



**Urban Land
Institute**

Shaping the Future of Maasmechelen
ULI Advisory Services Panel
Maasmechelen, Belgium
30th June 2011

Alexandra Notay, VP – Strategic Programmes

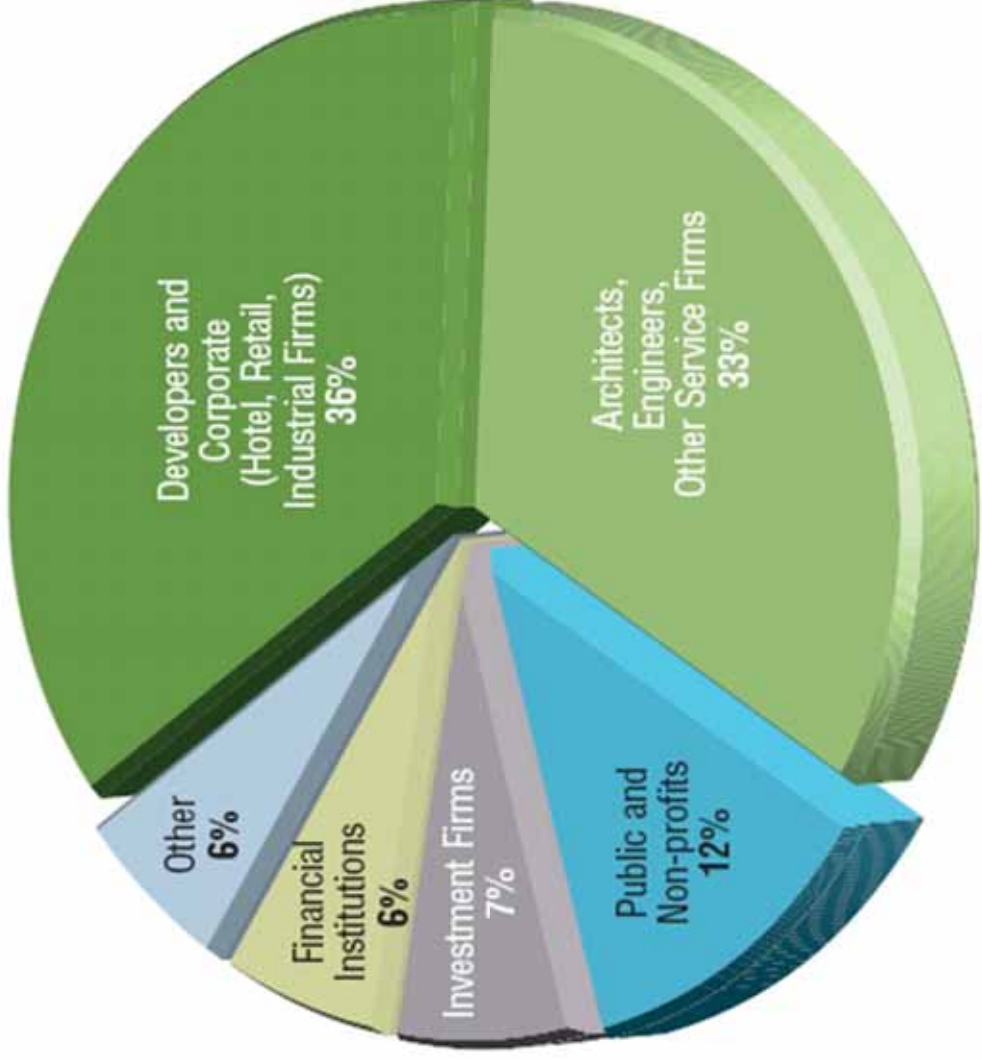
Urban Land Institute



ULI's mission is to provide leadership in the responsible use of land and in creating and sustaining thriving communities worldwide.

- ❑ Not-for-profit founded 1936, USA
- ❑ Neutral and Non-Lobbying
- ❑ 30,000+ members
- ❑ 90 countries
- ❑ Washington DC, London, Frankfurt, Hong Kong, Tokyo

Entire property spectrum



Diverse programme of work



Outreach



Knowledge



Exchange



Research

ULI Advisory Services Panel



- Hundreds run around the world since 1947
- Private sector real estate/land use/ investment perspective
- ULI handpicks a group of experts from its membership who act as an independent and objective review panel
- Develop a focused assignment with the local sponsors
- 3 day site visit ends with this public presentation
- Written report 3 months afterwards

Why Maasmechelen?



