)

Tool 2

De door de provincie geformuleerde landschappelijke ambities:

 [Area analysis of core qualities](#)
For several areas, for example UNESCO World Heritage Site the Dutch Water Defence Lines, ['Uitgangspunten ontwikkeling' \(Development Principles\)](#) and a ['Kansenkaart' Kansenkaart \(Opportunity Map\)](#) have also been developed.

Geodata of the province of Utrecht

For example, an overview of new residential areas, the green contour, NNN areas and quiet zones.

Process accelerators



Tips

- Involve municipal colleagues first. They can contribute substantial knowledge to the actions listed above and help resolve any initial conflicts.
- Facilitate dialogue between parties whose interests may appear to be, or genuinely are, in conflict, and work with them to identify their common ground.
- Existing studies and visions often show which Groene Schakels are missing to create coherence 'from doorstep to landscape' for the new residential area, or which aspects of the Schijf van Vijf are underexposed. Focus on these in Step 2.

Outcomes

- It saves a great deal of work if you involve the right colleagues and stakeholders to contribute ideas and expertise on regional green space development (green space, blue space, recreation) and on the social context in which the housing will be built.
- Addressing dilemmas early prevents delays later in the housing development process.
- Integrated stakeholder sessions create fertile ground for collaboration in the realisation of both regional and local green space.
- It makes political and administrative decision-making easier when the development of regional and local green space directly aligns with established visions.

Step 3

Formulate realistic opportunities based on design-led research

In Step 2, the potential was inventoried and analysed. Step 3 focuses on translating that potential into realistic opportunities for realisation.

A highly effective way to do this is to carry out an integrated design-led study, focusing on three aspects: spatial design, landownership and available budget.

Spatially, it must be examined how the framework of green space, blue space and recreational paths from doorstep to landscape can be achieved. In addition, each green link must be assessed for how it meets the aspects of biodiversity, water balance, accessibility, identity and healthy people. For the aspect of biodiversity, the indicators in the Covenant Toekomstbestendig Bouwen (Future-proof Building Covenant) provide concrete guidance.

By identifying which landowners surrounding the housing development site are willing to cooperate and which budgets are available for implementation and maintenance, it becomes clear what the likelihood of realisation is and within what time frame this can occur. When thinking of 'landowners', be sure to include parties such as the province of Utrecht, Staatsbosbeheer (National Forest Service in the Netherlands), Stichting Utrechts Landschap (Utrecht Landscape Foundation), investors and project developers.

Actions

1. Carry out design-led research to translate the potential for residential green space and regional green space into realistic opportunities across three aspects:
 - Spatial design
 - Landownership
 - Available budget
2. Include trees as a separate point of attention for both residential green space and regional green space. Existing and new trees provide value on many aspects, yet they are far too often lost in residential areas because the necessary root space has not been properly incorporated into the plan, for example in relation to utilities, infrastructure or ditch banks. The starting point for the number of trees follows the 3-30-300 rule included under Indicatoren (Indicators) in the Covenant Toekomstbestendig Bouwen.
3. Distinguish between Groen Groeit Mee opportunities for the long term and the short term, depending on the expected process with landowners and the budget possibilities.
4. For potential opportunities that are long-term, high-level or cross-municipal in nature, it is useful in this step to make administrative agreements.

Tool 1 Guidelines



Guidelines and agendas of the relevant water authority



Covenant Toekomstbestendig Bouwen (Future-proof Building Covenant): sustainable, more cost-effective and faster building

Tool 2 Expertise



Expertnetwerk Versnelling Woningbouw (Expert network for accelerating housing development) of the province of Utrecht

Process accelerators



Tips

- Involve the project developers. They can, for example, make landscape architects or other expertise available for design-led research under the municipality's direction.
- Bring in expertise in green space and health. The translation of mental and social health objectives into spatial plans often fails.
- Yet this is a requirement arising from the objectives of the 'healthy people' aspect and the multiple value creation of green space in housing development.
- Engage with landowners early to explore potential opportunities.
- Check with the province of Utrecht whether they have ongoing implementation projects in the area that could contribute to the Groen Groeit Mee objectives.
- Involve farmers through 'farmer-to-farmer' communication when all or part of their landownership offers potential for Groen Groeit Mee and for their own benefit, through alternative land use or design. Organise sessions for farmers who have experience with this, and have them share their stories with other farmers or estate owners.



Ontwerpateliers Natuurinclusief (Nature-inclusive design workshops) of the province of Utrecht



Rural coaches of the province of Utrecht



Factsheet on funding for Groen Groeit Mee

Step 3 (continued)

Outcomes

- You prevent stagnation, because (larger) project developers can quickly hire expertise for the municipality without complicated procedures.
- You prevent the environmental plan from failing to meet the Groen Groeit Mee requirements due to insufficient incorporation of green space that contributes to the 'healthy people' aspect.
- You prevent crucial opportunities from being missed because of assumptions about whether a landowner is or is not willing to cooperate. What was true a few years ago may now have changed completely.
- You prevent early resistance to potential Groen Groeit Mee opportunities due to the perception that the government will be 'interfering' with the business operations of an estate owner or farmer.



