Description
Retail Outlet Explorer
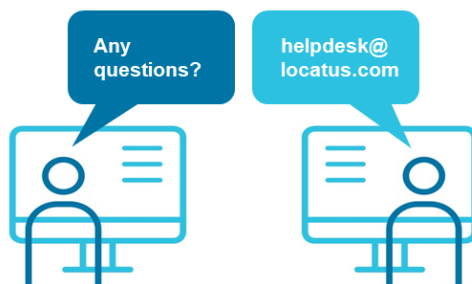
Content and application of Locatus's retail outlet database.

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1   Introduction

Locatus gather data on all shops, stores, and consumer-oriented service providers. Our team of dedicated field workers goes out every day to make sure our database is up-to-date. Every year, they go round every retail area in the Benelux and visit the main retail areas in the largest cities of Europe for an inventory. Shops located outside retail areas (non-central stores) are visited once every three years.

Data such as (shop)name, retail floor space, and sector, are registered in Locatus's database.
The main source of this database is field work. Our team checks the store's name, address, sector, retail floor space, and location. The retail floor space of shops has been measured since 2000. We started measuring the retail floor space of food & drink outlets and other service-providing retailers. Moreover, our field workers take a picture of every retail outlet within a retail area.
Our office team checks the database to make sure our file remains consistent. Moreover, we keep the database updated between visits by checking notifications for new openings & closures in news letters and on the internet, although we will only change our database after a careful fact check (by phone where necessary).

The basic data gathered in Locatus's database are:
•   Address of the retail outlet
•   Retail floor space
•   Name and type of retail area
•   Retail chain
•   Sector
•   Number of inhabitants

Besides information on individual shops/food & drink outlets/service providers, Locatus's database also contains information on retail areas, footfall numbers, catchment areas, and public parking garages. Predictive data, such as the Retail Risk Index, may also be added to Locatus Online App. You can visualise all this information within the retail areas on digital maps (Retail Plans).

The aim of this document is to provide information on the content and application of Locatus' database. The following chapters will look at the basic terms and the different variables within the Retail Outlet Explorer.
The appendices will provide even more information on how we determine retail areas, retail floor space, vacancy, and visit motive type.

2   Some basic terms

Before getting into more details of the various elements of the database, it is necessary to understand a few basic terms. This chapter will explain the terms 'physical (retail) unit', 'economic activity', 'chain organization', and 'retail area'.

2.1.   Physical (retail) unit

Locatus' database only incorporates activities carried out on a fixed location. Furthermore, it must be an indoor space reasonably accessible to consumers. In some cases, 'reasonably accessible' can mean that an entrance fee is charged. Retail premises where entry is granted only to an exclusive target group or to those holding membership, cannot be said to be reasonably accessible.

In the database, a distinction is made between a retail unit and a shop-in-shop. A retail unit is taken to mean a building with an address in which consumer-orientated activities are engaged. A shop-in-shop is a physical space that is clearly part of a retail unit with the same address, but that is autonomous. This space is usually physically separable and only accessible via the parent unit. There will always be a separate checkout for any activity occurring. In principle, the retail floor space will be measured separately.

2.2.   Economic activity

An economic activity is a description of a commercial activity being performed within a retail unit. In Locatus' database, an activity is characterised by several elements, such as a unique number, the retail activity, the façade name, the retail chain, the retail floor space and the address. Two types of economic activity are distinguished, namely point of sale and point of service.

A point of sale is the most important economic activity at a unique address. It entails its own staff, its own cash desk and has its own retail floor space. The more common name for the combination of retail unit and economic activity is shop, or retail outlet. Locatus' retail outlet file contains over 525,000 retail outlets in Belgium, Luxembourg and The Netherlands and a great number of cities in the rest of Europe.

Contrary to a point of sale, no retail floor space is allocated to a point of service, because it operates within a section of a point of sale. A point of service has its own checkout or staff. Points of service are always part of a point of sale, have the same address as the parent activity and their own (retail chain) industry which may differ from the point of sale's industry. A few examples include PostNL, Top 1 Toys, car brands, Delifrance, and Regiobank.

