



*For a Vibrant Commune Even Greener,
More Participative, and Fairer*

**Program
Ecolo-Groen Etterbeek
2024-2030**

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A Candidate for Mayor for a Greener, More Participative, and Fairer Commune

While Etterbeek is a pleasant place to live, we believe that the quality of life for its residents could be improved **if public spaces were better shared and greened even more**. Indeed, providing every Etterbeek resident with a peaceful, green place for relaxation close to their home seems essential for **social, environmental, health, and safety reasons**, from young children to the elderly.

It is also crucial to **ensure the safety** of residents during their **commutes**, whether it's picking up their children from school, going to work, or doing their shopping. In a densely populated and built-up commune, this necessarily involves **developments that facilitate and secure** the movement of vulnerable road users, such as pedestrians and cyclists. And if during their journey they encounter some trees, flowers, meeting areas, or bike lanes, they will only be delighted. And so will we!

Etterbeek 2030 Investment Plan

During the next six-year term, we will **invest 28 million EUR** in school buildings, sports infrastructures, and the greening of our streets.

This "Etterbeek 2030 Investment Plan" includes:

- 6 million EUR for tree-planting;
- 8 million EUR for sports buildings and infrastructure;
- 14 million EUR for school buildings.

Thus, we would **increasing investments** in these three areas **by 40%**.

For **tree planting**, we will implement the 300/30/3 strategy, which involves having a green space within 300 meters of any location, 30% of the commune's territory covered in greenery, and 3 trees visible from anyone's home. The investment will also include planting a Tiny Forest and significantly increasing the number of de-paved areas in the communal territory. These investments will also create a green network linking every communal green space. These investments not only foster conviviality in our neighborhoods but also combat heat islands generated by the large amount of asphalted surfaces in Etterbeek (more than in other municipalities in the Region).

The investment plan will ensure the modernization of the **sports center** (Rue des Champs) and the **municipal swimming pool**. This will ensure that all buildings will aim for zero carbon emission (which allows for a return on investment). These investments will also facilitate the use of certain venues or school playgrounds for sports activities. We will create sports areas in public spaces.

Finally, 14 million EUR will be dedicated to modernizing our **school buildings and infrastructure** (toilets, heating, window frames replacements, etc.).

An Ecolo-Groen Mayor means:

- Dedicating **100% to Etterbeek** and its residents:
 - by not combining the role of Mayor with another job/mandate
 - by scheduling weekly meetings between the Mayor and residents
 - by maintaining a balance between professional and family life
 - by proposing a strategic plan for 2040, which will be subject to public consultation

- Ensuring **safety for everyone**, everywhere, and at all times:
 - through enhanced prevention: increasing the number of peacekeepers, combating school bullying, reinforcing preventive and punitive radar systems to protect vulnerable users and deter speeding, etc.
 - by increasing the number of mounted and bicycle police patrols
 - by increasing the presence of neighborhood police inspectors on the ground
 - by paying special attention to women, the homeless, and vulnerable groups
 - by working effectively with regional and federal authorities in the fight against drug-related crime while helping victims
 - by safeguarding the peace of residents (noise pollution, heavy traffic, construction sites, etc.)
 - by proposing, whenever feasible, community service work (cleaning, waste sorting, etc.) instead of financial penalties
 - by deploying surveillance cameras to detect cleanliness and road safety issues while respecting people's privacy
 - by improving the support for victims of domestic violence, harassment, and discrimination

- Conducting an audit to improve the **municipal administration's inner workings** and the well-being of municipal workers, as well as imposing a **comprehensive review of operating and investment budgets** (zero-based budgeting);

- **Depoliticizing the municipal newsletter** and allowing, for example, citizens and economic and associative actors to contribute freely

- Creating a municipal **ombudsman/mediator**¹ office and make complaint management a tool for the continuous improvement of municipal public services

¹ Person in charge of defending citizens' rights against public authorities

A Candidate for Mayor, but Who?

Dear Etterbeek residents,

I have been living in Etterbeek with my husband Mathieu and our three children (19, 18, and 15 years old) since 2001. In 2009, I decided to become a member of Ecolo, a party whose values align with those I have always defended.

At almost 50 years old, I find that three words could summarize my personal and professional journey: **commitment, altruism, and social justice**. Engaged from a young age in youth movements, it was quite natural for me to pursue studies in Romance philology with the goal of teaching French. I then left Belgium for a year to work in Bolivia with street children. Upon my return, I taught French for nearly 20 years at a vocational school in Molenbeek and for 10 years at the Haute École Galilée.

After the 2018 elections, I was elected as a municipal councilor before accepting a position as Alderman for Mobility and Public Works (replacing Rik Jellema) in September 2021. This term reinforced my desire to run as a candidate for Mayor with Ecolo-Groen because I am convinced that we are collectively capable of meeting many challenges to improve the quality of life in our commune and to see the realization of projects we wish to implement to make Etterbeek greener and fairer.

I am confident that my political experience rooted in our commune and my knowledge of its inner workings, my professional experience as a teacher, my eagerness to learn, my ability to question myself, my determination, my curiosity, and my desire to innovate will enable us to meet this challenge.

Thank you for your trust,

Caroline Joway

Preface

Today, more than ever before, the foundations for an environmentally respectful life that includes everyone as a full member of society resonate as urgent at the communal level.

The proposals we make in 2024 and for the future to address these issues are realistic and achievable. Carried out unimpeded, the budget and a legislative term will ensure their implementation, if not their complete realization.

Our program, grounded in the reality of our commune, is the result of long reflection, informed by meetings with Etterbeek residents from all neighborhoods, discussed within the Ecolo-Groen local group, and based on the principles of our respective parties. It has been developed to embrace Etterbeek's realities. It is also enriched by the experience of all our elected representatives who have been working for many years within communal bodies such as the College of Mayors and Aldermen, the Municipal Council, the CPAS, Log'iris, and various associations in which they are involved.