Step 4

Define specific interventions for green space, blue space and recreation, and record these

Formulate specific interventions for green space, blue space and recreation and record these in the environmental plan. Based on the realistic opportunities identified in Step 3, you can use Step 4 to determine, in conjunction with the buildings, infrastructure and the energy challenge, which interventions for regional and local green space development should be included in the environmental plan. If you address this properly in the preliminary draft environmental plan, the environmental plan can then be expected to receive automatic approval for Groen Groeit Mee.

Actions

1. Describe and/or map the short-term Groen Groeit Mee interventions. Include these in the environmental plan for the housing development site.
2. Make a realistic assessment of the process required for the long-term Groen Groeit Mee interventions. Based on this, determine which interventions should be described in the environmental plan.
3. Describe the steps for the implementation process of the Groen Groeit Mee interventions.
4. Describe the available budgets or the budgets that may be accessed for the Groen Groeit Mee interventions.
5. Check with the province of Utrecht whether the above descriptions meet the Groen Groeit Mee requirements before the preliminary draft environmental plan is submitted.
6. Record all elements in the preliminary draft environmental plan.
7. Result: Clarity on the adequate fulfilment of the rule in the provincial environmental regulation concerning Groen Groeit Mee.



Expertise

 [Expertnetwerk Versnelling Woningbouw](#)
(Expert network for accelerating housing development)
of the province of Utrecht

Process accelerators

Tips

- Agree that a progress meeting will be held with the province of Utrecht for the interventions to be implemented and at what moment. This is particularly important for long-term interventions.

Outcomes

- When Steps 1 to 4 are followed, an adequate Groen Groeit Mee contribution will already be prepared in the preliminary draft environmental plan, and the environmental plan will, at that point, already comply with the provincial environmental regulation.
- By establishing contact moments with the province of Utrecht, you avoid having to describe long-term processes down to the last detail. Timelines can be refined during the progress meetings.
- Progress meetings can also address support from the province of Utrecht for funding, for example through subsidy applications.

-  **Biodiversity**
Both resilient ecosystems and species richness
-  **Accessibility**
From doorstep to landscape for people
-  **Water balance**
The capacity to cope with both dry and wet periods
-  **Healthy people**
Green space and blue space contribute to physical, mental and social health
-  **Identity**
The genius loci – the distinctiveness, history and experience of a place – is tangible and perceptible



Groen Groeit Mee contribution at specific new residential areas



1.
De Bleek, Montfoort



2.
Het Oosterland, Ronde Venen



3.
**Bovenduist, Amersfoort
(under development)**

9

1. De Bleek, Montfoort

Groen Groeit Mee contribution in the ‘transition phase’

Phase 1 of the De Bleek new residential area in the municipality of Montfoort was already far advanced in the zoning plan procedure when the province of Utrecht adopted its guidance. The province considers this a housing development project in the transition phase: new residential areas whose zoning plans were approved by the province during the ‘trial year’ and on the basis of the first version of Handreiking Nieuwe Woongebieden (Guidance for new residential areas).

Discussions with the province revealed that the municipality had many separate visions, plans and projects which – if physically and financially linked to De Bleek – would together form a strong Groen Groeit Mee contribution for this transition phase of the zoning plans. The province therefore advised the project team to contact various municipal colleagues working on related themes (such as recreation, water and wellbeing), as well as colleagues involved in current implementation projects within the municipality.

The municipality had clear ambitions in the field of nature-inclusive projects and nature-friendly management. In addition, it already had a well-defined recreation vision, including cycling, walking and boating networks, also developed in

cooperation with the neighbouring municipality of Oudewater. There is engagement with proactive residents who are creating walking loops through agricultural land. There is an overview of farm shops, new seating areas and other facilities that routes could pass. All of this has been integrated into the contribution to ‘regional green space’ for Groen Groeit Mee.

Crucial missing links in ecological structures and cycling and walking routes have also been included in the Groen Groeit Mee contribution, enabling larger contiguous landscapes to be reached directly from the neighbourhood. This concerns the Groene Hart area near Haarzuilens and the Hollandsche IJssel East area. Work is underway to guide the routes along nature-friendly banks, flower-rich verges and nature-inclusive designed sites.

In addition, the Groen Groeit Mee contribution includes links to projects that are ongoing or will be initiated, both physically and in terms of budget. Examples include a campsite with potentially publicly accessible routes, an orchard, agroforestry, an ecological park and a solar farm.

When examining the area’s potential, Phase 2 of De Bleek was of course also taken into account, as well as the other

new residential area, De Rapijnen. For these later development phases, the work already carried out and the contacts already established, or currently being established, by the municipality with various stakeholders in the context of Groen Groeit Mee can be built upon. This will greatly support the subsequent stages of the process.