2.3.   Chain organisation

Roughly one quarter of the shops in the retail sector of the Benelux is part of a retail chain. This is characterised by the way in which the organisational and/or marketing aspects of the shops' activities are tackled.
An organisation will only be classified as a chain organisation if seven or more retail outlets are operating internationally under the same name. A local baker that operates four other bakeries in town is not included as a chain organisation.

Where the dominant image of a shop is determined by a partnership, this is said to be a Frontstore partnership. Examples of Frontstore partnerships are Albert Heijn, Randstad, and McDonald's.

Car dealers are different again. After all, a garage can become a dealer of multiple makes of car, for which they may supply the vehicles and/or components for these makes. The fact that they are able to sell several brands makes car dealers a unique group.
Car dealers are included in the database as a backstore chain, utilizing points of service.

2.4. Retail area

For each retail outlet we register whether the outlet is part of a retail area. In this process we pay a great deal of attention to using uniform criteria for classification.

A retail area is not referred to as a retail area until it has **a minimum of ten shops** within every **industry groups** (e.g., Vacancy, Convenience, Fashion & Luxury, Leisure, Home & Garden, Transport & Fuel, Recreational Goods, Services and Others).

Exceptions to this are the Subregial Convenience Centres, Mini Convenience Centres, Big Box Retail Parks and Out of town road shopping.

All retail concentrations are defined by Locatus on an individual basis. When in doubt, the opinion of the surveyor will prevail. A detailed description on demarceting a retail area, by our field workers, can be found as appendix 2.

We distinguish four categories of retail areas:
1. City & Town Centres
2. Supportive Centres
3. Residual Centres
4. Solitary Outlets

The term 'Solitary Outlets' is used for all retail outlets which do not meet the criteria of the shopping centres in category 1-3.

2.4.1. All categories are further subdivided below.Types of retail area Locatus

The most important retail area in a town or city is designated as City & Town Centre. With Locatus' database, the following subcentres are distinguished:

City Centres   over 700 outlets
In effect, this pertains to the most important retail areas in Europe, of which the inner cities of Amsterdam, Barcelona, Antwerp and London are part.

Regional Centre Large   400-700 outlets
A regional centre is the biggest retail area of a town or city. There are between 400 and 700 outlets in the retail business. Examples are Bussum centre or Delft centre.

Regional Centre Small   200-400 outlets
A regional centre is the biggest retail area in the town or city. There are between 200 and 400 outlets in the retail business. Examples are Franeker centre or Putten centre.

Subregional Centre Large   100-200 outlets

A subregional centre is the biggest retail area in a town or city. This pertains to centres with fewer than 200, but more than 100 outletsin the retail business.

Subregional Centre Small   10-100 outlets

A subregional centre is the biggest retail area in a town or city. This pertains to centres with a maximum of 100 outlets in the retail business.

Subregional Supermarket Centre   3 or more outlets

This is a concentration of shops that constitutes the biggest retail area in a town or city and which has 3 or more outlets. A Subregional Supermarket Centre must include 1 supermarket measuring 500 m² retail floor space or more.

Supportive Centres

In addition to one city or town centre, a town may have one or more supportive retail areas. Within the category of "supportive centres", the following six types of retail areas are distinguished:

Out of town road shopping (Belgium & Luxembourg)

'Road concentrations' are a group of retail outlets located alongside an N-road (a main road that is not a motorway), where there must be a minimum of 5 shops with a retail floor space of at least 400 m2 within a radius of 1 kilometre.

City District Centre (The Netherlands)   over 100 outlets

A city district centre is always an addition to a city centre or primary shopping centre. Furthermore, the majority (>50%) of this centre is a designed retail centre. Examples of district centres include Amsterdam-Osdorpplein or Nijmegen-Dukenburg.

Inner Urban Shopping Area   over 100 outlets

This is also a case of a supportive centre with more than 100 outlets, but in contrast to the district centres, these retail areas have not been developed methodically, but are the shopping streets in major cities. Examples include Steenstraat in Arnhem, Kinkerstraatbuurt in Amsterdam and De Wandstraat in Brussels.