Thus, in this document, we present the most important proposals that we believe must be absolutely implemented (in the text boxes) and those we consider essential for improving the daily lives of all residents.

We firmly believe in our collective ability to build **a greener and fairer future** in a commune where everyone finds their place and feels included, enjoys a balanced and high-quality public space and a decent housing.

We believe that with you, we can achieve this!

Happy reading!

And vote for the future of Etterbeek by supporting us!

Some Contextual Elements

The context in Etterbeek, although quite similar to that of other major communes in Belgium, presents a series of specific features. These have been considered in the development of this program to best address the challenges faced by Etterbeek.

Thus, Etterbeek is:

- > a commune with 49,558 inhabitants (in 2023), of which 50.8% (25,175) are of foreign nationality (the regional average is 36.9%). Among this foreign population, 36.6% (18,138) are EU nationals (excluding Belgians with European nationality);
- > a densely populated commune (15,613 inhabitants/km², which is twice the regional average and twenty times denser than the national average);
- > a commune with the youngest population in the southeast of Brussels (average age 37.6 years in 2023);
- > a commune where only 40% of residents own a car;
- > a commune very well served by public transportation;
- > a commune where the average household size is among the smallest amongst other communes in Brussels (1.77 compared to 2.15 regionally): many households consist of a single person, and few households have three or more people. Isolated individuals are proportionally more present in Etterbeek than in the Region;
- > a commune less green compared to the Brussels Region, with 28% of the communal territory covered by vegetation (compared to 52% in the Region) and 17% covered by trees (compared to 33% for the entire Region);
- > a commune where the number of social housing units (a little over 1,400) represents 5.3% of the housing market, which is less than the regional average (7.2%);
- > a commune where nearly 1,250 households (5% of the commune's households) are on the waiting list for social housing;
- > a commune where the percentage of the working-age population (18-64 years) living on social integration income (or equivalent) is close to the regional average (in 2022: 5.2% compared to 6.2% in the region) and where the percentage of elderly people (65 years and older) living on the Guaranteed Income for the Elderly (GrAPA) is equivalent to that of the Region;
- > a commune where public administration, financial, insurance, and real estate activities are overrepresented (42% of jobs compared to 28% regionally), and where the sectors of industry, commerce, transportation, hospitality, and communication are underrepresented;
- > a commune with more than 3,500 self-employed individuals;
- > a commune with over 1,600 businesses (employing at least one employee) with a large proportion of very small establishments (with between 1 and 9 employees);

- > a commune where only 35%² of the housing units are owner-occupied; one of the lowest rates in Belgium;
- > a commune with a 2024 budget of 132 million euros (including 52% for personnel expenses);
- > a commune where the additional tax on personal income tax (IPP) is set, after several reductions decided by the municipal council, at 6% (compared to a regional average of 6.23%);
- > a commune where the additional tax on property tax is 2,966³ (regional average of 3,281 euros).

All these elements have been taken into account in the proposals we make for Etterbeek.

² Compared to 41% at the regional level

³ 1 additional cent = 1/100 of the regional tax, which for Brussels is 1/100 of 1.25% or 0.0125%; therefore, 2,966 additional cents amount to $2.296 \times 0.0125\% = 37.075\%$ of the cadastral income.

Greener Etterbeek

I. Mobility

A harmonious use of the public space is fundamental. Traveling by car is the slowest of all transportation modes in large cities and the most polluting. The car still occupies a disproportionate place. The commune of the future is one where travel is no longer a source of stress or difficulty, particularly for the most vulnerable users, including seniors and children. Public spaces should be intelligently shared among all types of users and occupants (valid and less valid residents, young or old, merchants, businesses, cultural and sports places...) and remain accessible to everyone, regardless of their mode of transportation (walking, wheelchair, cars, bicycles, public transport, vans, micro-mobility...) while ensuring everyone's safety.

In this context, we propose to:

- **Adjust the resident parking permit fee** based on the size and weight of the car (so that the increased pollution generated by this type of vehicle is borne by its owner), with an exception for utility vehicles used professionally
- **Increase the number of school streets** and make them permanent by installing specific street signs (movable barriers, etc.) and, as soon as possible, by limiting street access and usage to allow only local traffic at all times
- Create **traffic schemes** to limit and manage through traffic (for example, in the Bernheim/New/Napoleon neighborhood), by developing a "calmed grid" principle, which means clear guidance towards major traffic routes by installing traffic-calming measures (urban signs, road narrowing, tree pits, green islands), making some streets one-way, etc
- Implement **marked and/or separated bike lanes** to ensure cyclists' safety and prioritize roads with dense and therefore dangerous traffic
- Continue installing **bike racks and boxes**
- Develop **activities at Mahma** (Active Mobility House): participatory repair workshops, fietsbib, bike fairs, "fight against theft" information sessions
- Generalize the installation of **advanced cyclist zones (ZAC) at every traffic light** and **permanently prevent illegal parking within 5 meters of a pedestrian crossing**
- Apply the **PVTV principle** in all mobility and public space redesign decisions: prioritize so-called vulnerable users and thus the least polluting forms of transport - (in order) Pedestrian-Bike-Public Transport-Car
- Take necessary **measures to ensure that mobility is inclusive**: public space designed for people with reduced mobility, strollers, etc., and enhance public space safety by ensuring sufficient street lighting, etc

And we also propose to:

Active Mobility

- Continue offering a **supplementary grant** in addition to the one provided by the region under **Bruxell'air** (Bruxell'Air: the grant for a car-free city | Citizen Blog - Brussels Environment)

- **Promote active modes throughout the year** - outside Mobility Week - by **organizing school weeks of "walk or bike to school"**
- **Evaluate** and adjust if necessary the **network of drop zones installed** in August 2023
- Continue, in collaboration with the Region, **installing electric vehicle charging stations**
- Energize the **active mobility and road safety commission**

