

URBAN SHARING IN AMSTERDAM

Country: The Netherlands
Population (city): 854,047
Population (metro): 2,431,000

City area: 219.32 km²
Government: Amsterdam
municipality, 8 districts



SHARING & THE CITY

Cities – Sharing – Sustainability



URBAN SHARING

Sustainability & Institutionalisation

Urban Sharing at a Glance

Amsterdam is a culturally diverse city, with a strong tradition of innovation and entrepreneurship. It is a busy tourist hub. In 2015, Amsterdam became the first **Sharing City** in Europe, initiated by the knowledge and networking organisation, shareNL. The municipality adopted an **Action Plan on the Sharing Economy** in 2016. The urban sharing landscape is vibrant, with commercial sharing platforms dominating over non-profit ones. Solutions for shared mobility are prominent, including cars, electric scooters and bikes, and peer-to-peer (P2P) and business-to-consumer (B2C) car and bike sharing business models can be found. These are both station-based and free-floating. Peerby is the main platform for the sharing of physical goods. Airbnb dominates the accommodation sharing market, but Amsterdam is also home to Booking.com. Other Amsterdam-based platforms include Felyx, Urbee and Seats2meet. Important urban sharing actors include national and local authorities, knowledge institutes and universities.

City Strategies, Agenda and Position on Sharing

In its **Action Plan on the Sharing Economy** (2016), the City of Amsterdam encourages innovation, social inclusiveness, sustainability and entrepreneurship. It monitors the sharing economy and responds whenever challenges arise. Amsterdam was the first city in Europe to negotiate a deal with Airbnb in 2014. In 2019, the city introduced a 30-day cap instead of the previous 60-day cap on entire home rentals, in response to the debate on accommodation sharing and its controversial implications for the housing market. The city also called for changes in national legislation to regulate short-term home rentals. The **City Agenda on Car Sharing** promotes electric cars in shared fleets and specifies parking permit rules for free-floating shared cars. A municipal bike sharing policy is being developed. While the city does not engage directly with the sharing of physical goods, it has a **Circular Innovation Agenda**. Several city departments work with the sharing economy. The Department of Economic Affairs works with sharing at a strategic level, while the Department of Traffic and Public Space and the Innovation Office work at the operational level. The **Startup Amsterdam** programme offers services for sharing economy start-ups. The city has been collaborating with shareNL since 2014, and has been a founding member of the **Sharing Cities Alliance** since 2017. The city is revising its **Action Plan on the Sharing Economy** into the new **Agenda on the Platform Economy**.

Drivers for Sharing

Drivers for the sharing economy in Amsterdam include:

- High density of the city and scarcity of space
- Favourable climate for sharing economy start-ups due to the city's liveability, well-connected infrastructure and human resources
- Deliberate and organised work by the municipality to become a Sharing City
- Deliberate work by the municipality to stimulate innovation and start-ups
- Explicit support of B2C car sharing by the municipality
- Role of shareNL in building knowledge and awareness of the sharing economy, its sustainability potentials, and connecting the municipality and start ups
- Stated willingness of Amsterdam citizens to share (84%)



Barriers to Sharing

Barriers to the sharing economy in Amsterdam include:

- Challenging conditions for sharing economy start-ups due to competition and funding needs
- Negative consequences of accommodation rentals on the long-term accommodation market and controversial municipal regulation of short-term accommodation rentals
- Limits to growth due to the caps imposed by the municipality in the sectors of the sharing economy
- Limited support from the municipality to sharing economy initiatives that target tourists
- Strong social norms of owning and creation of identity through possessions, e.g. bikes in particular

Sustainability and Sharing

Environmental sustainability

The City of Amsterdam has a goal to reduce environmental impacts and traffic congestion. The city supports B2C car sharing, by promoting electric vehicles that are charged at municipal charging stations using renewable electricity. Environmental sustainability is also important to the city from a resource efficiency perspective, e.g. people do not throw away clothes or children's items, and instead share them with others.

Social sustainability

Making life easier and more efficient for citizens is an important local government perspective. There is a housing shortage affecting, particularly, students. The growing number of tourists has become an increasing challenge for Amsterdam. Both factors resulted in municipal regulation of short-term accommodation rentals. The city is exploring ways of how to address its social justice and social inclusiveness objectives by supporting the sharing economy. One such example is connecting the food sharing platform Share a Meal (Thuisafgehaald) with City Pass holders.

Economic sustainability

The business start-up scene is quite dynamic. The city focuses on stimulating innovation and entrepreneurship, particularly through its Innovation Office and Startup Amsterdam programme. For-profit sharing dominates the sharing landscape, and a number of sharing company headquarters are located in Amsterdam.

Amsterdam Citizens and Sharing

Amsterdam citizens are willing to participate in the sharing economy. However, although they are highly aware of large tech companies such as Airbnb and Uber, and to some extent older Dutch platforms such as Snappcar, MyWheels, Green Wheels, and Peerby, small community-based platforms are less well-known. Often, people would share in their communities informally without using a platform. Key motivations for sharing include cost and convenience, while environmental and social reasons are less important. The public discourse is changing from "sharing is caring" to becoming more controversial, relating to the issues with Airbnb, Uber and multinational bike sharing schemes.

