



AMSTERDAM
PLACEMAKING WEEK
OCT 10-14, 2017

City Expedition Almere The Heart of a New Town

11 October 2017



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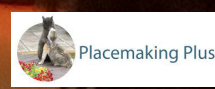
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Placemaking week opening City expeditions

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PLACEMAKING

Public space is located at the intersection of many global issues from health to sustainability, innovation to equity. Placemaking Week is all about leveraging this convergence.



1 ALMERE SHORT DESCRIPTION OF THE CASE STUDY

List of participants

Aisling Soden
Alexandra Woolmore
Anna Sommardal
Arwen Schram
Bob Hannan
Els Visser
Ewa Scheifes
Ijsbrand Heeringa
Jacqueline Bleicher
Jennie Suann
Jeroen Laven
Jouke van der Werf
Kyra
Mariana Alegre
Marleen De Groot
Mirjam Nijpels
Mizah Rahman
Peter Stair
Riya Nichani
Rob van Zwet
Sofia Koukoura

Who was present during the day

During the day, they were present 6 municipal officers of the city of Almere. Moreover, there were 24 participants from around the world, such as USA, United Kingdom, Romania, Netherlands, Sweden, Peru, and Greece. The scientific background and their professional of the participants varied; they were municipal officers, urban planners, anthropologists that working for NGOs, consultants, architects, designers etc. Thanks to their different backgrounds they all had different ideas to bring to the table and shared successful examples from their home country and hometown.

Description of the atmosphere during the day

The atmosphere during the day was great, as the different people collaborated for the placegame, while in parallel they explored the city center of Almere. The group was quite small so it was easy to mingle. After the presentation, there was time to work on ideas and concepts together, it was nice to exchange ideas and learn more about each other's talents. The participants found this workshop particularly inspirational, as they attempted to discover how they can activate a new planned city and they can use methods such as the placegame for the production of fruitful and feasible ideas for the public space of a city.

1 ALMERE SHORT DESCRIPTION OF THE CASE STUDY

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What kind of area

Almere is a new planned city with 196.932 inhabitants, whose first house was finished in 1976. The city is growing rapidly and is seeking ways to be a more livable city with enough jobs, entertainment, shops and infrastructure. So, the city center of Almere is inhabited by 4.214 people and has a growing number of students (at the level of highschool) and a growing of tertiary sector of the economy (997 companies at the city center). Our focus for this day was on the city center, where there are 7 squares that need redesigning to make it from a 'non' place to a place people actually like to be.

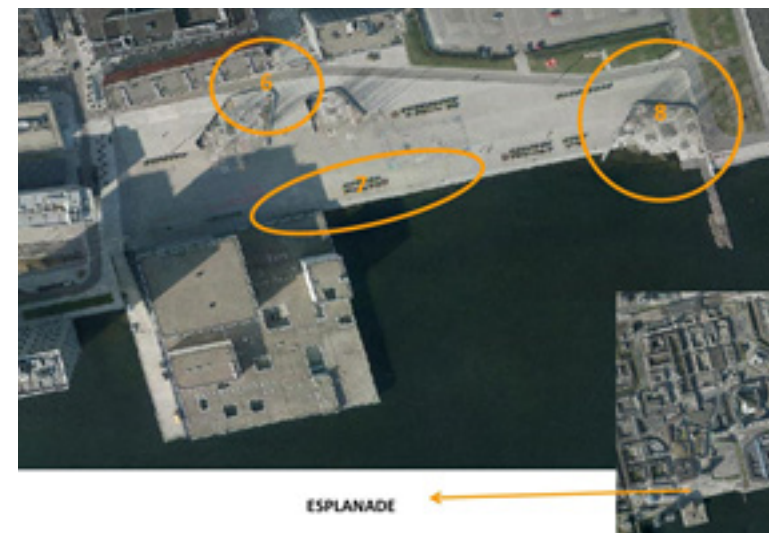
What goals were there for the day

The goal of this visit was to explore how the Almere centrum could become more attractive for its residents and its visitors from the city and the region. Hence, the main questions that were posed were how to create better squares that would strengthen the built and natural environment, so that the city center could become the 'heart of the city'. What can Almere do to improve these places and involve inhabitants in the process? The goals were to identify the challenges, collect solutions, see what they can do on the short & long term and give practical examples on how to collaborate with citizens, designers and municipality.



2 ALMERE CHARACTERISTICS OF THE AREA

The placegame was conducted in two public spaces, the square Esplanade and the Stadhuisplein (see picture 4, 5, 6, 7, 8 and 9) and the participants were divided in 6 groups; 1st group (1-2 site), group 2nd (3-4 site), group 3rd (5 site), group 4th (6 site), group 5th (7 site) and group 6 (8 site). So, it will be analyzed the two squares separately.