Bicycle

- Offer support **grants for the purchase of bicycles, electric bikes, and cargo bikes**
- Continue providing a **lock grant** for cyclists who wish it

Road Design

- Implement traffic-calming measures in streets where the 30 km/h speed limit is not respected
- **Generalize the installation of refuge islands for pedestrian** crossings with more than two lanes of traffic
- Adopt a **"sidewalk" plan**: widen some sidewalks considered too narrow and/or redesign those in poor condition, minimum 2 meters wide, lower curbs at every pedestrian crossing
- Favor the **installation of raised plateaus** and secure crossings to facilitate accessibility and secure pathways (especially near schools, daycare centers, libraries, etc.)
- Continue requiring (via urban planning permits) companies to **make unused parking spaces available to residents in the evening and at night**

II. Urban Planning

Given Etterbeek's high population density and strong pressure on built space, increasing green space in the city, creating calm public spaces, and ensuring functional diversity are essential. Quality of life is crucial to maintaining all forms of "families" in Etterbeek. The needs of women and the elderly should be considered in the design of public spaces.

In this context, we propose to:

- Implement a **300/30/3 strategy** which involves having green space within 300 meters, 30% of the commune's territory covered in greenery, and 3 trees in view from one's home so that **every Etterbeek resident can see greenery from their window** in addition to **finding a park or green space within walking distance**
- Increase the number of **meeting and sports areas**
- **Plant a "Micro-forest (Tiny Forest)"** in Etterbeek (e.g., at the barracks site, around the town hall, etc.)
- Require real estate developers, through urban planning charges⁴, to develop **accessible green spaces for residents** (e.g., transformation of the old town hall and ING buildings (Cour St Michel))

⁴ Authorities can require private projects, once they exceed a certain size, to contribute to financing the collective needs they generate, such as local facilities (schools, daycares) and mobility infrastructure. They can also fund social or regulated housing if increased pressure on Brussels land makes public policies for producing such housing increasingly difficult.

- **Remove advertising from public spaces** and replace it with **de-paving** projects
- Require **20% social housing** and **60% mixed-use spaces** (housing, hospital, daycare, etc.) on the site of the **old town hall** with a **large green space open to the neighborhood** and a **recreational area**
- **Redesign streets/squares in the commune** to make them more user-friendly and secure by **greening/pedestrianizing them** (e.g., **Chaussée de Wavre, Place Van Meyel, Aimé Dandoy**)
- **Extend park** and **garden opening hours**

And we also propose to:

Public Space

- Significantly **increase the number of de-paved zones** on communal territory
- **Include greening of public space in all road refurbishments** and redesign projects
- **Prioritize greening streets with the highest "heat island" effect**

Urban Living

- Establish a real action plan based on an **inventory of priority zones** (residential, recreational, etc.) **for noise reduction**, in particular, in collaboration with neighborhood committees/councils
- Be attentive, when issuing urban planning permits, to ensure **real functional diversity** (housing, work, commerce, schools, etc.)

Green Spaces

- Implement a **green network connecting every communal green space**
- Facilitate the **greening of facades** and roofs by simplifying administrative procedures and offering a grant for this purpose
- Stimulate the **maintenance of biodiversity** in public spaces (by creating specific zones as needed) and **adapt planted species to climate change**
- Encourage **private owners to plant species that stimulate biodiversity**
- Maintain or, where possible, rehabilitate **interior courtyards as green spaces**, especially on public properties, and assist private owners in maintaining existing trees or adding new ones
- Green the base of trees with **ground cover plants** that will also help reduce illegal dumping
- Promote the **adoption of a tree base**, an existing but little-known program in the commune, and the **greening of roofs** via a grant

Neighborhoods

- Advocate with Brussels Mobility to **redesign Place Saint-Pierre as a green, comfortable area** without illegal parking
- Support the regional initiative to redevelop **Avenue de Tervuren** into an urban boulevard (better shared space among different users, pedestrian crossings, tree planting, reduction in the number of lanes, etc.)

- Similar to the project for the vicinity of social housing on Rue Gén. Henry, redesign various Etterbeek intersections/streets as **meeting zones** (20 km/h) (continuous sidewalks, greening, terraces, etc.)
- Ensure that the future project for the **US embassy** (current ING site) is reasonable and does not distort the neighborhood or disturb the tranquility of residents

III. Cleanliness – Waste Reduction

Quality of life is a daily concern for many Etterbeek residents. This includes cleanliness in our neighborhoods. Waste management is a major issue: in 2021, Brussels households produced about 342,638 tons of waste. Therefore, it is necessary to continue combating incivilities that inevitably surround waste collection, even as we attempt to limit their number, such as:

- Illegal dumping;
- Small wild waste;
- Pollution (dog waste, urine, spit, tags and graffiti, illegal advertising);
- Bags put out on the wrong day.

The cleanliness plan, launched under the 2018-2024 term, is an important tool for identifying challenges and proposing concrete actions at the preventive (information/awareness), reactive (cleaning), and punitive (sanctions) levels. Today, the challenge is to strengthen these actions by further promoting prevention and reduction of waste upstream, reuse (repair or reuse of products or some of their parts), and recycling (valorization of raw materials).

In this context, we propose to :

- Strengthen **sanctions** aimed at **combating incivility** regarding cleanliness
- Support the **development of “repair cafés”** (workshops for repairing clothes, machines, etc.) and other local initiatives focusing on repair and reuse of objects
- Develop **Freego**⁵ by making it sustainable and **open every day**
- Hire **street sweepers** who know their neighborhoods and have a social link function

And we also propose to:

Zero waste

- Continue the **incentive system to reduce waste**, such as subsidies for reusable diapers or washable sanitary towels

Positive Actions Under the Cleanliness Plan

- Strengthen the network of "**cleanliness ambassadors**"
- Based on the results of the ongoing study at the time of writing this program, assess the relevance of launching a pilot project of trash **containers by street/ neighborhood**

⁵ Freego is a communal solidarity project run by volunteers, in partnership with the CPAS (Public Center for Social Welfare), aimed at combating food waste. It enables the redistribution of unsold products from the small and large distribution sectors to residents twice a week.