Meeting Groen Groeit Mee requirements with new and ongoing initiatives

When it became clear in 2023 that the new development plans for Park Rapijnen and De Bleek did not comply with the green space provisions in the provincial environmental regulation, the municipality and the province of Utrecht joined forces. Within a short period, they jointly developed measures to ensure that the new development locations are better connected to the surrounding green space.

Read the interview here with Christiaan De Jong of the Municipality of Montfoort and landscape designer Anne-Mette Andersen, on behalf of the Groen Groeit Mee programme.

Tool: the Lerend Network instrument

De Bleek was one of seven pilot neighbourhoods in a ‘lerend netwerk’ (learning network) for climate-adaptive, nature-inclusive and healthy neighbourhoods. Within this network, the province of Utrecht and the Municipality of Montfoort developed a timeline to help ensure that the right policy documents are introduced at the right stage of a housing development. **[Click here](#)** to receive this instrument.

All lessons learned from the seven pilot neighbourhoods are being collected and compiled **[Click here](#)** to receive this document.



Facts and figures

- 500 dwellings in total
- Phase 1, 210 dwellings:
 - 65 social rented dwellings
 - 70 owner-occupied dwellings up to €390,000 including costs or rented dwellings at approx. €1,100 per month
 - 75 dwellings above €390,000
- Housing development site: 19,4 ha

Realisation of GGM green space

- Framework from doorstep to landscape consisting of:
 - nature-friendly banks with flower rich verges
 - walking networks, including routes from the residential area to the Hollandsche IJssel
 - cycling network, including routes from the residential area to Haarzuilens
- Quiet places to linger along the routes
- Green buffer zone between the existing neighbourhood and the new neighbourhood
- Edges of blue space and green space as a transition to the agricultural area
- Engaging a heritage consultant for the creation of nature-friendly terrain
- Creation of small landscape elements, orchards and agroforestry linked to the residential area

Stakeholders involved

- The water authority
- The neighbouring municipality
- A solar park developer
- Proactive residents
- An equestrian centre
- Farmers
- The initiator of a campsite



Score on Groene Schakels

De Bleek performs well on all links, including through the creation of the previously missing urban-rural green link. The development of a solar park along the A12 is being used as an opportunity to complete a missing section of the cycle network from De Bleek, via Linschoten, to the Groene Hart area surrounding Haarzuilens. This also improves the use of the cycle bridge over the A12.

Score Schijf van Vijf

Existing qualities and new interventions generate strong added value in terms of accessibility and identity. This applies both within the site, in the design of residential green space, and beyond it, in the design of regional green space. A clearer understanding is needed of the current health situation, the expected developments and what is required for the 'healthy people' aspect. Stakeholders such as the public health service (GGD) and welfare organisations should be involved in this. The existing water system could be used more effectively for recreational water activities. This could still be arranged in Phase 2, or at least for De Rapijnen.

Biodiversity	★ ★ ★ ★ ☆
Accessibility	★ ★ ★ ★ ☆
Water balance	★ ★ ★ ☆ ☆
Healthy people	★ ★ ★ ☆ ☆
Identity	★ ★ ★ ★ ☆

2. Het Oosterland, Ronde Venen GGM contribution in the 'transition phase'

Het Oosterland is the second expansion location for which the zoning plan, during the trial year, received approval from the province. Het Oosterland too was already far advanced in the zoning plan process. The municipality received a formal response from the province of Utrecht on the draft zoning plan because it did not comply with Groen Groeit Mee. Within the housing development site, matters were in order. A valuable framework of blue space, green space and recreation had been developed, placing the cultural historical value (identity) of the area at the forefront. The plan also offered a solid response, including a design quality plan, to water balance, biodiversity, accessibility and healthy people. However, no 'regional green space' had been developed together with the housing development.

During a crucial meeting between the municipality, the project developer, the landscape architect who had contributed to the design quality plan for Het Oosterland, and the province, potential ways of contributing to Groen Groeit Mee were already identified.

The use of the instruments in the guidance was first explained. The province noted that the design quality plan, prepared by the landscape architect (engaged by the project developer), already contained substantial, concrete research into the

potential of blue space, green space, cultural history and routes in the surroundings of the housing development site.

In addition, the province is aware of many valuable initiatives taking place around the housing development that relate to nature and cultural development. Examples include initiatives in the Wilnisse Bovenlanden, which serves an important connecting function between the Nieuwkoopse Plassen and the Vinkeveense Plassen, hospitality and nature development at Fort Uithoorn, and the construction of the Uithoorn line. Valuable projects have also been carried out by the agricultural collective 'Boerennatuur Rijn, Vecht en Venen'.

Finally, the meeting highlighted that the municipality had good insight into land ownership around the housing development site and into the willingness of private landowners to cooperate, for instance by allowing paths on their land.

