



**ROTTERDAM: HIGHER DENSITY SUBURBS & EXURBS**

FAST FACTS		Similar To
Metropolitan Area Population	1,500,000	Perth, Columbus, Auckland
Urban Area Population*	1,325,000	Zurich, Milwaukee, Brisbane
Urban Land Area: Square Miles	205	Munich, Beijing, Toledo
Urban Land Area: Square Kilometers	530	
Population per Square Mile	6,500	Los Angeles, Milan, Toulouse, Toronto
Population per Square Kilometer	2,500	
*Continuously built up area		

31 March 2005

Rotterdam is one of the world’s great port cities. It is located at the mouth of the Rhine River and forms the southern edge of what is often referred to as the Randstat metropolitan area, which also includes Amsterdam, Utrecht and the capital of the Netherlands, The Hague. Most analysts consider this to be at least four metropolitan areas, but the distances between these urban areas is short. From the northern suburbs of Rotterdam, the towers of both Rotterdam and The Hague can be seen. For much of the late 20<sup>th</sup> century, Rotterdam has been the largest port in the world, ahead of Antwerp, in Belgium, which is 80 kilometers south.

The Netherlands is one of the world’s most densely populated nations, and probably the most dense among high income nations. But that does not mean it does not have suburban areas. Rotterdam is a good example. The central city of Rotterdam has less than one-half of the urban area’s population, with the balance in the suburbs and exurbs. Through recent decades, the city itself has lost population, while all of the growth has been in suburban and exurban areas, a typical pattern for urban areas throughout the high income world. In fact, more than 100 percent of European urban growth has been in the suburbs and exurbs over the past four decades ([www.demographia.com/db-metro-we1965.htm](http://www.demographia.com/db-metro-we1965.htm)), as central cities have lost population.

Rotterdam is surrounded by water and suburban development. The share of suburban houses that are multiple --- multiple unit buildings and two-family houses appears generally to be higher than in much of Europe, North America or Australasia. Yet, single family detached housing is to be found in ample supply.

The higher density suburban and exurban developments tend to be low-rise, with most units having entryways on the ground floor, following what would be called in the United States a

town-house design. There is more than sufficient parking for the residents, who must rely on cars for much of their mobility (Figure 7). The higher density development provides virtually no advantage for public transport, because the housing is located in a far too decentralized pattern for most employment locations to be reached except with long travel times involving one or more transfers.

Mixed in among the low-rise higher density residences will be found the single family detached residences. Many of these have two car garages, a necessity for mobility where households have more than one adult. In some cases, large single family houses are connected to one another by adjacent garages. Yards tend to be smaller than in North American suburbs or German exurbs, but there are still private gardens both behind and in front of the houses. Suburban Rotterdam is a good place to witness the Dutch phenomenon of windows without interior coverings. Most people seem to leave their drapes open all of the time so that the neat interior living areas can be viewed by people driving by.

Highway officials have provided an effective freeway system, which contains some of the widest roadway expanses in Europe. This provides mobility not only for people to jobs and shopping, but also for the high volumes of truck traffic to and from the port. The port stretches from the core of the city along both sides of the river to the North Sea (Atlantic Ocean), 20 miles to the west.

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Note: The colors in the figures that follow are not accurate because of a setting error on a new camera.

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A16 Approaching Rhine Bridge

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Dordrecht

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Dordrecht

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Dordrecht

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Dordrecht

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Dordrecht

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Dordrecht

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Dordrecht

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Dordrecht

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Dordrecht

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Dordrecht

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Dordrecht

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Dordrecht

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Dordrecht

14



Berkel

15



Berkel

16



Berkel

17



Westerlee

18