

Green public courtyards

Status	Implemented in 2012
Location	The Netherlands, Gelderland, City of Nijmegen
Spatial info	Urban quarter/street; Inner city / city centre
Measure type(s)	Green open spaces; Water retention; Urban texture
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Description and Aim

Some courtyards in the city centre of Nijmegen consist mostly of brick, are used as parking space and get very hot in summer. The Korenmarkt, a former parking lot was turned into a multi-functional nice green park where the citizens can relax, meet and play. As the stony surfaces were removed, the rainwater is now drained at the square and kept away from the sewer channel.

The adaptation target set is to reduce heat in these courtyards, to change hot, stone courtyards into cool, green-blue places.

Adaptation to climate change

Direct impact is less heat in summer in the direct surroundings. Also better storage of rainwater is a direct effect of more green in these courtyards.

Problems addressed:

Heat wave, heavy precipitation / flooding

Receptor(s):

Population, built environment, infrastructure

Experiences

Functionality/ Further synergies/benefits:

Making stony courtyards green adds space for water retention in case of storm water and rain and recreational area for citizens, e.g. children can play with a water artwork which also cools the square during periods of heat. It makes the inner city more attractive and liveable, especially in the surrounding of the adjacent houses. Opportunities are created to enhance biodiversity. Archaeological findings such as cellars, graves and a chapel are also displayed, providing evidence of its mediaeval history.

Costs:

Costs are very dependent on the site, the design and the communication process. There is no general price per m². The Korenmarkt costs about € 200,-/m². The costs for the construction of the park and the fountains are € 250.000, besides that much money was spent on archeology survey and the participation process.

Funding:

International and local. International: Future Cities. Municipal: Programme "Green Allure Innercity".

Stakeholder involvement:

Housing corporations, citizens living close to the courtyards.

Acceptance:

To change the function of an inner city space from parking into green is a difficult process. People tend to value parking near their house higher than or as high as green. So it is important to take time to discuss these plans and let the inhabitants design the courtyard with the municipality so they are truly involved in the whole process.

Obstacles/restrictions:

Both parking space and urban green are important parts of the public space of a city. Plans to remove parking space to make a park can then lead to discussions that might result in keeping the parking space.

In another case Nijmegen didn't succeed in greening the whole parking space but only a part of it because inhabitants and their housing corporation weren't willing to pay more to park elsewhere.