The province proposed that the landscape architect, together with the municipality, should first translate the potential study literally into visual map formats. The municipality would then provide an assessment of feasibility, including a broad cost estimate of possible Groen Groeit Mee interventions that could be incorporated into the zoning plan.



Visualisatie Het Oosterland

No sooner said than done. By translating the potential into concrete opportunities, well aligned with the framework of blue space, green space and cycling routes extending from the residential area, a proposal was developed for the Groen

Groeit Mee contribution which received approval from the provincial authorities. The proposal makes an important contribution to enhancing the landscape experience and restores the 'broken link' of urban-rural green space.

Unexpected funding for Groen Groeit Mee following municipal council decision

When it became clear to the municipality and the project developer that the zoning plan for Het Oosterland did not comply with the requirement in the provincial environmental regulation, they worked together swiftly on the development of the regional contribution. The plans now also include improved access to the adjoining rural area: based on the overall plan, the municipal council decided to use two million euros of the revenues from Het Oosterland to realise the ambitions of Groen Groeit Mee.

Read the interview on this process with landscape and nature policy adviser Gabriëlle Mennen of the municipality of De Ronde Venen and Jenny Vonk of Kavel Vastgoed.



Location of the informal walking trail



Path along the boezem water (storage basin water)

Facts and figures

- 755 dwellings in total
- 226 social rented dwellings
- 113 mid-priced rental dwellings
- 37 affordable owner-occupied dwellings
- 379 owner-occupied dwellings above the affordable price range
- Housing development site: 2.63 ha

Realisation of GGM green space

- Routes to larger, contiguous landscape and cultural historical areas (including the Stelling van Amsterdam and the Wilnis Bovenlanden), and to the (future) terminus of the Uithoorn line
- Cycling and walking networks connected to regional routes and the Toeristisch Overstappunt (Tourist Transfer Point) (TOP), and providing a safe route to school
- Nature friendly banks and herb rich verges along the routes
- Missing urban-rural green space link
- Cycling bridge across a crucial barrier (the Kerkvaart); including nature-friendly banks beneath the bridge, an informal walking route along the dike and ecological mowing management
- Strong internal framework of blue space, green space and trees directly integrated with the surroundings
- Visible disconnecting of rainwater and added attention to biodiversity within the residential green space
- The same water level as the adjacent existing neighbourhood, enabling climate adaptive benefits through water buffering in the new neighbourhood
- Redesign of the existing park to meet the needs of both the adjacent existing and the new neighbourhood