District Centre large (The Netherlands)   50-100 outlets

A large district centre coexists with a city centre or a regional centre and has fewer shops than a City District Centre.

District Centre large (Belgium)   50-100 outlets

A large district centre coexists with a city centre or a regional centre.

District Centre small (The Netherlands)   fewer than 50 outlets

These centres have a specific supportive function. Small district centres are either concentrations of outlets including 10-19 outlets and 2 or more supermarkets or small retail areas with 20-50 outlets.

District Centre medium (Belgium)   fewer than 50 outlets

These centres have a specific supportive function. Small district centres are either concentrations of outlets including 10-19 outlets and 2 or more supermarkets or small retail areas with 20-50 outlets.

Neighbourhood centre (The Netherlands)

This is a concentration of outlets featuring a minimum of 10 and a maximum of 19 outlets. Additionally there may be one supermarket or no supermarkets present in this type of retail area.

District Centre small (Belgium)   fewer than 50 outlets
This is a concentration of outlets featuring a minimum of 10 and a maximum of 19 outlets. Additionally there may be one supermarket or no supermarkets present in this type of retail area.

Mini convenience centre
This is a concentration of 3-10 outlets, which includes 1 supermarket measuring 500 m² retail floor space area or more.

Residual Centres
The category 'residual centres' encompasses large-scale concentrations of shops and special retail areas.

Big Box Retail Park
Concentration of 5 or more retail shops with an average retail floor space of minimum 500 m2 per shop. Furthermore, a minimum of 50% of the shops must be targeted. This means that at least half of the retail floor space of the retail area is geared towards the industries "plants and animals", "electronics", "bicycle and vehicle accessories", "DIY" or "home".

Shopping center (Belgium)
A (planned) concentration of shops with more than 50 outlets. Often partially indoor or a completely indoor shopping center.

Specialty Centre
Retail areas not belonging to one of the aforementioned categories are designated as a special retail area. This mostly pertains to retail areas around a railway station or retail areas with a special theme. Designer Outlet Center in Roermond, Stationsplein Breda and Amsterdam Airport Schiphol are included in this category, for example.

Solitary Outlets
The term 'Solitary Outlets' is used for all retail outlets which do not meet the criteria of the shopping centres mentioned before.

3   Significance of various variables

The following variables are included in the Retail Outlet Explorer:

3.1.   Variables basic module

UnitID
Description: Unique number allocated to a retail unit.
Example: 92271

Name
Description: The name of the shop, as featured on the shop's front/façade.
Example: Perry Sport
Source: Locatus
Comment: From the consumer's perspective, a shop's name is the name on the shop's façade or the name
                    included in the phone book.

Retail chain
Description: Name of the retail chain with which the point of sale is affiliated.
Example: PERRY SPORT
Source: Locatus
Comment: The name of the retail chain does not always correspond to the name of the parent
                    organization. If the entrepreneur is operating independently, this is indicated by means of
                    '(Indep/N.A.)'.

Street
Description: Street name of the visiting address
Example: Dorpsplein
Source: BAG (NL), GIM (BE), Open source (EU)

House No.
Description: House number
Number example: 3
Source: BAG (NL), GIM (BE), Open source (EU)
Comment: A retail unit can have an address range, which will be visible while looking at house numbers.
                    Sometimes a retail unit is spread over multiple buildings, where walls have been knocked
                    through to form a single unit (for example Markt 24-28) or, by contrast, it may involve multiple
                    activities at a single address.A retail unit

House No. Addition
Description: Suffix appended to the house number in the form of digits/letters.
Example: -5
Source: BAG (NL), GIM (BE), Open source (EU)

Postal code
Description: Postal code
Example: 6211ED
Source: BAG (NL), GIM (BE), Open source (EU)

Town/city

Description: Town/city
Example: Maastricht
Source: Cendris (NL), GIM (BE), Open source (EU)

District (The Netherlands)

Description: Names of the districts in line with CBS
Source: Centraal Bureau voor de Statistiek (CBS)
Example: Rivierenwijk