IV. Ecological transition

Although various municipal buildings have been renovated or built in recent years, the municipality's building stock is aging and requires numerous interventions (sealing, insulation, bringing up to standard). One of the major goals, besides addressing user comfort, is to contribute to improving energy performance. The municipality must also play a role in ensuring health and helping residents spend less and better, in order to reduce dependency on fossil fuels and waste production.

We propose, in this context, to :

- Aim for a **climate-neutral municipality by 2050**
- Allow Etterbeek residents to **measure their energy consumption** for free
- Continue the inventory and **decarbonization plan for municipal buildings**, prioritizing schools and buildings with social functions (aiming for a 55% reduction in emissions by 2030)
- Organize the **sharing of electricity** among residents **through energy communities**, including with schools or public buildings
- Support and develop **urban agriculture projects and community gardens** by acquiring additional land (SNCB/former barracks/around the town hall)
- Increase **access to drinking water in public places** through fountains
- Ensure **sidewalk paving** allows **rainwater infiltration** into the ground
- Include strict **environmental and social clauses in specifications** (public contracts) and ensure their implementation

And we also propose to:

Climate

- Achieve the **objectives of the 2030 Covenant of Mayors** and sign the 2050 Covenant of Mayors ([Convention des Maires - Europe | Convention des Maires – Europe \(europa.eu\)](#))
- **Deploy the municipal climate plan** through round tables open to civil society

Private Building Renovation

- Use financial incentives to make **private housing energy-efficient**
- **Inform and guide citizens** to **structures** that can provide advice on housing and renovation
- Encourage, through subsidies, the **use of heat pumps** where technically possible.

Public Buildings

- **Continue the renovation and insulation of public housing** (social, transit, emergency)
- Ensure that **all new buildings aim for zero carbon**

- Continue collaboration and **reflection with Sibelga on public lighting** (power, timing, LEDs, etc.)

Energy

- Purchase **100% green electricity** for the municipality
- Continue the **installation of solar panels** on public buildings
- **Double the number of solar panels and solar boilers among citizens** through subsidies
- Create a **map of the municipality's solar energy potential**
- Support **insulation subsidies** and energy audits in connection with regional aids (Renolution)
- Continue **energy savings in public buildings** by promoting solar water heaters and rainwater tanks
- Subsidize investments aimed at **energy savings by businesses**

Short Supply Chains and Sustainable Food

- Adopt an **Ethics Code for municipal investments** excluding investments in fossil fuels.
- Continue and **strengthen the "Good Food" strategy** for municipal schools, nurseries, and day centers by purchasing organic, local, seasonal, and healthy food, with an emphasis on more plant-based diets through enhanced sustainability criteria in purchasing policies
- **Plant fruit trees** in schools and public spaces

Water and air

- Organize rainwater collection for managing municipal infrastructure
- Organize regular air quality measurement campaigns and inform residents of the results and their impact.

More Participatory Etterbeek

I. Democracy & Participation

For Ecolo-Groen Etterbeek, citizen participation is not limited to voting every 6 years. It must be present in citizens' daily lives. During the last legislature (2018-2024), the two operational neighborhood councils (La Chasse and Jourdan/St Pierre) provided recommendations to the College and helped beautify their neighborhoods (plantations, trees, benches, murals, etc.) thanks to the allocated municipal budget. This reinforces the idea that participatory democracy should be at the center of local democracy, making it more effective and transparent to complement representative democracy through citizen deliberation and not just elected officials.

We propose, in this context, to:

- **Strengthen the implementation of neighborhood councils** by covering all neighborhoods and increasing the extraordinary budget available to them

- **Create a citizen evaluation committee for the implementation of priorities** defined through participatory methods
- **Broadcast municipal council meetings online** (live and recorded) to allow everyone to follow them
- **Make public (open data) the data from municipal institutions** such as the location of collective equipment, street names, library catalog, municipal budget, public contracts concluded, etc
- **Publish all municipal decisions** to ensure more effective management and allow better oversight of institutions

And we also propose to:

To Strengthen Resident Involvement in Political Life

- **Lower the threshold for filing a citizen initiative to 250 signatures**
- **Involve neighborhood councilors concretely** in the implementation of impactful projects for the neighborhood and the municipality by associating them with project discussions and having them participate actively throughout the entire process as full stakeholders
- Ensure **reception in municipal services in languages other** than Dutch and French
- **Open neighborhood councils to all residents** of the neighborhood with a consultative voice
- **Involve the population in defining municipal priorities** through neighborhood consultations
- Implement **decentralized participation tools** on the ground, such as a participatory bike
- **Facilitate the registration of non-Belgian residents on electoral rolls** by offering automatic registration when they register at the municipal population service. For non-EU non-Belgians, inform them that they will have this possibility after 5 years of legal residence
- Grant citizens, municipal councilors, and councilors the **right to ask current questions at the municipal council up to one full day before the session**
- **Organize moments of exchange between elected officials and residents on current issues of their municipality** before council sessions, but also at times more accessible to parents
- **Facilitate** the organization of **popular consultations on important issues**

To Make Public Management More Effective and Transparent

- Create **synergies with the administration, neighboring municipalities, and the regional government** in areas such as employment, economy, tourism, animal welfare, etc
- Ensure that **any request** made by a resident via the municipality's website receives **a quality response within a short period**
- **Ensure** that the **municipality's website** is **accessible to everyone**, prioritizing Easy-to-Read and Understand (FALC) standards and allowing residents to find all useful information

- Promote **gender parity within management bodies**
- **Publish** on the municipality's website the **list of delegates designated by the municipal council** to represent the municipality in its various structures
- **Rationalize the missions of various para-municipal structures** (inter-municipal associations, municipal management, municipal non-profits, project associations, etc.), which are the on-the-ground relay of municipal policy
- Within **para-municipal structures, ensure that administrators**, including elected members of the municipal council or representatives designated by the council, **motivate their candidacies**
- Ensure the application of Gender budgeting⁶

II. Local Economy and Employment

Besides the large number of small businesses in Etterbeek that reflect the local economic dynamism supported by the municipality, we are seeing a rise in citizen initiatives aiming to take control of the economy through cooperatives and 'responsible' consumer associations.

