



9.2 Map of Amsterdam waterfront.

dam Schipol Airport, the port of Amsterdam, and the telecommunications campus, known as Teleport, are the primary “ports” or entrances into the city. Amsterdam is the cultural and financial capital of the Netherlands. It is also one of the world’s largest, conserved, historic inner cities. Amsterdam is a case study of innovative development and urban revitalization.

The historic city was established around a dam that separated the Amstel River from the IJ River (pronounced Ay), a former tributary of the South Sea. The River IJ was Amsterdam’s connection to the world and until the decision to build the Central Railway Station (1882–1889) there was an open connection between the city and the sea. With the construction of the station, it was no longer the IJ Harbor but rather the Central Station that became the umbilical cord of the inner city. Although the harbor continued to play an important role for Amsterdam, the city essentially turned its back to it.

The inner city of Amsterdam has approximately 80,000 residents and supports 80,000 jobs. In the 1960s, the number of jobs was double this figure but, due to a lack of space and poor accessibility, the large financial corporations moved from the center to the periphery of the city. The old center, obviously not designed to accommodate motor vehicles, is well suited for pedestrians, bicyclists and public transportation. Unfortunately, there is a continuing pressure wrought by cars and tour buses in the inner city.

Amsterdam is a multi-polar city. International business and banking companies are located along the south axis of the city. Large-scale entertainment facilities are located around the new Ajax soccer stadium. Meanwhile, the inner city remains the most important center for culture, tourism and retail activities and for new forms of creative economic activity. These centers do not compete with one another; rather, they are complementary to each other’s primary roles.

For most of its evolution, Amsterdam grew in a series of half-circles,