- Invited by the community of Maasmechelen & sponsored by Value Retail, Maasmechelen Village
- Interviews hosted by the Mayor at City Hall

Questions:



- 1) What does Maasmechelen community need to do to better leverage its tourism assets to secure inward investment?
- 2) How could Maasmechelen provide a more complete visitor experience to the next generation of tourist?

Answering the Questions – Q1

What does Maasmechelen community need to do to better leverage its tourism assets to secure inward investment?

- 1a) Assets and challenges
- 1b) Segmentation
- 1c) Vehicle/Mechanisms
- 1d) Quick wins
- 1e) Big Ideas

Answering the Questions – Q2

How could Maasmechelen provide a more complete visitor experience to the next generation of tourist?

- 2a) Establishing a brand
- 2b) Local Promotion
- 2c) Regional Promotion
- 2d) International Promotion



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Shaping the Future of Maasmechelen



Initial Recommendations

ULI Advisory Panels



- Introduction to the ULI panel and process
- Who we spoke with
- What we heard
- Questions we were asked
- Key themes
- Recommendations

Who We Spoke With









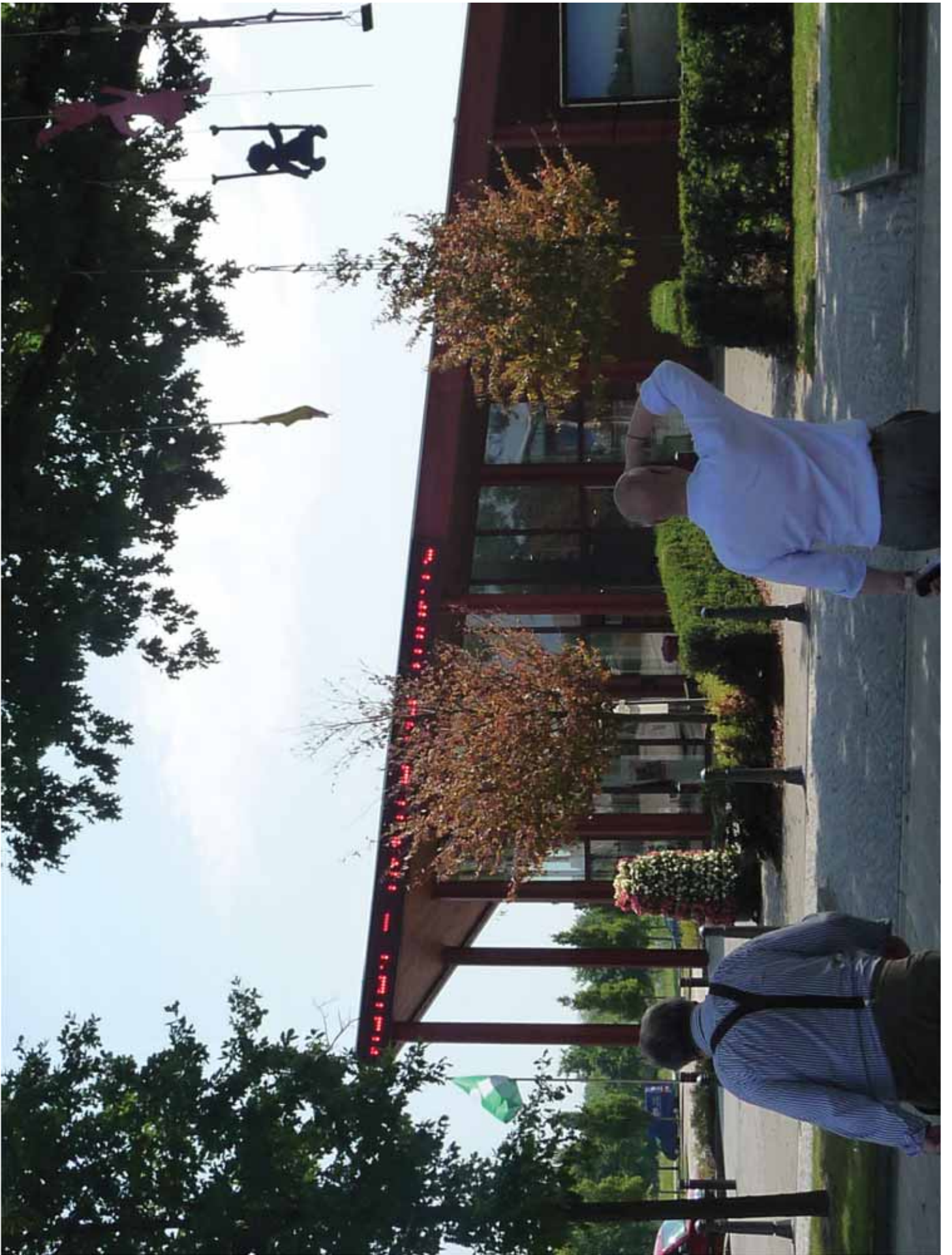




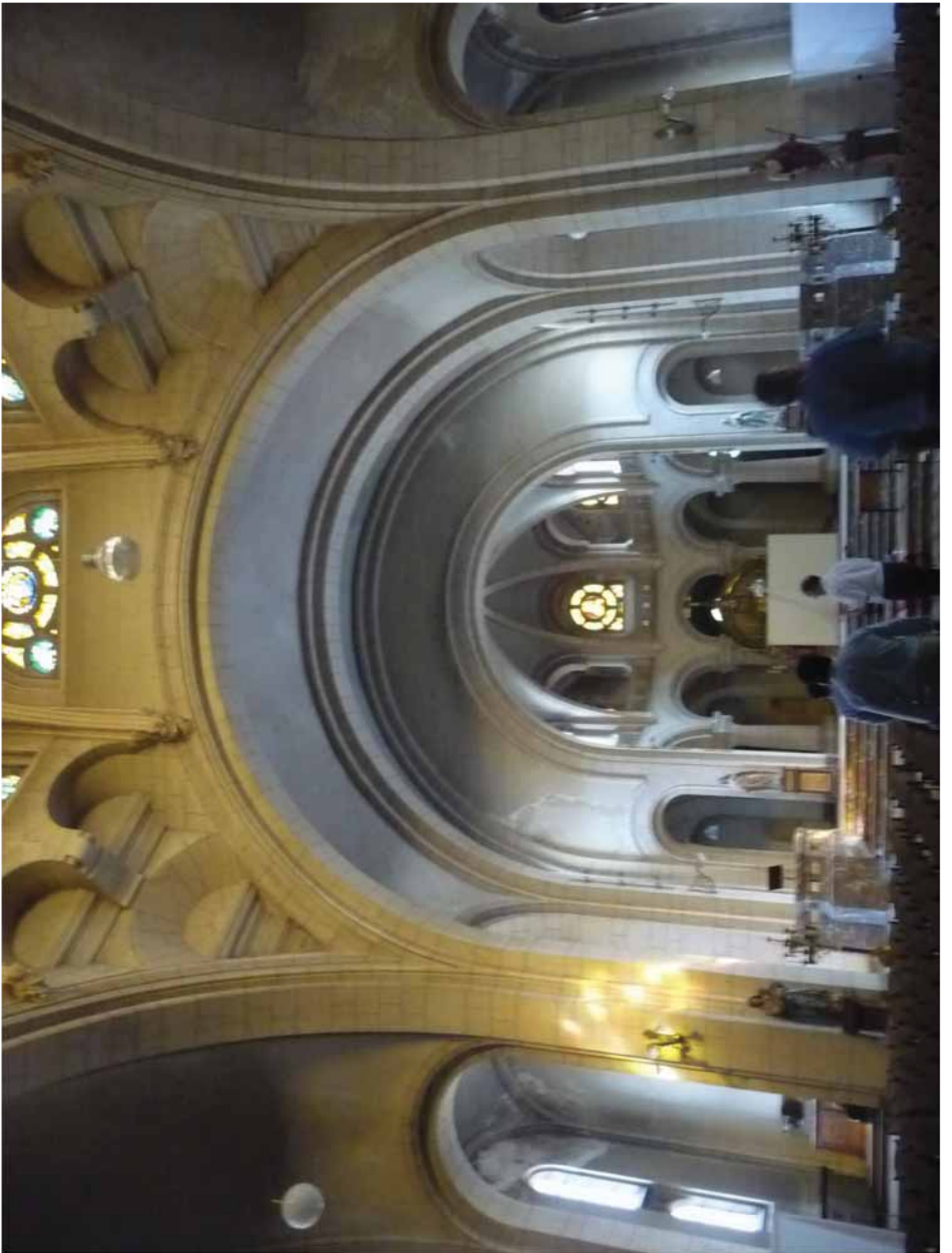


What We Saw





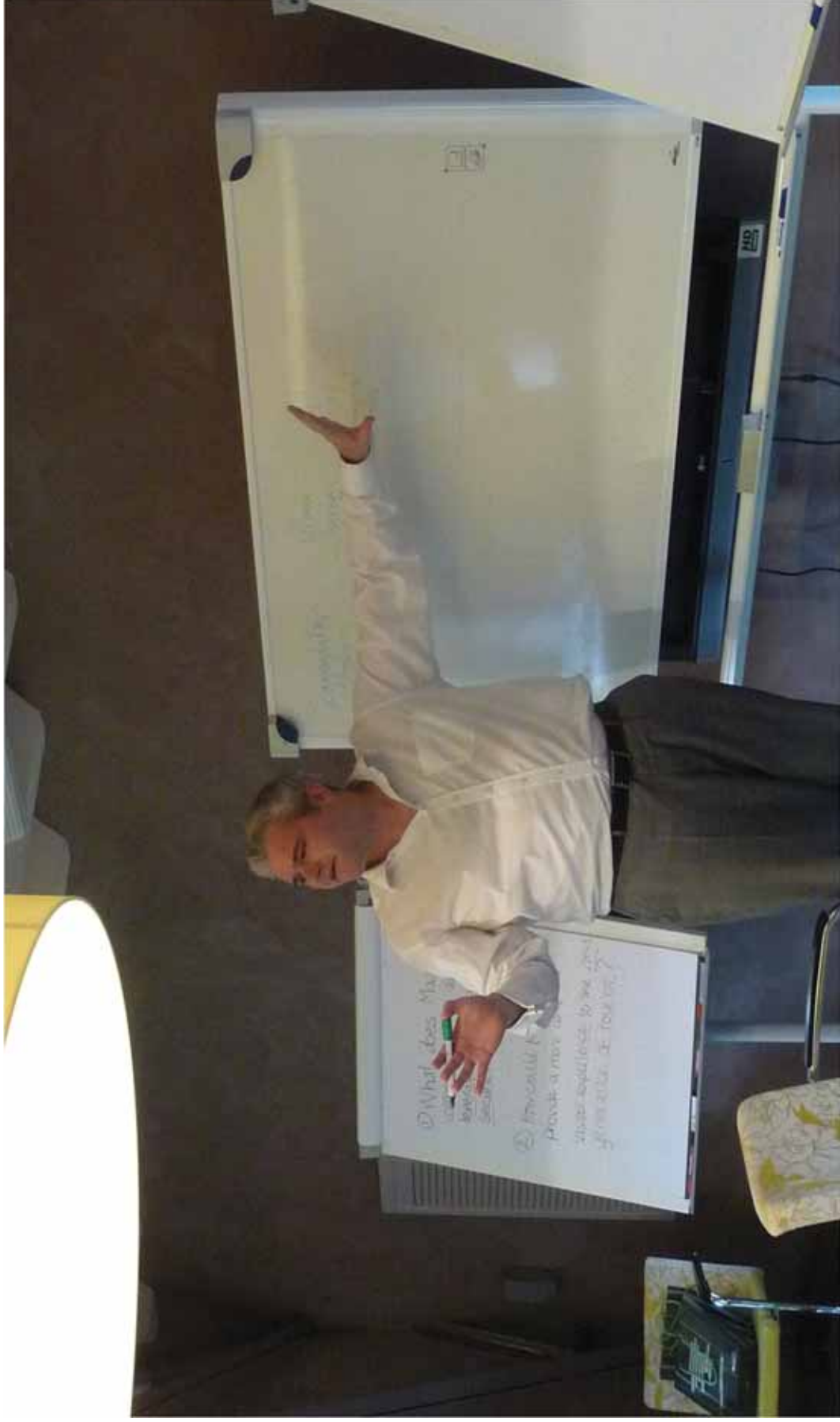








The Panel process







Strategic Themes

- Huge Unrealized potential
 - *“tourists don’t see what Maasmechelen has to offer outside Maasmechelen village”*
- Disjointed physically - Gathering places are missing
 - *“The Place making rules are not in play”*
 - *“We have no natural city-centre.”*
- Lack of integration and synergies between partners:
 - *“Maasmechelen has all the elements, it is a question of sharing them and bringing them all together”*

Q1



What does Maasmechelen community need to do to better leverage its tourism assets to secure inward investment?

- 1a) Assets and challenges
- 1b) Segmentation
- 1c) Vehicle/Mechanisms
- 1d) Quick wins
- 1e) Big Ideas

Tourism Assets and Challenges

ASSETS
Entertainment: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• MMV• Retail• Cinema
Nature <ul style="list-style-type: none">• National Park• Cycling• River & Waterways• Garden City