Stakeholders involved

- The water authority
- Waternet
- Farmers

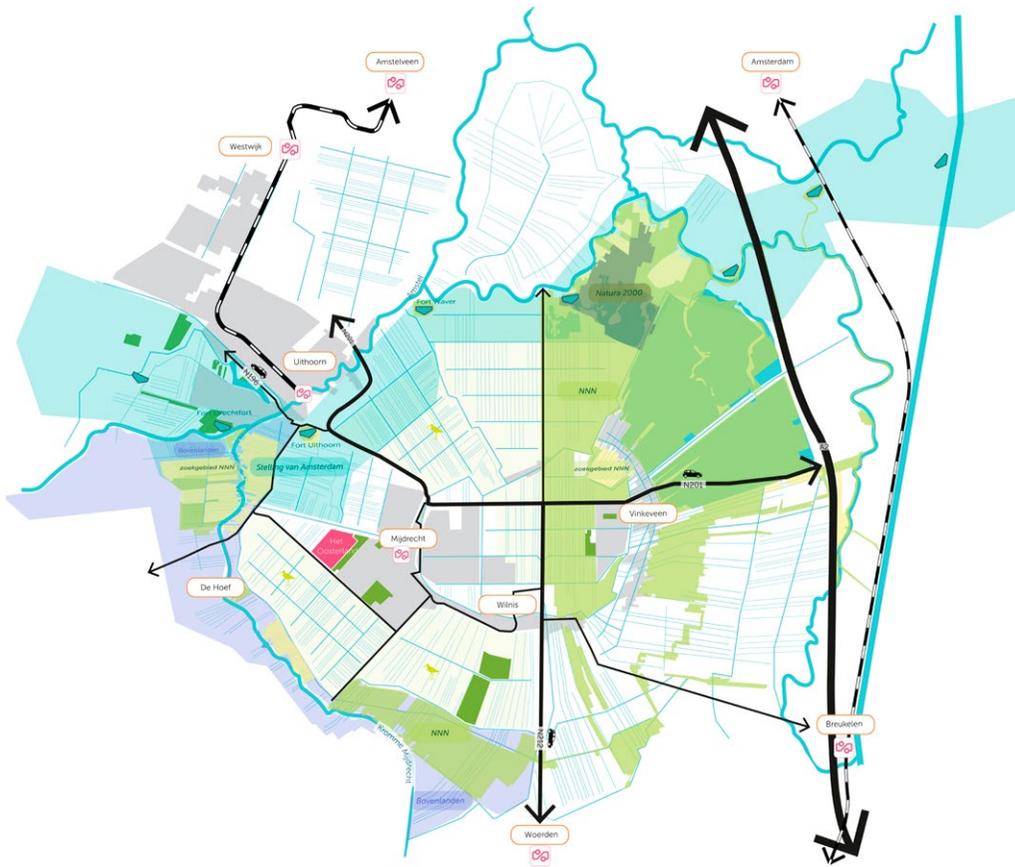
Score on Groene Schakels

Het Oosterland performs well on all links. Several cycling and informal walking routes are being created between the residential area and the surrounding landscape, accompanied by green space with rich biodiversity. An improvement in water quality can also be expected. The crucial missing urban-rural green space link to valuable natural and cultural historical areas is being realised.

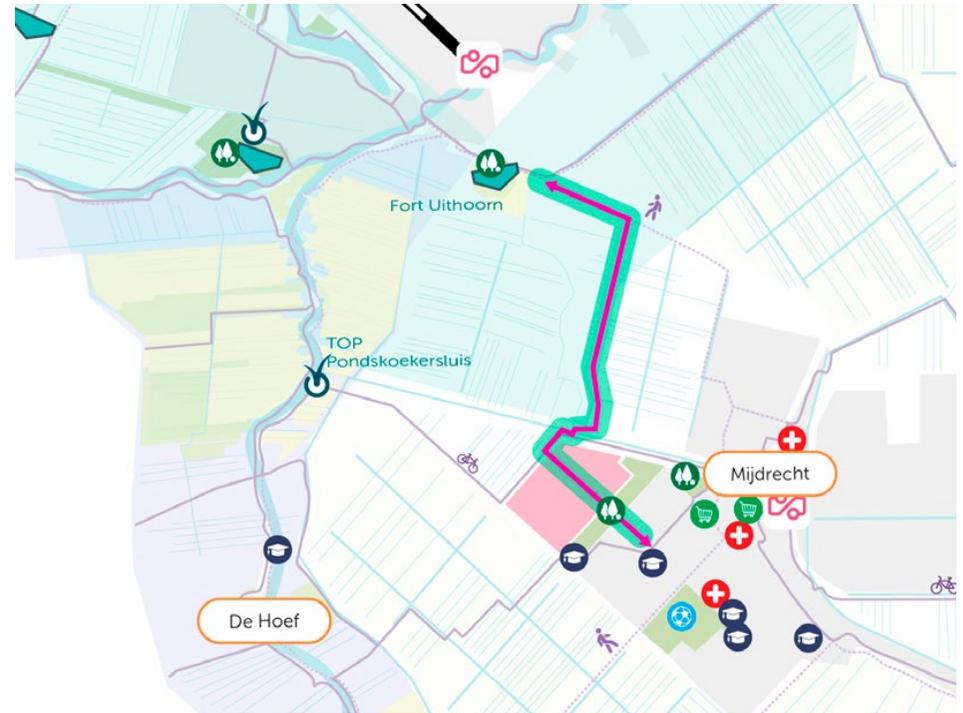
Score on Schijf van Vijf

Existing qualities and new interventions generate value across all aspects: water balance, biodiversity, accessibility, healthy people and identity. This applies both within the site, in the development of residential green space, and beyond it, in the development of regional green space. It is now important to monitor carefully that the green connections along the routes are developed in a targeted way, both in terms of coherence and species diversity, in order to stimulate biodiversity to the fullest extent. In addition, careful consideration should be given to which recreational facilities should be created within the urban-rural link, in line with the needs of current and future residents and users. These may sometimes be small, relatively low-cost resting or activity places that are highly beneficial for stimulating the 'healthy people' aspect.

Biodiversity	★ ★ ★ ☆ ☆
Accessibility	★ ★ ★ ★ ☆
Water balance	★ ★ ★ ★ ☆
Healthy people	★ ★ ★ ★ ★
Identity	★ ★ ★ ★ ★



Overview map of existing area qualities



Cycle connection



Location of the Uithoorn cycling connection

3. Bovenduist, Amersfoort (under development)

Bovenduist was designated as a housing development location in the 2013 provincial spatial structure vision (Provinciale Ruimtelijke Structuurvisie). In 2017, the municipal council of Amersfoort decided to designate Bovenduist as a potential housing development location. Around 3,300 dwellings are expected to be built here, with construction likely to begin in 2029. The neighbourhood is intended to become a 'green urban living environment', with a high residential density but also ample space for green space and recreation.

The municipality, together with the province, has identified the provincial points of attention for the development of the residential area. As a result, Groen Groeit Mee is being considered from an early stage and is being integrated into a plan in which all ambitions for this location take shape. The Handreiking Nieuwe Woongebieden (Guidance for new residential areas) has been provided as an instrument in this process.