Municipality

Description: Name of the municipality
Source: Cendris (NL), GIM (BE), Open source (EU)
Example: Genk

Province

Description: Name of the province
Source: BAG (NL), GIM (BE), Open source (EU)
Example: Limburg

Retail Floor Space (RFS)

Description: Retail floor space in m²
Example: 472
Source: Locatus
Comment: A shop's floor space is measured by the surveyors. It encompasses all covered spaces
                 accessible and visible to the consumer. It also includes the (visible) space behind the display
                 counter and the shop window display area, but not (for example) the staffroom, warehouses and
                 outdoor sale areas. This information is only recorded for shops, and not for catering and service
                 industry such as hairdressers and bank offices and the like.

RFS_Classification

Description: Category of the retail floor space to which the retail unit belongs.
                 Locatus guarantees that 95% of the measured space has been included in the correct
                 size category.
Example: 0400<WVO<=0800
Source: Locatus
Comment: There are seven categories to describe the retail floor space. These categories are organized
as follows:

Unknown/N.A.
0000<RFS<=0100   0400<RFS<=0800
0100<RFS<=0200   0800<RFS<=1600
0200<RFS<=0400   1600 <RFS

Retail Sector

Description: Highest level of the Locatus retail activity. Example: 35- Recreational Goods
Source: Locatus
Comment: For the retail activity Locatus uses a hierarchically structured three-tier retail activity coding.
                 The highest level is the group. Presently, the database features nine different groups, six of
                 which are included in the Retail Outlet Explorer, Special Edition.

Retail Category

Description: Umbrella term for a number of industries with the same characteristics.
Example: 35.100- Sports & Toys
Source: Locatus
Comment: 27 retail categories are distinguished within this database.

Retail Activity

Description: Retail Activity is a characterization of an activity and/or partnership.
Example: 35.100.492 – Sports shop
Source: Locatus
Comment: The retail activity codes used in the database are exceedingly detailed.

Survey_date

Description: Date of inspection by field staff
Source: Locatus
Example: 21-09-2017

Desk_research_date

Description: Date of inspection by desk research team Locatus
Source: Locatus
Example: 11-11-2019

Mutation_date

Description: The date on which a change was made to the core data of a property. For example the industry, retail floor space m², retail chain, name, etc. The date does not change in case of a typo or when the house number has been updated.
Source: Locatus
Example: 05-02-2023

Population

Description: Number of residents in the relevant town/city.
Source: Statistics Netherlands (CBS), StatBel (BE), Open sources (EU)
Example: 121,370

Population_Class

Description: Category within which the number of residents of the relevant town/city falls.
Source: Locatus
Example: 100000<=Population_Class<175000

POP5min

Description: Number of residents within a drive time of 5 minutes by car.
Source: Locatus
Example: 4.385

POP10min

Description: Number of residents within a drive time of 10 minutes by car.
Source: Locatus
Example: 122.721

POP15min

Description: Number of residents within a drive time of 15 minutes by car.
Source: Locatus
Example: 173.541

POP20min

Description: Number of residents within a drive time of 20 minutes by car.
Source: Locatus
Example: 173.541

Retail Area Category

Description: Type of retail area
Example: City or Town Centre
Source: Locatus
Comment: Depending on the function of the retail area a distinction is made between three primary
                 types: 'City & Town Centres', 'Supportive Centres' or 'Residual Centres or Solitary Outlets'.

Retail Area Type

Description: Different types of retail area.
Example: Inner city
Source: Locatus
Comment: Differentiation in terms of the retail area categorization based on the number of retail outlets
                 within the retail sector and in some cases the retail floor space or industry (see appendices.)

