



Leidsche Rijn (Utrecht - NL)

<p>Project description</p>	<p>Leidsche Rijn is a sustainable neighbourhood under construction situated in the West of Utrecht. It is the largest housing and industrial development in the Netherlands, being constructed on approximately 2100 ha of land. The constructions began in 1997 and the neighbourhood is expected to be completed in 2015. The new district will host 80 000 inhabitants in 30 000 dwellings, out of which 30% will represent social housing. 40 000 new jobs will be created and 720 000 m² of office buildings and 270 ha of industrial land will be provided. The local commercial area will be around 95 000 m² and recreational areas (such as large green spaces - 390 ha; an exhibition pavilion etc) will be planned for the residents.</p> <p>The development of Leidsche Rijn is not based on a previously-designed plan; instead the district is being designed and constructed neighbourhood by neighbourhood, an approach which enables the urban planners and architects to accommodate new developments.</p>	
	<p>The large scale of Leidsche Rijn offers them special opportunities – opportunities rendered visible in the great diversity in the architecture and the types of housing. Consequently each neighbourhood within the district possesses an individual identity, and its own particular ambience.</p> <p>Moreover Leidsche Rijn has a particularly rich history, and the archaeological remains from its past are carefully incorporated in the development of this district.</p>	
<p>Objectives</p>	<p>The objective of Utrecht is to be a carbon neutral city in 2030. This is a very ambitious goal, considering the growth of the city in the next few years. By 2012 Utrecht wants to reduce the CO₂ emission with 6% (Kyoto objective of the Netherlands).</p>	
<p>Driving factors</p>	<p>The population of Utrecht and the Netherlands is growing, thus there is an increasing need for housing. To relieve the housing shortage in the Utrecht region Leidsche Rijn is developed. To prevent an every day mobility migration a regional labour market is provided through the development of industrial and commercial areas.</p>	
<p>Financing structure</p>	<p>The total budget for the development of Leidsche Rijn is estimated at € 200 million. The goal of the total investment costs for the municipality of Utrecht is set at zero euro. Investments needed in the public space, such as schools or a energy sustainable system, is paid for by the house buyers, industrial and commercial utilities, project developers and other partners. Sometimes grants from third parties are received (i.e. national government, EU).</p>	
<p>Partners & Roles</p>	<p>Although the municipality has a leading role in the development in Leidsche Rijn, several project developers owned the land before the start of the development. Partnerships, gentleman agreements and contracts all are used to formalise the co-operation between these partners. In several projects residents have been played the leading role in the development of the project ('De Kersentuin'); in other projects the role of the residents was limited to buying the house.</p>	
<p>Results/Achievements</p>	<p>In the beginning of 2008 the neighbourhood contains already 14 000 dwellings and 36 000 inhabitants are already living in Leidsche Rijn. Leidsche Rijn is being built in accordance with the principles of sustainable construction, and large investments have been made in environmental protection and energy management – such as a rainwater collection system. The goal of this project is to retain the water in the green spaces of the area. In this way less capacity is needed for the water management. This also contributes to the sustainability in terms of not shifting problems to others areas. In case of Leidsche Rijn the</p>	

water burden is not shifted to other (low lying) area's in the neighbourhood. Originally the rain water (of less quality than tap water) was used in the households for washing machines and toilet flushing (two tap water system). However due to technical problems this part of the project was terminated to make sure no health issues were created. The objective of the two tap water system was to reduce the water consumption with 30%.

Energy

The low-energy street lighting and the low-energy demand of the houses will result in savings for both the Municipality and the residents. Moreover large areas of Leidsche Rijn are connected to the city's district heating system, thereby achieving a reduction in the demand for expensive fuels and a decrease in the level of emissions of carbon dioxide. A reduction of approximately 30% of CO₂ is foreseen due to the connection of the dwellings at district heating. However, with the growth of Leidsche Rijn the CO₂ production in the area will increase. In the long term more sustainable sources (biogas, biomass) for the district heating system should be used.

Transport

The parking space for a dwelling is foreseen to be between 1,45 and 1,75. The amount of parking places per dwelling depends also on the type of dwelling and its location compared to the public transport system. Leidsche Rijn is connected to the old city of Utrecht via several road bridges over the Amsterdam-Rhine canal.

Leidsche Rijn currently has two trainstations, Utrecht Terwijde and Vleuten. In the future a third station will be opened in Leidsche Rijn centre. Both stations are serviced every 30 minutes by the local train between Utrecht Centraal and The Hague. Furthermore, 2 new bus lines and several cycle tracks are being developed.

The ultimate network will not be completed for some years to come; however accessibility is one of the Municipality's spearheads, and consequently the local authorities are making a great deal of effort to provide for these facilities.



<p>Difficulties faced and solutions found</p>	<p>All kind of difficulties have been faced varying from technical problems in the two tap water system or the reality of every day (not so) sustainable life. Technical problems are most of the times easy to overcome, but the reality of every day life is a much more persevere problem to overcome. In the Leidsche Rijn case all was set on a sustainable transport system (public transport, regional labour market) however the vast majority of the households owns at least one or more cars creating a huge parking problem in the area. Utrecht choose to make parking places to measure for specific dwellings. This was also done with others sustainable aspects of Leidsche Rijn, such as waste management in the area.</p>
<p>Friendly advice to those who want to build new eco-districts</p>	<p>With the development of Leidsche Rijn the original sustainable objectives were tuned down during the development of the dwellings and other sites. This points out that the development of a sustainable area demands high ambitions, long term visions and perseverance for the set backs. Fortunately more and more people realise that the profits of an eco-district go beyond the eco-efficiency, but also has positive effects on health issues, the quality of the neighbourhood and economic growth of the city (especially with increasing energy prices).</p>
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