In the immediate surroundings of Bovenduist, work is already under way with partners and neighbouring municipalities on various (regional) green developments. To the southwest, this is the Groen Groeit Mee example area of the Southern Eemvallei. To the northeast of the housing development site, the green recreational areas Waterrijk, Speelpolder and 't Hammetje (approximately 29 hectares) are under development.

All this landscape green space can be drawn into the neighbourhood in different ways, linked to recreational connections. For example, via a bridge over the river De Laak and/or an attractive cycling route to the Eemvallei, making this rural area more accessible.

To gain an initial understanding of the relationship between the Groen Groeit Mee task and these existing developments, discussions were held with the programme manager for the wider Vathorst district and with the commissioning party for the various projects under way in this area.

First, a development framework is now being drawn up for Bovenduist. This will elaborate all the requirements, such as guiding species, parking standards, the number of dwellings and therefore also Groen Groeit Mee. In the detailed elaboration of the Groene Schakels from this guidance, various parties will be involved.

Amersfoort moving towards a broad-based approach

Read the interview with Maud Schimmel, project leader for Bovenduist, and Marjolein van Steen, spatial development strategist at the municipality of Amersfoort. They explain how they aim to apply the principles of Groen Groeit Mee at this location.



Facts and figures

- 127.5 hectares
- 3,300 dwellings in total

Preliminary directions for Groen Groeit Mee

- Routes to larger, contiguous landscape areas such as the Eemvallei, Speelpolder, Waterrijk and 't Hammetje

- Cycling and walking networks
- Nature friendly banks and herb rich verges along the routes
- 75 m² of neighbourhood green space per dwelling
- Possibility to cross the river De Laak
- Preservation of the 'wasp waist' between Amersfoort and Bunschoten

Stakeholders involved

- The water authority
- Province of Utrecht



10

Inspiration for meeting the requirement in the provincial environmental regulation

What is the status of the Schijf van Vijf and the Groene Schakels?

On the following pages we present twenty four examples of different Groene Schakels as inspiration. For each example, we indicate which link(s) are shown in the photo and whether a link is 'broken' due to a missing connection. We also specify which of the Schijf van Vijf aspects each green link contributes to. Finally, we outline the opportunities and constraints for meeting the Groen Groeit Mee contribution in new residential areas.

-  **Water balance:** The capacity to cope with both dry and wet periods
-  **Biodiversity:** Both resilient ecosystems and species richness
-  **Accessibility:** From doorstep to landscape for people
-  **Healthy people:** Green space and blue space contribute to mental health
-  **Identity:** The genius loci – the distinctiveness, history and experience of a place – is tangible and perceptible.

V O B W S L

- V** Voordeurgroen (doorstep green space)
- B** Buurtgroen (neighbourhood green space)
- W** Wijkgroen (district green space)
- S** Stad-landgroen (urban-rural green space)
- L** Landschap (landscape)



1 Het Zand, Leidsche Rijn

Utrecht Neighbourhood green space that also functions as doorstep green space, with seating areas, play facilities and trees. Directly accessible from the dwelling, with no car or bicycle traffic. Functions both as doorstep green space and as a swale leading towards the ditch. Water is purified through soil infiltration.

Opportunity

Add more varied planting.



Schijf van vijf



Groene schakels



2 Vechtpassen

Nature development, water buffering, recreation and local identity go hand in hand in the Vechtpassen.

Key consideration

Crowding is increasing, and recreational use of the water is dominated by motorboats.

Opportunity

Limit motorised recreational boating, improve accessibility for a wider range of users and provide alternative routes.



Schijf van vijf



Groene schakels



3 Leidsche Rijn, Utrecht

Continuous structures of blue space and green space, with the residential building situated directly on the water; space efficient and increasing property value.

Key consideration

The verges and banks were originally constructed with stone, and were later greened through a residents' initiative. In several places culverts were installed instead of bridges, making it difficult to use the wider Leidsche Rijn water system for water-based recreation.

Opportunity

Create green verges and banks from the outset, saving both work and money. Replace the culverts with bridges, creating an extensive and connected network for water-based recreation.



Schijf van vijf



Groene schakels



4 Het Lint, Leidsche Rijn, Utrecht

A broad recreational route that runs past all the green and cultural historic places in Leidsche Rijn (Maximapark, Castellum, fruit orchards, old trees, sports fields). It often follows the ditches, with the verge functioning as a swale and maintained through extensive mowing.

Key consideration

Large scale tree felling had been planned to create 'attractive avenues', but this was stopped by residents. Initially, mowing was intensive, but this has now been reduced to twice a year. The new trees are plane trees, which contribute nothing to biodiversity.

Opportunity

As a starting point, integrate all existing trees into the housing development

plan, including trees classified as 'non valuable' in certain tree assessment systems (such as weeping willows). Mature trees immediately give any neighbourhood character and are the simplest and cheapest contribution to biodiversity, reducing heat stress and supporting resident wellbeing. For new planting, choose mainly native species, ensure a good mix and check that they are climate resilient.