Culture <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Mining history• Chapel building• City centre/commercial street• Festival/carnival

CHALLENGES
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Poor signage
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Poor Communication/marketing
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Lack of Accommodation provision
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Need for improved Integration & connectivity
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Need for a clear vision for the future & strong ambition
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Mobility & Connectivity

Location as an asset

- *“Geographically we are the front door of Europe but the world doesn’t know what we have here.”*
- Many countries claim to have this but Maasmechelen could prove it!



Nature at the heart of MM



The beauty of Maasmechelen and its character create a unique destination that utilises nature and offers a range of leisure activities



1b) Segmentation strategy for placemaking

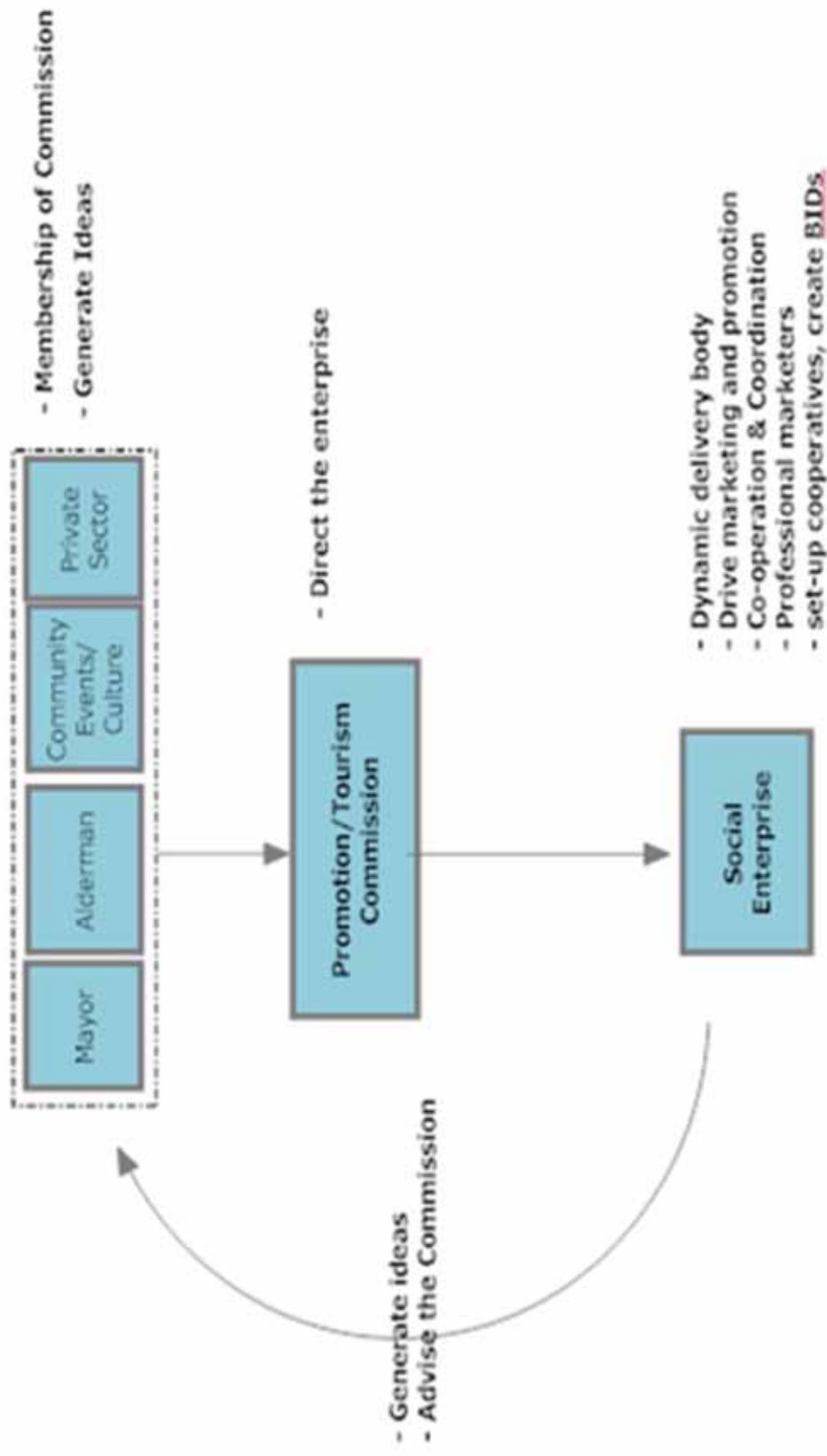
Segmentation Strategy for Placemaking in Maasmechelen			
Place/Product (Places with distinctiveness and key assets)	MM Shopping Village	City Centre	Community
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Shopping - Hotel (Mine Office) - Cinema 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Commercial centre - Concert Hall (converted chapel) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Garden city - Cycling route - River trail - Heritage sites
Consumer Profile	Local Shopper		
	International Shopper		
Investment Type	Heritage Visitor/ & Cyclists		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Developer - Developer - Investor - Fund Manager 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Shop frontage funds - Regeneration branding 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Shared narrative - Owner of vision - Center Parcs?
Flagship Projects	National Park Main Gateway		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Piazza - Concert Space/Chapel 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Integrated Information Centre 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Nature- Eco Trail- Reconnecting