Retail Area

Description: A concentration of at least five shops (although with the exception of
                 Subregional Convenience Centre and Mini Convenience Centre).
Source: Locatus
Example: Maastricht centre

Subcentre

Description: A (planned) concentration of shops with its own name. It is always part of a (larger) retail area.
Source: Locatus
Example: Hoog Catharijne

BAGADRESID (The Netherlands)

Description: Unique number from the Basisregistratie Adressen en Gebouwen (BAG) (Basic Registration
                 Addresses and Buildings)
Source: Municipality/BAG

BAG_Construction_date (The Netherlands)

Description: Original year of construction from the Basisregistratie Adressen en
                 Gebouwen (BAG) Nederland/(Basic Registration Addresses and Buildings)
Source: Municipality / BAG

BAG_Surface (The Netherlands)

Description: Usable area of a residential object originating from the Basisregistratie Adressen en
                 Gebouwen (BAG) Nederland/ (Basic Registration Addresses and Buildings)
Source: Municipality / BAG

Consumer motive classification

Despription: Classification based on consumer motives and the total retail floor space (m²) of the retail area.
Source: Locatus / ICSC
Example: Convenience XL

Servicepoint1 t/m servicepoint5

Description: Point of service within retail outlet
Source: Locatus
Example: PostNL

Servicepoint1_Retail_Activity t/m servicepoint5_Retail_Activity

Description: Retail activity of point of service within retail outlet
Source: Locatus
Example: 65.280.410-Post office

PUP

Description: Pickup point for online purchases (groceries) in a supermarket
Source: Locatus
Example: Yes

SUP Franchise:

Description: Indicates whether the supermarket is a franchised store or not.
Source: Locatus

SUP Franchise Name:

Description: Name of franchisee
Source: Locatus

Energy Label

Description: Energy performance certificate (EPC) of a building.
Source: EP-Online
Example: A+++

Disclaime energy labels:

The connection between Locatus and the BAG has been made as good as possible, but for practical reasons can never be made 100% conclusive for two reasons:

1.   Locatus registers retail outlets and not all retail outlets are separate residential objects in the BAG. Think of indoor liquor stores in a supermarket or the Bijenkorf's shop-in-shops.

2.   On the other hand, sometimes multiple residence objects are combined into one store and sometimes even multiple BAG properties. From these multiple objects we then try to find the best match based on function, address and area.

3.2. Module 'Footfall'

The module 'Footfall' provides information on the footfall numbers of an outlet on an average Saturday. This number is only available for retail areas where footfall has been counted.

Footfall

Description: Average footfall of an outlet on an average Saturday.
Example: 51.500
Source: Locatus
Comment: Locatus executes footfall countings on different locations twice a year. Footfall countings in towns where footfall has been counted before are repeated at least once every two years, and the amount of new countings is extended each year. On an average Saturday, 24 different counting points are visited by our footfall counters, who count footfall on these points for 5 minutes, four times a day. The results are compared with the transaction numbers of several anchor stores to generate reliable footfall numbers for an average Saturday.

Footfall_Class

Description: Category within which the footfall number of this particular retail outlet falls.
                  The categories are based on the national results.
Source: Locatus
Example:

n.a.   *15000 <= FOOTFALL < 20000*
_____0 <= FOOTFALL < _5000 *20000 <= FOOTFALL < 25000*
_5000 <= FOOTFALL < 10000   *25000 <= FOOTFALL < 40000*
10000 <= FOOTFALL < 15000   *40000 <= FOOTFALL*

Last_Count

Description: Indicates when footfall was counted.
Source: Locatus

Segment

Description: The ration between the maximum footfall number of a retail area and the footfall number of a specific outlet determines the quality/score of this location. This is based on the division made by Drs E.J. Bolt in his book 'Winkelvoorzieningen op waarde geschat'.

Segment   *% of the busiest counting point*
A1-location   *75-100%*
A2-location   *50- 75%*
B1-location   *25- 50%*
B2-location   *10- 25%*
C-location   *5- 10%*

Source: Locatus
Example: A1
Comment: Every shopping centre has its own A, B, or C location. A comparison is therefore not easily made. An A1-location in Woerden is not comparable to an A1-location in Amsterdam.

3.3. Module 'Retail Plan'

A Retail Plan is a detailed map of a part of a town. The boundaries of a Retail Plan are usually equal to the boundaries of a shopping centre.

Retailplan

Description: The name of the digital map (Plan) where the outlet is located.

Example: Maastricht (Centrum)

Comment: Locatus' team of surveyors maps retail areas in the Netherlands, Belgium, and major European cities.