Schijf van vijf



Groene schakels



5 Gladsaxe, Denmark

Recreational path, resting places, water storage and woodland combined. Unique identity as Denmark's first 'water pipeline path' (Vandledningssti). An educational centre for nature is linked to this route, which also explains the water project.



Schijf van vijf



Groene schakels



6 Gagelbos, Utrecht

Water storage, woodland, play areas and recreational paths. Directly connected to the landscape of the Gagelpolder.

Key consideration

The ring road forms a barrier to access. For which user groups was this designed, and do they actually come here? The site has already been revised three times in attempts to make it function effectively.

Opportunity

Whenever land becomes available for nature or recreation development, prepare a design that delivers value across multiple aspects, together with the target user groups.



Schijf van vijf



Groene schakels



7 Rietplas, Houten

Water storage, swimming area and play facilities. A 'nature island' accessible only by pull ferry. Accessible to everyone via the long bridge, which also functions as a jumping bridge. Private jetties belonging to the adjacent dwellings increase property value.



Schijf van vijf



Groene schakels



8 Denmark

Neighbourhood green space with play facilities, a vegetable garden and places to sit. Functions as doorstep green space and extends right up to the façades of the dwellings. Encourages social cohesion and healthy eating.

Key consideration

It only appeals to certain user groups who are willing and able to commit to intensive gardening. The location of such spaces is therefore crucial for their success



Schijf van vijf



Groene schakels



9 Nationaal Park Bosland, Belgium

Cycling paths on an elevated second level within the forest. Experiential landscape, unique identity and a unique cycling experience.

Opportunity

No tree felling is required for recreational paths.



Schijf van vijf



Groene schakels



10 Kerckebosch, Zeist

Housing development as a trigger for forest development. Tree felling to enable heathland growth and planting of new tree species.

Key consideration

Specialist expertise is required to protect and support trees.

Financial agreements must be made with the developer to safeguard existing trees.

Opportunity

Nature as the basis of the neighbourhood, not an add-on, and nature beginning right at the doorstep.



Schijf van vijf



Groene schakels



11 Grønttorvet, Kopenhagen

Greenhouses on every roof and in every courtyard of apartment buildings. Encourages social cohesion, provides edible plants and supports biodiversity. Functions as both doorstep green space and neighbourhood green space. Gives the area a distinctive identity that refers to the former vegetable market.

Opportunity

A key success factor here is that residents furnish their own greenhouse: one as a winter garden, another as a vegetable greenhouse.



Schijf van vijf



Groene schakels



12 Farm ditch

Farm ditches managed for nature.

Key consideration

Create a recreational path. Stimulate nature management by developing a revenue model for the land manager. Funding is currently available for this from the province of Utrecht through the Utrechts Programma Landelijk Gebied (Utrecht Rural Area Programme, UPLG). If recreational places are also created along the route – places that reflect the identity of the area and meet the needs of the target user groups – a framework of blue space, green space and recreation will emerge that aligns with the Schijf van Vijf.



Schijf van vijf



Groene schakels



13 Rijnenburg, Utrecht

The gardens of farmyards contribute to local identity, an experiential landscape, biodiversity and often support good water balance through storage and drainage.

Key consideration

Be aware that private yards can also be fully paved, and that willows may be felled to avoid the work of pollarding.

Opportunity

Together with all Groen Groeit Mee Pact partners, ensure long term green space management when the farmer is not, or no longer, able to take care of it.



Schijf van vijf



Groene schakels



14 Community garden De Boog, Utrecht

A playground with an asphalt area and standard equipment redesigned as a neighbourhood garden. This strengthens social cohesion and forms an ecological stepping stone within the wider green structure. Biodiversity has increased through planting for birds and insects, fruit trees and perennials. The asphalt field is now an asphalt play circuit with large cutouts for green space.

The soil balance is zero due to the construction of the play hill, producing both CO₂ and cost savings.

Transforming existing green space into higher-value green space, thereby becoming part of the Groene Schakels



and meeting the Schijf van Vijf, means that it counts towards regional green space.



Schijf van vijf



Groene schakels



15 De Bomençrèche tree nursery, Nieuwegein

Growing young trees for a future avenue in the new city centre. A mix of climate resilient and low maintenance species supports biodiversity, and the temporary situation opposite existing dwellings is greened. Next to the tree nursery, a place for rest, play and exercise has been created.

Growing the trees on site saves significant CO₂ and costs compared with transporting larger, mature trees at a later stage.

Key consideration

Ensure proper protection and establish financial agreements with construction partners to prevent damage.



Schijf van vijf



Groene schakels



16 Odijk

Greening existing streets with varied planting increases biodiversity, improves quality of life and strengthens the identity of the neighbourhood and village.

Key consideration

The green design of private gardens contributes significantly to biodiversity, reducing heat stress, supporting water balance (retention) and residents' experience. Green garden design is not guaranteed in most existing neighbourhoods and new housing developments.