1c) Vehicles/Mechanism

- Social enterprise which generates further mechanism – investment companies, community co-operations, brand owner, creative director, such as:
 - Promote London Council
 - Destination Edinburgh marketing alliance
 - Knokke-Heist Tourism Commission
 - European style BIDs (Business Improvement District)
 - Turisme Barcelona



Effective Social Enterprise



1d) Quick Wins

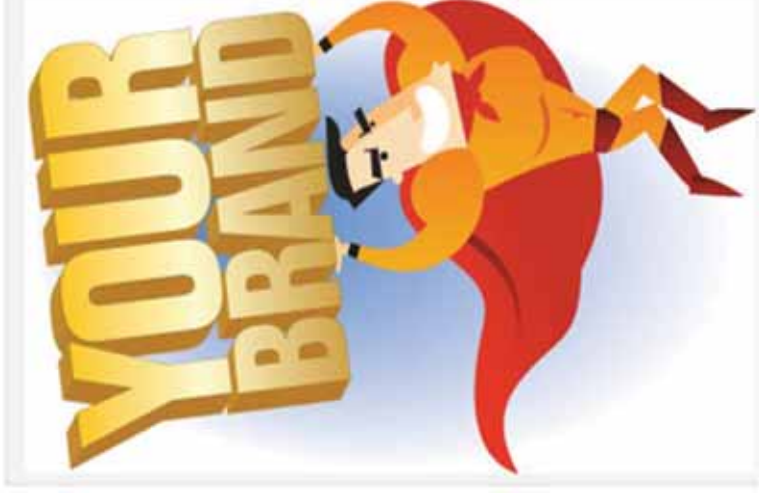
- Create a **promotion/tourism commission** to agree on priorities and a small, effective **social enterprise** to deliver the work programme
- Write a shared place-making agenda:
 - ▣ A manifesto set out by the Mayor but delivered through an independent workshop with key stakeholders
 - ▣ Undergo a process of assessment, evaluation and recommendations

“We lack here a sense of place and need to be clear on our personality.”