2 ALMERE CHARACTERISTICS OF THE AREA

Stadhuisplein

Strengths 1. Central	Opportunities 1. Heart of the city 2. Open space
Weaknesses 1. Flat place 2. Without use and identity 3. Lack of green and color 4. Lack of proper illumination	Threats 1. Transit area 2. Lack of sense of orientation

Esplanade

Strengths 1. Open space 2. Feeling of enclosure 3. Not pre-programmed space 4. Calm and Quiet	Opportunities 1. Not pre-programmed space 2. Flexible space 3. Blank canvas 4. Feeling of enclosure
Weaknesses 1. Windswept 2. Without use and identity	Threats 1. Monotexture 2. Lack of sense of orientation



PROPOSED SOLUTIONS



3 ALMERE PROPOSED SOLUTIONS Stadhuisplein

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Long term

1. Facade regeneration
2. Creating meeting points (more than benches)
3. Extend the library towards the square and engage it at the space of the square
4. Make a museum about the city
5. Install water element at the site, for instance fountain and pond
6. Put an art object that will operate as a landmark for the square or establish an open-air gallery with cooperation with the local artists and students
7. Add trees
8. Add soft and atmospheric lights
9. Having variety of shops and cafes instead of big chain shops
10. Having a physical and visual separation of the square, so that the big, open and empty space of Stadhuisplein would acquire a character and break the space into thematic.
11. Soften area by putting artificial grass throughout parts of the area
12. Creating a landmark at the area by putting Pop up installations that will change the use of the site such as pop - up cafe, book stores

Short term

1. Organize more events at the place
2. Structural coherence at the market
3. window fronts/window stickers
4. Add more color by signage such as banners that advertise events or banners that would welcome the visitors of the site
5. Add natural elements such as trees and flowers especially at the corridor of De Diagonaal
6. Add benches, but in an organic structure that will break the linearity of the place
7. Create a free creative space for music, art exhibitions and performance by adding different materials and different signage on the pavement
8. Organize spontaneous events and activities such as salsa lessons, open air cinema
9. Create a digital map that will indicate the position of the site at the context of the city
10. Reoriented the benches, so the change of their axes will help at the orientation of the individual

What partners do you need to take things to the next level (and how can they help?)

School, Library, Entrepreneurs, The bus company, Retail association, Municipality, Kunstlinie Almere Flevoland KAF, Foundation Art Center "Art Line".

3 ALMERE PROPOSED SOLUTIONS Esplanade

Long term

1. Have spaces that are hybrid and not in use
2. Create a wayfinding to connect the train station to the waterfront
3. Programming the lower level of the entrance of the parking, so that will attract more people
4. It can be added water elements at the space like fountains, so the landscape will be more playable and with this practice there will be created place for relaxing and play.
5. Also, a landmark is needed as the place is lacking of character.
6. Another idea is to install seatable steps nearby the water, so that the inhabitants and the visitor will enjoy the waterfront and performances will take place.
7. In order to attract more people at the site 7, there ought to be destination - uses such as bars, cafe, so that people will stay at the site more than one hour.
8. Sand can also be used to create an artificial beach that can be used especially during the summertime and also a place where boats can be placed.
9. Cleaning the water of the lake, so everyone can enjoy it.
10. Create a swimming pool
11. Install constructions that will break the wind

Short term

1. Create places to sit
2. Install kiosks and food trucks for kids and food trucks
3. Increase the opportunities to visit weekly the site by establishing a mix market for kids
4. Activation of the place by adding new land uses, for example performance at the sea front, urban beach by the sea and boat trips at the lake, kiosk and pop - ups cafe.
5. Temporary playground for the toddlers
6. Improvement of lightening was proposed especially for the nighttime.
7. Moreover, it was proposed video and media projections nearby the lake.
8. Soften the concrete walls by using paint art and green elements.

What partners do you need to take things to the next level (and how can they help?)

Food trucks operators, Schools at the higher education, Restaurants, Hospital, Theater and cinema, Restaurants and offices, other landowners such as of the parking space and the supermarket, Schools at the higher education, Recreational businesses (such as water sports clubs etc.), Construction companies

4 ALMERE CONCLUSIONS

The last years Almere has focused mainly on creating all the conditions for people to be able to live there, creating shops, infrastructure, hospitals, schools, etc. Now it's time to go from livable to comfortable living. Lively squares and a nice boulevard next to the water would definitely add to that, for locals (feeling of safety, public space open to everybody) but also for tourists. At the city center, the squares the goal is to create lively squares that not only are the 'heart' of the city, but also a place you want to be. For the waterside, the goal is to open the city up to the water, and to make it a visible where you can enjoy the view, food & drinks, but also just walk around. In order to achieve the abovementioned goals, it is needed to activate the citizens to interact with the urban public space of their city and built a better understanding and trust can be built between the citizens of Almere and the civil servants. So, the ideas that emerged from the last discussion during the brainstorming are the following:

- Formalize a group of stakeholders (and possibly of active citizens that show interest) through forum. Moreover, the maintenance of good public profile through website and email lists.
 - Create an online platform for citizens to upload their events for reclaiming their public space.
- Organize an annual challenge for new students of Hogeschool Windesheim Flevoland in order to create something for the public spaces of the city.
- Organize a competition for the best idea for Almere whose budget could be 5000 euros. So, that the citizens would be motivated to involve in matters of the city.
 - Put a marina next to the theater of small boats.
- Exploit the water element of the city especially nearby the square of Esplanade via organizing water sport events.
 - Part of the municipal budget would be decided by the neighborhood how it should be used.
- Co-organize with the citizens a workshop in a public space, where everyone can join in make something physical in the space.
 - Art festival led by the municipality



DE STAD OP OOGHOOGTE IN NEDERLAND

Samengesteld door Jeroen Laven, Sander van der Ham, Siënna Veelders & Hans Karssenber

blauwdruk

You can read more stories on
the city at eye level and placemaking in the Netherland in our
new book

“The City at Eye Level
in the Netherlands”

More info on

www.thecityateyelevel.com



City Expedition Almere The Heart of a New Town

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