We propose, in this context, to:

- **Expand the pop-up store system** available to merchants who wish to develop an innovative project, lacking or coherent from a commercial balance point of view and/or expected by the population
- **Reimburse the property tax for the first 3 years of a business's existence** to provide financial support
- **Support "exemplary" businesses from an ecological and social perspective** with installation aids, among others
- **Offer, for each business that wishes it, a partnership** in urban planning around its establishment: delivery zone needs, façade visibility, short-term parking for wholesale businesses, etc
- **Subsidize off-street parking for utility vehicles**
- **Support businesses in their ecological transition** by funding bike racks in off-street parking areas, purchasing bike boxes, and lending cargo bikes for deliveries
- **Invest in the commercial core of the chaussée de Wavre** adjoining the town hall, integrating mobility aspects (pedestrians and buses)
- **Sustain the neighborhood terraces** developed during the Covid period

And we also propose to:

- **Collaborate effectively with economic life actors** (Region, Hub.brussels, business counters, UCM) and neighboring municipalities to support and **enhance synergies within the living area**, to boost local activities and jobs
- Make **municipal public markets accessible to microenterprises and SMEs**
- Continue a **local financial policy** that fosters the emergence of new forms of economy (tax incentives, reduced rents, flat-rate waste taxes, etc.)
- **Support** the organization of an **evening market** in addition to the Sunday market (Jourdan)

⁶ Gender-sensitive analysis of all forms of public spending and revenue, and the inventory of their direct and indirect consequences on the respective situations of women and men

- Set up a **mixed commission** (mandatory and randomly selected citizens) to identify the **targeting of aids for microenterprises and SMEs**
- **Remove as many legal and administrative constraints as possible encountered by project holders** in implementing sharing activities
- **Relay regional initiatives** (Innov'Iris, Be Circular, hub.brussels, Atrium, etc.)
- Assist **night shopkeepers** in gradually **transforming their product and service offerings** to meet the needs of residents within a 10-minute walk
- Analyze the **commercial potential of Rue Général Leman and Place Van Meyel** to identify actions needed for targeted support for entrepreneurship

Fairer Etterbeek

I. Housing

Due to demographic challenges, particularly in Etterbeek, and the lack of available land, real estate prices are soaring. The primary source of housing in Etterbeek is vacant buildings because, due to urban density, land reserves are limited.

We propose, in this context, to:

- **Eliminate street occupation taxes** (for containers, parking, scaffolding, etc.) **for renovation works** by individuals to insulate homes, and adjust the amount based on the reason for the occupation
- Continue to support, through **targeted and substantial aids** (renovation subsidies, energy efficiency, and insulation), initiatives aimed at the **energy and qualitative transition of Etterbeek's buildings**
- Require, given the large projects that could impact the municipality in the coming years—namely, the demolition and reconstruction of housing on the site of the Parc Léopold Clinic and potentially the Federal Police barracks—the **mixed use of public and private functions for any new real estate project**: a balance of private, subsidized, and social housing, combined with professional, commercial, and cultural spaces.

And we also propose to :

Ensure Access to Housing for All

- Work with the Brussels region to **renovate still-uninhabitable social housing** to bring it up to space and health standards
- Explore the option of **purchasing or public management rights** when opportunities arise, for transforming **vacant office buildings** into housing
- Take fiscal and regulatory measures in collaboration with the regional administration, if necessary, to **combat deliberately vacant housing or spaces**
- Create a **cadastral map of adapted accessible housing** and continue incentives for adaptations of private housing
- **Encourage** the creation of **shared housing/roommate arrangements for young people starting their professional lives or intergenerational living arrangements**

- **Strengthen social coordination in housing assistance and the fight against homelessness** to establish a **coordinated preventive approach** and better respond to emergency situations

Support for all forms of housing to ensure accessibility for everyone

- Conclude **temporary occupation agreements** for empty buildings awaiting purchase or renovation
- Systematize **urban planning charges** in kind (construction of properties/outdoor space development/long-term rental of properties through AIS) for the community in exchange for the authorization to build large projects in the Etterbeek area
- Sustain a **social hotel** to ensure a **supply of transitional housing for people in emergency situations**
- Continue to encourage private housing owners to **rent their properties through a social real estate agency**

II. Social Cohesion and Health

The number of people receiving replacement income (unemployment benefits or disability benefits) or social aid is an indicator of the number of people living on limited incomes, often below the poverty line. This indicator is higher than the regional average and has increased in recent years. Financial insecurity particularly affects seniors and young people. More broadly, social actors and people in precarious situations express an urgent need to rebuild connections and respond to growing poverty.

The CPAS (Public Social Welfare Centre) already performs many missions to assist the least advantaged, and it is crucial to sustain and strengthen essential aids to cope with the costs of energy, health, housing, and mobility. Nevertheless, additional measures and actions can be taken to reorganize and complement the municipality's social policy. It is urgent to implement a local plan to combat insecurity with a transversal strategy to address the problems and needs identified by the social diagnosis carried out by the CPAS.