Source: Locatus

Retailplan Layer (Floor_Level)

Description: Indication for the level where the retail outlet is located within the Retail Plan, for example 0,0 (Ground level), -1,2 (Basement to Second Floor), or 1,1 (Only First Floor).

Example: 0,1

Source: Locatus

3.4. Module "Retail Risk Index"

The Retail Risk Index (RRI) sketches the risk profile of shops and retail areas in the Netherlands and Belgium. This information reduces uncertainty about the future of store locations. Below, you can find a short explanation on the variables

RRI
Description: Weighted average of the indexes below
Example: 78
Comment: There are five categories:

Index 130-150: Very high risk
Index 110-130: High risk
Index 90-110: Risk
Index 70-90: Limited risk
Index 50-70: Very limited risk

RRI_Outlet
Description: Performance of this particular building up until now.
Example: 82
Comment: There are five categories, see RRI

RRI_Street
Description: Development of the shops and stores in the immediate surroundings of the desired location.
Example: 85
Comment: There are five categories, see RRI

RRI_Retail_Activity
Description: Development of the sector in which this store operates.
Example: 102
Comment: There are five categories, see RRI

RRI_Market
Description: The relation between supply and demand of the sector in which this store operates (in the immediate surroundings).
Example: 94
Comment: There are five categories, see RRI

RRI_Class
Description: Category within which the RRI of this particular retail outlet falls.
Comment: There are five categories;

130 < RRI_index <= 150
110 < RRI_index <= 130
090 < RRI_index <= 110
070 < RRI_index <= 090
050 < RRI_index <= 070

RRI_Outlet_Class

Description: Category within which the RRI_Outlet of this particular retail outlet falls.

Comment: There are five categories;

130 < Outletindex <= 150
110 < Outletindex <= 130
090 < Outletindex <= 110
070 < Outletindex <= 090
050 < Outletindex <= 070

RRI_Street_Class

Description: Category within which the RRI_Street of this particular retail outlet falls.

Comment: There are five categories;

130 < Streettindex <= 150
110 < Streettindex <= 130
090 < Streettindex <= 110
070 < Streettindex <= 090
050 < Streettindex <= 070

RRI_Retail_Activity_Class

Description: Category within which the RR_Retail_Activity of this particular retail outlet falls.

Comment: There are five categories;

130 < Retail_Activity_index <= 150
110 < Retail_Activity_index <= 130
090 < Retail_Activity_index <= 110
070 < Retail_Activity_index <= 090
050 < Retail_Activity_index <= 070

RRI_Market_Class

Description: Category within which the RRI_Market of this particular retail outlet falls.

Comment: There are five categories;

130 < Marketindex <= 150
110 < Marketindex <= 130
090 < Marketindex <= 110
070 < Marketindex <= 090
050 < Marketindex <= 070

3.5. Appendix 1: Retail Floor Space

The Retail Floor Space (RFS) is attached to every retail outlet in the database. Shops without a RFS (according to Locatus' definition of a RFS) are not added to the database. However, an exception is made for permanent pitches such as fish stalls, flower stands, etc. These small shops are included in the Locatus database.

Locatus' definition of retail floor space is:

The floor space of a (shopping) unit that is either freely accessible to the public and/or directly visible. This includes spaces that are directly connected to sales.

Determining the RFS of shops can often be done without trouble. However, in practice, there are many possible situations where we cannot be sure whether a certain space belongs to the RFS.
An example. At the entrance of a large furniture shop, we find ourselves in front of a large pond. The space of this pond is added to the RFS, because the pond is part of the 'dressing' of the shop and therefore it also plays a role in the sales. The same can be said on, for example, a small coffee corner in a fashion store. An entire restaurant or lunchroom with its own substantial turnover (for example in IKEA or the Hema) is not added to the RFS.

The RFS is measured from a height of 150 cm. All spaces lower than 150 cm (slanted roofs, low basements) are not added to the RFS.

The following spaces are always added to the RFS:
- fitting rooms;
- window displays;
- space for shopping carts;
- entrances;
- spaces behind the counter;
- display cases;
- shelf spaces;
- space behind checkouts in supermarkets.

