

Climate Adaptive Copenhagen

Mid-September a Stadswerk delegation visited Copenhagen. During the three day trip climate adaptive projects were viewed and a Smart City living lab was visited. In addition, the Dutch ambassador organised a reception in which to facilitate and encourage the exchange of knowledge with Danish professionals. Sander Lubberhuizen and Maarten Loeffen, together with their fellow travellers, sought the secret towards the successful Danish approach.

Henk Swarttouw, the Dutch ambassador in Copenhagen pointed out and explained the differences in cycle behavior between Denmark and the Netherlands to the Stadswerk delegation. 'The Danish don't bike for the fun of it, or speak with one another while biking; instead they are focused on how fast they can get to their final destination.' We noticed this while looking around: lots of destination determined pedaling city-goers - half of which wearing a helmet, on their way to or from work.

Striving on, goal orientated

Striving on; goal orientated towards the final goal appears to be the most important point to the successful climate (adaptive) programs. All initiators and experts insisted that the realization of a climate-proof, CO₂-neutral Copenhagen, the long-term vision and consistent implementation are the key to success. In Copenhagen, they take this very seriously. Climate mayor, Morten Kabell is an important architect towards the climate approach. In an interview previously published in the Stadswerk magazine special regarding climate



◀ Amager Resource Centre (ARC), a waste to energy facility, with a ski slope on the roof.



◀ New bridge for cyclists and pedestrians.



◀ Lamp post with sensors.



▲ Public space in Copenhagen: always robust and sustainable.



change he outlines how a long-term vision, for which broad political and social support has been obtained, is the basis for the successful Copenhagen climate policy. This vision is clearly formulated and worked out in plans which are actually being accomplished. It may also be noted that the Danes are not afraid of sturdy government interference. Projects are conducted under the direction of the government or through partnerships with non-profit objectives. The government is cherished as a trustworthy party which monitors the aspired long-term perspective. 'The Danes feel as a shareholder of their country. This is a very important foundation towards the pursuit of sustainable quality, and for that the Danes pay a substantial amount of tax,' according to Ambassador Henk Swarttouw.

Improving the quality of public space

Public space with sustainable quality, Danish design, can be found in all of the chosen (robust) solutions. The actions taken to make the city climate-adaptive and CO₂-neutral improve the quality of the living environment, to which people are the central focus. To promote cycling, beautiful bicycle bridges are being built, streets are being augmented by means of greenery to allow rainwater retention, and even the new waste incineration plant, near to the city center, has an iconic design: with a ski slope on the roof. This waste burner generates electricity and supplies heat to the city district heating, of which 98% of the homes are connected to. The waste from the residents heats the homes.

Proud of the city

The focus on long-term perspective can also be heard through stories on the work-floor and seen on the surrounding streets. This in turn results in a longer



▲ The participants.

time-span in respect to planning, but also improves the connection between policy and design and management, leading to better (management) quality. And is there then no public-private cooperation at all in Copenhagen? Most certainly, Jørgen Abildgaard, Executive Climate Program Director of the '2025 Carbon Neutral' program: 'We work with the "Short arms lengths principle" in which we keep close contact with companies resulting in faster contact and creating greater involvement'. A remarkable difference compared to the Dutch practice, where the government aims at keeping others at arm's length. The Danish are proud of their city and know very well how to translate their pride into excellent branding. Not only does that 'sell' well to the outside world, it also motivates its own people and keeps them active and moving. For example, to further promote cycling creating shortcuts by means of beautiful bicycle bridges. The bicycle improves urban livability and promotes public health. Noteworthy is the absence of electrical bikes as well as free supervised bicycle parking. But in an effort to attract more commuters Copenhagen is also working on long-distance cycle paths. ●

Suggestions Copenhagen

Amager Resource Centre: waste to energy facility, close to the city center. A good example of Danes 'living on the edge': unconventional, intriguing combinations of features. Doll living lab: lighting the future of the green city. View intelligent street lighting in an extensive 'trial area'. Swimming in the harbor: active recreation in the heart of town.

Destination 2018?

The Stadswerk study trip was a great success voor the 30 participants and was appreciated and represented by nine municipalities, two water boards, one province and four engineering and consultancy firms who exchanged with each other and Danish colleagues extensive knowledge and know-how. Who we spoke with and what we saw can be found on our Stadswerk website. Next year we will also be organising a study trip. Let us know your destination preference via our online poll.