We propose, in this context, to:

- Establish a **one-stop shop at the CPAS** offering **initial human contact** to clarify all the aid beneficiaries can receive and combat digital divide
- **Review the organization of local social coordination** to energize the extensive network of 156 local actors in Etterbeek, centralize the available subsidies, organize their collaboration by creating a "network house," and better support the various target groups through the development of a partnership between the CPAS and the associative fabric
- Establish **free legal aid within the CPAS** to provide an initial legal opinion and assist with procedures towards third-party operators
- **Reorganize the CPAS services to better ensure the well-being of center workers** and the effective collaboration of services in the interest of beneficiaries
- Provide a **dedicated service for people in irregular situations** to simplify reception and follow-up throughout the aid process
- **Develop a proactive information campaign** in multiple languages through various media to better publicize existing aids and services

- Open a **free hotline** to **report isolation, fragility, or loss of autonomy**
- Enable everyone to adapt to new technologies at their level to **reduce digital divide** and inform on the use of social networks
- **Combat menstrual insecurity** by ensuring free access to hygiene products in schools and other public institutions

And we also propose to:

CPAS

- Establish a **partnership agreement** with **medical centers** to enhance access to primary care
- Develop **agreements with all pharmacists in the municipality to simplify user procedures for accessing medications**
- **Strengthen the teams involved** in combating **homelessness and the "housing first" projects**
- **Establish collaboration between the CPAS and purchasing groups** supported by a third-party payment system to make local and healthy food accessible to vulnerable populations
- **Reinforce the CPAS mobile team** to enhance its "outreach" work to raise awareness of the CPAS's role, improve its image, and reduce the non-use of rights
- **Develop "early childhood" aids** to address school expenses and the costs of cultural and sports activities for children
- Strengthen **socio-professional integration policies** by working on new partnerships and reintegration strategies with public, private, and associative actors, including better support for access to stable employment after an Article 60 contract
- **Make the health card** (pharmaceutical and medical free) more accessible to uninsured individuals with incomes equivalent to beneficiaries of social integration income (RIS)
- Review the CPAS **"Cultural Relay" program** to **diversify the activity schedule, better inform** the public of available cultural offerings, **expand the number of beneficiaries,** and **improve supervision during outings**

Vulnerable Populations

- **Reorganize the appointment system and service hours of municipal services** to ensure wider time slots, especially outside of working hours, and address digital divide related to making appointments
- **Increase** the number of **places** in **reception or transitional structures** for young adults losing their bearings, victims of intra-family violence, and people without homes
- Establish **training for social workers** to address **mental health** issues to better support suffering populations
- Implement an integrated model of local aid and care aimed at **maintaining elderly people at home** in collaboration with the Brussels Region (COCOM)
- Increase visibility for the "**Fair Trade Municipality**" label
- Develop awareness-raising and training actions to help everyone adapt to new technologies at their level to **reduce digital divide** and inform on social media usage.
- Support associations active in **school support** (homework clubs, etc.) and **language learning**

Welcoming Municipality

- Implement a **medical and pharmaceutical card valid for one year as part of urgent medical aid**
- **Draw inspiration** from **best practices** established for **hosting Ukrainian refugees to welcome all asylum seekers**
- Work with **translators** for asylum seekers
- Increase the number of **ILA** (Initial Reception Centers⁷) **to accommodate asylum seekers and allow** individuals wishing to **host regularized refugees from reception centers** seeking housing to **domicile them** in their homes with differentiated household compositions

Health

- Analyze the **impact of political decisions on the health of residents** and draw concrete conclusions in the form of an action plan (based on priority)
- Ensure **accessibility of all public spaces** and **buildings for people with disabilities**
- Ensure the legal minimum **employment in public services for people with disabilities** is met
- Ensure access to **public digital spaces** (physical accessibility to spaces, readability, access to technical tools provided, etc.)
- Maintain and **develop medical centers** including basic mental health services

III. Education & Youth

Childhood and education are absolute priorities as they form the foundation of tomorrow's society. Mastery of the mother tongue and both French and Dutch is fundamental. Awareness of a fairer, sustainable, and equitable society begins with education, access to childcare, extracurricular activities with educational aims, and quality teaching. Etterbeek is a

⁷ Local reception initiatives that are individual reception structures

municipality with a significant number of schools. Supply and demand must be better aligned in a municipality with limited available space. This section is longer than the others due to the challenges to be addressed, which have not been tackled for several years.

We propose, in this context, to:

- Offer **all children a healthy, quality, and affordable meal** (free for those receiving CPAS benefits), in primary and nursery schools, prioritizing short supply chains, organic or sustainably farmed foods, and a less meat-centric plate with a focus on plant-based options, ensuring at least one vegetarian option
- Ensure **adolescents** have a **public space suited to their needs**, with infrastructure allowing for socializing, relaxation, and activities that do not disrupt others
- Maximize **children's contact with nature** and promote a **green and airy environment**, promoting the installation of vegetable gardens, trees, and shrubs in **schoolyards = continue greening** schoolyards
- Ensure that the **Youth Houses of Etterbeek** and **youth movements** have sufficient means to meet their demand, including subsidizing them and providing facilities and/or transportation means
- **Strengthen support** in **homework clubs** by promoting knowledge exchange and peer tutoring
- **Increase** the number of **extracurricular activities (including language learning)**, both during and outside school hours, in partnership with the associative world, and **pool extracurricular activities offered across all schools**
- Provide **all children** with a **free bowl of soup or a healthy snack (fruit) at 10 am** to combat food inequality
- Support **actions against school bullying**
- Facilitate and regulate the **use of certain school facilities or playgrounds for extracurricular activities** (flea markets in the yard, association meals in the cafeteria, activities by associations or residents in the yard, etc.)