Quick Wins Cont.

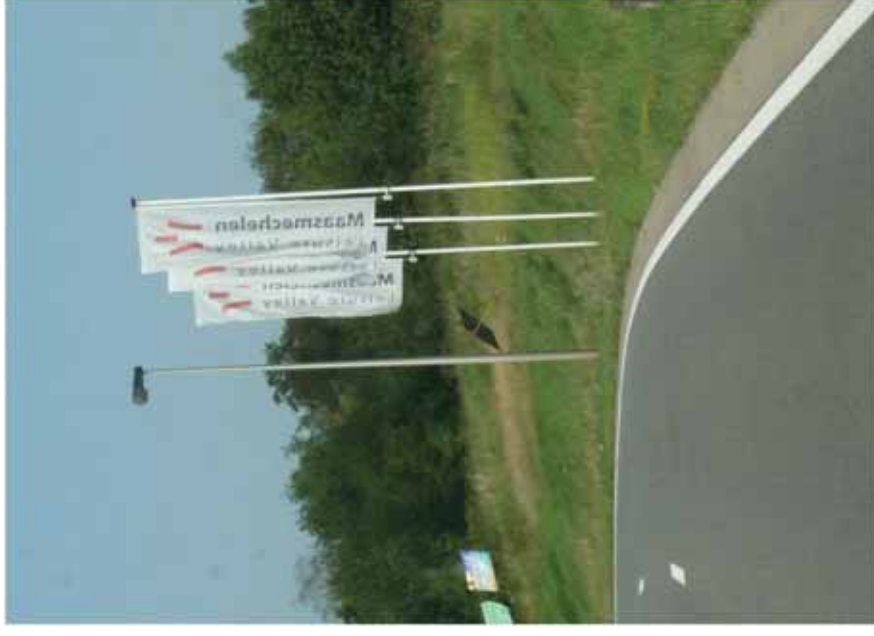
- Agree on a unified brand: Maasmechelen is the hero brand!
 - The Maasmechelen Main Gateway to the National Park
 - Maasmechelen Village
 - Maasmechelen Festival
 - Maasmechelen Cultural centre



Quick Wins Cont.

- Signage – an international destination?
- Multi lingual
- Maintenance needs to be improved
- Maasmechelen Leisure Valley:

"It's a phantom!"



Quick Wins Cont.

- Create an annual signature event
 - During the summer to complement winter carnival.
 - A multi-cultural focus, to celebrate diversity and multi-cultural roots of the community.
 - “Maasmechelen mediteranee” through the arts, theatre, culture, food, dancing...

SAVEURS
DU
MONDE_{.net}



1e) Big ideas for longer term

- Create 'gathering places' within the city, and a mechanism to link them together which is walkable and cyclable to create a connected network to discover all of Maasmechelen
 - ▣ Maasmechelen Village > Pauwengraff > Church Square
 - ▣ Derelict buildings around the church square could be developed into Hotels

"We need to connect the dots"



Big Ideas Cont.

- Convert the Chapel to a concert hall/cultural centre
- Inventory of derelict buildings to be restored and invested in:
 - ▣ Charming and characterful buildings
 - ▣ Hotels, Bed & Breakfasts to fill current gap in accommodation provision



Big Ideas Cont.



- Harness the power and investment of existing partners to ensure the brand resonates
- Attract strategic investment such as foreign wealth funds from Asia for capital projects
- International Marketing – via MMV and Retail offer to Asia and emerging markets through promotions. ‘China day’ ‘Maasmechelen day’

Q2



How could Maasmechelen provide a more complete visitor experience to the next generation of tourist?