The following spaces are never added to the RF:
- storage, office, and warehouse spaces;
- toilets and kitchens;
- canteens;
- all spaces that are influenced by the weather (shop doorways, spaces under a lean-to e.g.);
- customer service spaces;
- production and repair spaces;
- staircases and elevator shafts;
- closed-off freezers and cooling spaces.

RFS are only measured for shops larger than 100 m2 (according to our own estimate).

We always note the source of the RFS in our database. When a retail outlet is measured, the Source in the database is changed to 'Measured'. When the RFS of a retail outlet is estimated, the Source in the database is changed to 'Observed'. The comment will clarify why there has been an estimate instead of an exact measurement. The shop might have been closed, or our surveyor did not get permission to measure the shop (in this case the note will say NP). In some cases, the shop owner will give us the exact space of the shop. The Source in database will then be 'Given'. Our surveyors do not take this type of information as a given and will, when in doubt, always try to get permission to measure the shop anyway.

3.6.   Appendix 2: Retail areas

Defining retail areas is in practice not a clear-cut task. Locatus' surveyors have to decide on the boundaries of a retail area. General coherence among shops is the most important indicator for retail areas.

The set guideline is that a retail area features:
•   permanent retail outlets with joined fronts, or, when this is not the case:
•   incidental retail outlets placed within a space of 50 meters from each other, or, when this is not the case:
•   retail outlets that have a clear synergy for each other and/or the shopping behaviour of customers shows a clear coherence between the shops.

When defining retail areas, we always try to look at retail areas from a consumers' point of view. Which shops are located within walking distance from each other? Can they be combined during a visit?

Many historical centres are usually defined by the local government. The boundaries are often set by the historical background of a town. Many (Dutch or Belgian) towns are built according to the 'fortress structure' that makes it relatively easy to define the inner city of that town. Well-known examples are Amsterdam, Groningen, Brugge, Leuven, etc. When defining retail areas, natural boundaries such as water, railways, parks, greenery, dikes, bridges, broad roads and many others are taken into account. Defining a designed shopping centre is usually fairly uncomplicated, too. Defining retail areas is usually only problematic with historically grown shopping streets that lead up to a town centre.

A retail area must contain at least 5 retail outlets, or 3 to 4 retail outlets where one of them is a supermarket with a RFS of at least 500 m2. Retail areas are categorized by our desk researchers and not our team of surveyors. The types of retail areas are different in the Netherlands and Belgium and they are continually changed and refined. The category of a particular retail area can be found in the Locatus Database.

3.7.   Appendix 3: Vacancy: what do we mean by this?

Figures on vacancy are usually used to get an impression of the vitality of certain retail area or for making a decision with regard to a new location. It is therefore essential to know exactly which definition is employed for the term 'vacancy'.

A retail premises is recorded as vacant if:
It can reasonably be expected that a shop, hotel and catering service or consumer-orientated services will return to the (unoccupied) premises. In addition, the criteria below apply.

Within a retail area:
•   The premises were used as a point of sale and are now genuinely empty.
•   The premises are currently no longer being used as a shop, hotel or catering facility, but the premises carry a sign saying that it is for sale/to let (as a point of sale).

**Outside of retail areas both criteria have to apply:**
•   The premises must have accommodated a point of sale *and* there must actually be a for sale/to let sign or a sold/let sign on the premises.

Duration of vacancy:
As of 21 May 2013, vacancy in the Netherlands has been divided into 3 categories within Locatus Online:

•   initial and temporary vacancy (maximum one year)

•   long term vacancy (between one and three years)

•   structural vacancy (three or more consecutive years)