And we also propose to:

Youth

- Multiply opportunities for discussion and **meetings for young parents and their children**
- Ensure **school breaks are moments of real relaxation and learning** even if family vacations are not possible by **strengthening the offer of holiday camps including by offering internships in Dutch** and ensuring their accessibility
- **Highlight the "work" of young people in academies, youth centers, social cohesion associations, and youth movements** by opening our cultural venues for a **grand celebration of Etterbeek youth**
- Encourage schools to **rethink their playgrounds** to have **gender-neutral spaces better shared** between different activities
- Create a **Youth Council** to meet voluntarily with the support of Youth House coordinators to draw up a list of recommendations to be transmitted to the municipal council and shared in the Etterbeek Community Life
- Encourage a **stronger network of youth organizations in the municipality**, such as youth movements, groups, and youth clubs, ensuring they can address a wide range of audiences, including those in greater need
- **Welcome** particularly vulnerable unaccompanied **young migrants**

- **Promote school outings**, which are important for field learning, favoring local options for green classes and mandating participation for all (mandatory during school hours) through social aid and (voluntary) solidarity mechanisms
- Increase visibility and **participation of Etterbeek youth in civic service**

Education

A Greener School

- Ensure **children** have **easy access to water** at school by installing drinking fountains
- Promote soft mobility and air quality around schools by maintaining existing **school streets**, creating new ones, improving school surroundings, and **organizing alternative school transportation** (pedibus and cyclobus)

A More Inclusive School

- Foster the establishment and smooth functioning of internal school bodies allowing **active participation from students** (school council and class council) and **parents** (participation council) to ensure school democracy
- Ensure **accessible sanitation facilities** that meet children's physiological needs
- Aim for **true education free** of charge by reducing the cost of morning and evening childcare, eliminating midday childcare fees, and providing school supplies up to 6th grade

A More Open School

- Open schools to neighborhoods and socio-cultural actors by facilitating access to their facilities outside school hours and encouraging cultural actors to visit
- Increase the number of **immersion classes** in municipal schools
- Favor **pedagogical methods focused on cooperation, self-confidence**, and alternative forms of assessment (continuous assessment, peer assessment...)
- **Support** and develop **academies**
- Encourage **knowledge of foreign languages**, support knowledge of the native language of non-native speakers in addition to the country's two major languages for real integration, and increase future employability
- Promote **exchanges (school and other)** between all networks and languages.
- Provide **public expression spaces** for students, such as graffiti walls

IV. Sports & culture

The municipality of Etterbeek offers quality cultural and sporting facilities, including two cultural centers (Le Senghor and "De Maalbeek"), four libraries, a toy library, four academies, a stadium, a swimming pool, a sports center, numerous playgrounds, and many other active actors in the community (Atelier 210, sports associations and federations, artist workshops, etc.). Nearly 120 local artists are listed during the artist tour.

Etterbeek is also a multicultural municipality; in this context, culture and sport must be essential tools for personal development and social cohesion.

We propose, in this context, to:

- Install **sports/gentle exercise modules for seniors, adults, and young people in public spaces** (pull-up bars, elliptical bikes, pedal machines near public benches...) to encourage free sports practice
- Increase the number of **sports fields in the municipality** also serving as meeting spaces for young people
- Consolidate all Francophone and Dutch-speaking cultural tools within a **single cultural department**

And we also propose to:

Culture

“Etterbeek en Fête”

- Support the organization of a new **cultural festival**, by neighborhood, aimed at showcasing and valuing the municipality's multicultural richness, co-constructed with schools, youth centers, and socio-cultural associations in partnership with other municipalities and existing events
- Fully **integrate** the municipality of Etterbeek into the **organization of the ‘Horizon 2030’ festivities for the bicentennial of Belgium** at the Cinquantenaire Park (50-200), ensuring **social and urban integration of the park’s redevelopment** for this occasion

“Etterbeek or Culture for All”

- Develop an **artistic co-creation project by school class and per year**, to introduce our children to culture from a young age
- **Strengthen the CPAS’s “Cultural Relay” program** to expand the offering of socio-cultural activities in collaboration with its social partners
- Support **“pay what you can”** or tiered pricing **events** based on the public's means
- Support events that **promote reading**

“Creative Etterbeek”

- Support the **exhibition of artistic work in public spaces and with local merchants**, and **large artistic projects in public spaces in collaboration with local artists**

Sport

- Support **“sport for all”** initiatives (**inter-neighborhood or inter-school sports tournaments**)
- Promote **friendly streets during school holidays** by facilitating the **provision of sports equipment**
- **Increase the amount of sports vouchers** and explore the feasibility of extending them to those over 18
- Install **ping pong and chess tables in parks and public spaces**
- Ensure the **shared use of the G. Thys stadium with federations** other than football (such as frisbee) and ensure priority access for Etterbeek residents
- Create an equivalent to **Article 27 for sports** in the municipality
- Offer **free introductory sports classes**

- Encourage sports participation among **sedentary adults**, especially due to their **precarious situation** (in collaboration with retirement homes, in particular)
- Organize a **5 or 10 km running/walking** event through the municipality, similar to other municipalities
- Support the **development of new mixed sports practices** (e.g., ultimate frisbee)

V. Living Together & Diversity

The diversity of Etterbeek's population is an undeniable cultural and social asset. However, with the complicated international context (migrant crisis in Europe, rise of populism and extremism in Europe and around the world, international tensions, attacks, wars...) and the increase in precariousness and poverty, some may be tempted to reject those who are different or seen as competitors or threats. Our municipality can play an important role in promoting social cohesion and combating all forms of discrimination.