- 2a) Establishing a brand
- 2b) Local Promotion
- 2c) Regional Promotion
- 2d) International Promotion

2) The future generation

- The Profile of the future market
 - International visitors
 - Eco-focused
- The profile of the future consumer
 - Social media & Digital tourism
 - Anticipate how users will interact with destination
 - Connectivity between users
 - Virtual information centre

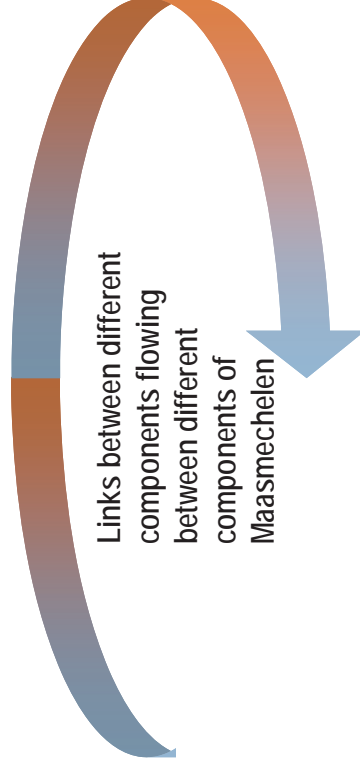


(Re)Connection Model

- RLKM Regionaal Landschap Kempen en Maasland
- This model is applicable for Maasmechelen
 - (Re)Connect nature with nature
 - (Re)Connect people with nature
 - (Re)Connect business with biodiversity
 - (Re)Connect policy with practice

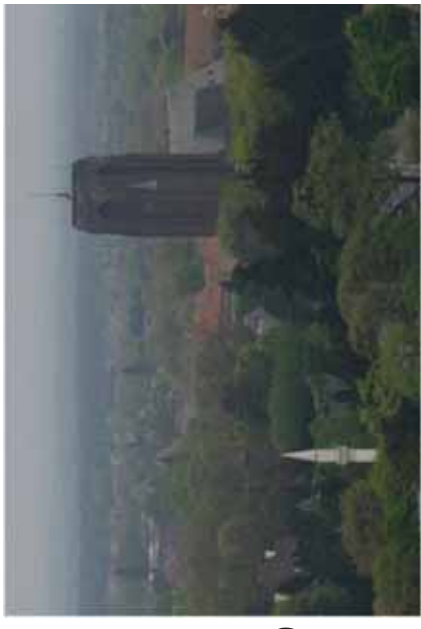


Every component in Maasmechelen will have certain key elements which are intrinsic to Maasmechelen and flow between the different communities creating an integrated leisure destination

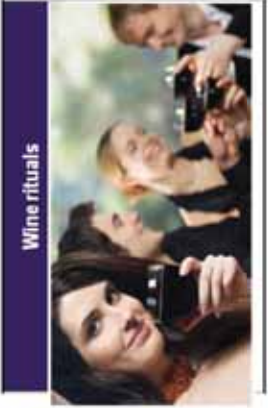


2a) Establishing a Brand

- Maasmechelen **IS** your brand
 - Maasmechelen Main Gateway to the National Park
 - *“We need to keep aware of what’s around us (Maastricht, Genk etc) and make a complementary offer – not to give the same thing. We cannot compete but should celebrate our differences!”*
- Trend of responsible tourism
 - *“Maasmechelen is a collection of manmade landscapes... Even our nature is urban. We should do something with that.”*



Rituals

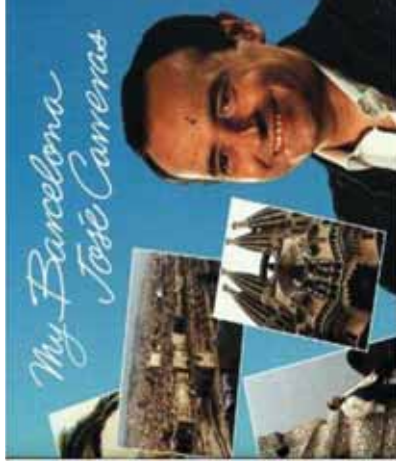


**Rituals, customs and traditions
bring life to the neighbourhood and the city**



Promotion

- 2b) Promotion – local level
 - The future generation that will live and work in Maasmechelen
 - Cater for local residents & visitors
 - ‘My Maasmechelen’
- Promotion - regional level
 - European neighbourhood
- Promotion – international level
 - Partnership



Top Recommendations



- Act on quick wins
- Demonstrate results:

“We need a good vision – we need to act like a city rather than a collection of elements.”

- Share information, ideas and results
- Do not be afraid to have a bigger vision
- Take the opportunity for Maasmechelen to brand itself as gateway to national Park and key to Region of Limburg

Next steps!



- The panel report will be published within 3 months and will contain more detailed recommendations.
- Any questions?