Opportunity

When similar greening is connected to a path, water with nature-friendly banks and varied planting outside the village, it becomes part of the framework of water, green space and recreation and counts towards regional green space.

Green gardens can be secured in new residential areas.



Schijf van vijf



Groene schakels



17 Parc de Triomphe, Parijisch, Culemborg

A climate adaptive and nature inclusive park forming part of wider green and blue structures. Accessible semi-paved paths for people with reduced mobility, and play and exercise circuits made of wood.

Key consideration

In the first design, the amphibian pond was a 'concrete shell'. It would either dry out or require pumping; the construction required a large amount of concrete and was very costly.

Opportunity

The initial design was reconsidered and the engineering approach was abandoned. The amphibian pond was transformed into a natural design, fed by

groundwater with an overflow into the wider water structure. Nature inclusive, and saves both CO₂ and money.



Schijf van vijf



Groene schakels



18 Tuinwijk, Leidsche Rijn

Encouraging doorstep green space by delivering front gardens with a beech hedge and a tree. This gives the neighbourhood its own identity and sparks conversations among neighbours, as the same type of green space is maintained throughout.

Key consideration

The experiment of delivering front gardens with a hedge failed in other neighbourhoods where maintenance was not arranged during the first years.

Opportunity

In this case, the project developer covered the first three years of maintenance (a requirement set by the municipality).

After three years, maintenance of substantial street green space is carried out by private residents. Hedges and trees have not been removed anywhere after twenty years – not due to enforcement, but because of intrinsic motivation.



Schijf van vijf



Groene schakels



19 Putten

Visible drainage of rainwater. Rainwater flows from the gutter to planted green strips and from the street gutter with grass paving.

Opportunity

The wildflower mix in the planted green strips, together with preserving the existing vegetation on the opposite side of the road, supports biodiversity. Along with the beech hedges against the façades, this also helps reduce heat stress. The gutter visually narrows the required road width for perpendicular parking, which has a traffic calming effect.



Schijf van vijf



Groene schakels



20 KTC Zegveld experimental farm

Kennis Transfer Centrum Zegveld (KTC) conducts research in the peat meadow area. At an experimental farm for high water levels and extensive livestock farming, KTC gains practical experience with varying groundwater levels, different crops and fertilisation variants. The aim is to find ways to combine counteracting land subsidence with climate resilient and profitable farming for dairy farmers.

Attention is given to greenhouse gas emissions, water quality and biodiversity, the nutritional value of the grass, and the health and welfare of the cows. Theory and practice come together here.

KTC Zegveld is accessible via segregated cycle paths from the surrounding towns and villages.

Opportunity

If new forms of farm management in the peat meadow area prove feasible and are combined with recreational facilities on or near a farm, and these are accessible to visitors, then the entire plot of the farm counts as regional green space.



Schijf van vijf



Groene schakels



21 De Hooierij farm, De Bilt

A diversified farm with its own beef cattle, a farm shop with regional products, a care farm and educational activities for schoolchildren. There are initiatives such as a shared table and a children's clothing exchange, and the care farm collaborates with a local community-supported agriculture farm. De Hooierij is accessible via segregated cycle paths from the surrounding towns and villages.

Opportunity

A similar initiative counts as regional green space.



Schijf van vijf



Groene schakels



22 Natuurinclusieve landbouw (LTO Noord) (nature inclusive farming)

Whether it involves improving soil quality, creating flower rich field margins, installing nest boxes, establishing species rich grassland or agroforestry, nature inclusive farming takes many forms and levels. This allows individual farmers to choose what best fits their business.

Opportunity

When this form of farm management is implemented and combined with recreational facilities on or near the farm, and these are accessible via the new development area, the entire plot of the farm counts as regional green space.

Key consideration

Provide structural and realistic compensation for farmers for nature inclusive management.



Schijf van vijf



Groene schakels



23 De Schammer, Leusden

Reconfiguration of arable land and meadows into the original landscape of the Gelderse Vallei: flower rich hay meadows, reedlands, streams and wetlands. In part of the De Schammer nature reserve of Utrechts Landschap there are walking, cycling and bridle paths, as well as picnic meadows. The area is accessible for wheelchairs, prams and offers suitable asphalt for skaters.



Schijf van vijf



Groene schakels



24 Hollandsche IJssel area

In the Hollandsche IJssel area, both the existing situation and the new plans already provide generously for achieving adequate water buffering, stimulating biodiversity, tree planting and recreational facilities.

Key consideration

The task now is to ensure that this large and valuable nature and recreation area offers value for a broad range of users from surrounding neighbourhoods, both existing and new.

Opportunity

By carefully developing the future recreational facilities and the routes leading to them, in dialogue with different target groups, their use will be accessible to everyone – both literally and figuratively.



Schijf van vijf



Groene schakels

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Find out more about Groen Groeit Mee:
www.groengroeitmee.nl (Dutch)
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