In this context, we propose to:

- **Redesign the municipality's communication policy** to adapt to technological and institutional changes. Websites, social media pages, and the municipal newspaper (La Vie Etterbeekoise) will be integrated, and their content will be open to neighborhood committees, associative initiatives, cultural initiatives, regional policies related to our neighborhoods, and our merchants, entrepreneurs, and artisans. The municipal newspaper will be transformed into a "local life magazine"
- Conduct **activities in schools to combat sexism, racism, homophobia, and transphobia** in collaboration with associations and public organizations (UNIA)
- Ensure that **seniors are included in mobility considerations**, with particular attention to sidewalk quality, the number of rest areas, and the availability of nearby public transport
- Structure **supportive neighborhood networks** within the municipality to complement the work of home care providers by offering **minor services** such as visits or occasional errands
- **Coordinate local policies aimed at seniors** by providing access to a **specific** (virtual and non-virtual) **service desk** where they can be assisted with completing municipal digital procedures or do so on paper

And we also propose to:

Diversity

- Adopt a **"diversity" plan** to organize actions, debates, and training for municipal staff, municipal schools, and residents
- **Follow the recommendations of the Etterbeek Participatory Mixed Commission to discuss colonial signs in public spaces, integrate this theme into existing artistic and social programming, and contextualize traces of the colonial era in public spaces**

Seniors

- Maintain and even **diversify** the **range of activities for seniors** by offering privileged access to local cultural opportunities
- Evaluate and, if necessary, adapt the functioning of the **day center** for seniors that opened in April 2024
- Develop **specific psychological support for seniors** (and their caregivers) to help them cope with the challenges of aging

VI. Taxation

The two main sources of tax revenue for Etterbeek are the additional tax on personal income (average 19%⁸ of tax revenues in the Brussels region) and the additional tax on property tax (56% of total tax revenues on average in the region). 65% of Etterbeek residents do not own their homes and are therefore not directly impacted by an increase in property tax. Additionally, due to its international character, Etterbeek has many residents not subject to the personal income tax, leading to a significant "loss of income" for the municipal budget, which could be partially compensated by a limited increase in property tax.

In this context, we propose to:

- Continue **reducing the income tax on wages** to strengthen tax equity
- Implement a "**tax shift**"⁹ by lowering the additional tax on personal income and compensating with revenue from the additional property tax
- **Adjust**, in collaboration with the regional administration, Brussels Fiscality, **the cadastral income** to reflect the renovation and modernization of **properties** since the last assessment to address growing inequalities among citizens regarding tax
- **Increase the additional property tax** if the cadastral income revision is not carried out by Brussels Fiscality or is insufficient to cover the reduction in personal income tax
- **Double the tax for second residences** (for comparison, this tax is twice as high in Berchem-Sainte-Agathe as in Etterbeek)

VII. Awareness Campaigns

Awareness campaigns help create connections by generating empathy for unknown situations experienced by others and reminding everyone of the possible consequences of their actions without directly punishing behaviors that are not initially aimed at causing harm. Etterbeek, despite having many existing places and initiatives where these actions are carried out, is not immune to incivilities or actions that do not contribute to the common good.

In this context, we propose to:

- Organize awareness campaigns and training for residents (drivers, cyclists, scooter users) and schools on **road safety, ecological driving, the "cyclist's license," carpooling**

⁸ Belfius - analysis of local finances

⁹ Reduction of one tax offset by another fiscal measure

promotion, soft and multimodal mobility, and issues faced by people with mobility challenges

- Raise awareness among children and youth about **equality in schools** and associations and educate them beyond gender stereotypes
- Develop **information and awareness campaigns on access to rights and social services** in accessible language and multiple languages
- Organize activities with associations to raise **awareness about climate change and the environment**
- Create **expression spaces** for urban arts or **sports infrastructures** to **combat incivilities** by conducting information and awareness campaigns
- Organize campaigns to **inform** residents about the **importance of their participation and the various ways to get involved in community life**
- Organize campaigns to **inform** residents about **issues related to waste production** and encourage more sustainable behaviors

VIII. Animal Welfare (AW)

Contact with animals is excellent for our health. Mentally, contact with an animal improves rehabilitation and is a way to prevent depression. Physically, contact with animals enhances immunity and reduces the risk of allergies. We advocate for respectful relationships with living beings around us that allow everyone to live, as much as possible, according to their physiological needs.

In this context, we propose to :

- Appoint a municipal **animal welfare (AW) referent** to answer residents' questions.
- Ensure that the **alderperson in charge of green spaces** and biodiversity can **also handle AW responsibilities**
- Offer **assistance** covering microchipping, vaccination, and neutering for **veterinary care** for more vulnerable populations (in the form of vouchers for any chosen veterinarian or as free or reduced-price visits to the municipal veterinarian)
- Develop **dog freedom zones** where dogs can roam off-leash without impacting biodiversity or disturbing other park users and include activity courses for dogs
- **Encourage cat sterilization** through financial assistance and/or awareness campaigns, including using existing regional subsidies and/or municipal subsidies.
- **Increase the number of dog parks**
- Provide **incentives (or veterinary vouchers) for adopting from shelters** or support "in kind": training courses, behavioral sessions, reduced-price veterinary follow-ups, etc

And we also propose to:

- Distribute **stickers** (X animals here) to be placed on mailboxes to **inform emergency services**
- For municipal festive activities, **prefer fireworks with contained noise, light shows, lanterns**, etc
- Require **police officers to read the microchips of found animals**
- Improve the **follow-up of complaints** related to AW

- If suitable, **support animal mediation projects in schools, respecting AW and potential allergies of present children**, such as animal visits, the presence of a chicken coop, etc
- To **regulate the population of nuisance animals** (pigeons, rats, foxes, etc.), focus on cleanliness and limiting animal feeding in the city that may attract them, avoiding the use of rodenticides in green and blue areas and near them
- Adopt strategies to **combat the invasion of exotic mosquitoes and ticks**
- **Appoint a municipal veterinarian** to receive injured or sick wild or domestic animals found within the municipality when the owner cannot be identified
- Allow the **transport of animals under certain conditions in shared mobility services** provided by the municipality

Conclusion

You have reached the end of our program. It is clear that it will need to be refined, expanded, and adapted based on various constraints (staff, budget...) as well as the needs, ideas, and wishes conveyed by Etterbeek residents during the different meetings (neighborhood councils, participatory cycling) that we would like to organize during the 2024-2030 legislative period.

We thank you for taking the time to read our various proposals and invite you to write to us/meet with us if there are measures you think should be included.