Figure 1: Nature of the vacancy within the retail sector over time
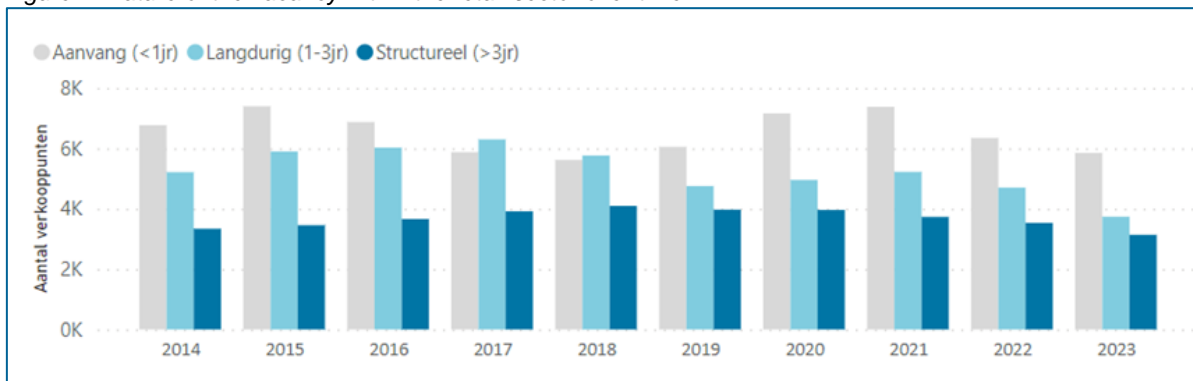
How to deal with the duration of the vacancy parameter:
Locatus employs a team of surveyors who check and assess all points of sale in the Benelux all year long. The result is an extremely up-to-date database. Locatus stands by the following quality norm: the information on a point of sale inside a retail area is not older than one year and the information on a point of sale classified as a solitary outlet is not older than three years.

One comment on the duration of vacancy: Locatus is dependent on the timing of our surveyors passing a building. It may therefore be the case that a building has been vacant for 11 months at the moment of our arrival. In these cases, we still record it as initial vacancy for another year, even though it will in fact become long term vacancy within a month.

Duration of vacancy is intended as an indicative parameter, providing you with a general idea as to how things are going with the vacancy in a certain region or in a specific retail area. It cannot be used as a precise measurement. For areas monitored only once every three years, this parameter is in fact unusable at detailed level.

3.8. Appendix 4: Consumer motive classification

The consumer motive classification is a new retail area classification. It is based on the motive that consumers indicate for their visit, and the size (retail floor space) of a retail area. This classification is taken from the International Council of Shopping Centers (ICSC).

In determining the visit motive of consumers, we have mainly asked 'what' consumers are doing in a particular retail area. Are they in the retail area for:
1. fun and relaxation, mainly doing non-daily shopping (comparison)
2. doing their daily shopping (convenience)
3. doing specialised shopping in areas like outlet centres or furniture stores (specialised).

Comparison
The retail area is aimed at Fun/Experience, Fashion & Non-Daily.
The retail floor space of the retail area is aimed at non-daily shopping for 70% or more.

Comparison – XL
>100.000m² retail floor space

Comparison - L
60.000 – 100.000m² retail floor space

Comparison - M
30.000 – 60.000m² retail floor space

Comparison - S
15.000 – 30.000m² retail floor space

Comparison - XS
5.000 – 15.000m² retail floor space

Convenience
The retail area is aimed at Run, Food & Daily.
The retail floor space of the retail area is aimed at daily shopping for 30% or more, and the supermarket sector is represented with more than 500 m².

Convenience - XL
>15.000m² retail floor space

Convenience - L
10.000 – 15.000m² retail floor space

Convenience - M
5.000 – 10.000m² retail floor space

Convenience - S
2.500 – 5.000m² retail floor space

Convenience - XS
1.000 – 2.500m² retail floor space

Specialised

The retail area is aimed at specialised shopping such as outlet centres and groups of furniture stores. PRO stands for Peripheral Retail Outlets; LSRO for Large Scale Retail Outlets.

Specialised – PRO/LSRO

Centre with a wide spectrum of shops in a variety of sectors.

Specialised – PRO

Centre with a large retail offer, but in a limited number of sectors. Think of cars, boats, caravans, furniture displays, garden centres, and DIY stores.

Specialised - Other

A special retail area than cannot be classified as PRO or LSRO.

Other

Retail outlets located outside any of the retail concentrations mentioned above fall in the group 'Other'.