City Expedition Utrecht
Healthy Urban Living

11 October 2017
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 UTRECHT SHORT DESCRIPTION OF THE CASE STUDY

Who was present during the day
The group was a mix of people from the Municipality of Utrecht, some partners they working with in the different area’s, and people from different countries (China, Australia, USA, Canada, England, Greece, Spain, Poland, The Netherlands...). A lot of them already did work with placemaking or are planning to.

Description of the atmosphere during the day
The group was really exited and curious during the tour and the placemaking program. A lot of questions where asked to learn for the process and experience of Utrecht, especially about the transformation around the Central Station Area. Some visitors want to use concrete lessons for their own cities. Visa Versa the visitors add their own knowledge and experiences to inspire Utrecht in their placemaking processes at the three locations. Interested conclusions where: many free underground bike parking lots will help open up crowded sidewalks, people tend to accept the strategy to use less space for cars (a six-lane thoroughfare will be shrunk to 3 lanes so they can bring back the canal, large ground floor parking-lots becoming building area’s etc.). Bit by bit commercial partners discover the value of better use of the public spaces.

List of participants

- Eline Malleret
- Harold Kuan
- Ina Anderson
- Dana Gibson
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- Michael Duindam
- Lisa Adkins
- Lia Gudaitis
- Andrew Pask
- Deborah Kuh
- Katharine Czarnecki
- Adam Green
- Kamari Durley
- Sushila Kukathas
- Haya Mani
- Wout Ritzema
- Lindsey Arenberg
- Wai Hung LUK
- Paul Krueger
- Ewald Dijkstra
- Panagiota Zachariadou
- Carolina Huffmann
- Julia Ubeda
- Vivian Doumpa
- John Van der Knaap
- Jan Nederveen
- Lisa Vlug
- Martine Sluijs
What kind of area

We started the day at the Municipality of Utrecht, which is located near the Central Station. Peter Steijn (Theme Director Healthy Urban Living) gave a presentation about the current identity of the City, the future prospects and challenges, their vision about Healthy Urban Living, and how to cope with city density and smart use of urban space. Tjerk van Impelen showed us the area around Central Station. He explained the strategy for the transformation, the impact of this development for the city, the process and how partners started to collaborate. One of the main issues is the transformation of big open parking spaces, roads and traffic nodes to a new business and living district, and how to add healthy elements (green, improving the routes for hiking and bicycle). He showed us one of the underground bicycle storages, the parking space issue and the bridge over the train tracks. After the tour, the groups split up and went to three different areas.
What goals were there for the day

Utrecht is developing really fast. The overall question was: “how can we grow fast and stay a resilient and healthy city?” After an introduction the group split up and got three different challenges to discuss:

Leidsche Rijn – Berlijnplein “How can we develop a cultural program at “Berlin Square” that is attractive for (inter)national visitors, public from Utrecht City Centre as well as to the people from the neighborhood, and results in an specific identity/image “Westplein - station area. “How can temporary measures (activities, spatial temporary improvements, etc.) in the next three years help us to transform Westplein, mainly a traffic node, to a great place to stay and enjoy: “Lombokplein”

Park Transwijk. How can we use Park Transwijk as a great place for all people, also the people who live in less wealthy neighborhoods. And how can we use placemaking.
## CHARACTERISTICS OF THE AREA

### Berlijnplein

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strengths</th>
<th>Opportunities</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>- Already working with artist The collaboration with RAUM and Utrecht</td>
<td>- The area is still in development, so there is nothing happening yet</td>
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<td>- The place for the new building is really flexible</td>
<td>- Use the creative talent of Utrecht, the neighborhood and try to involve kids</td>
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<td>- Money to develop the area</td>
<td>- Work together with companies with an international network</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Weaknesses</th>
<th>Threats</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>- The Municipality doesn’t have a real vision yet.</td>
<td>- The area is not developed yet, so there is not a clear vision what the new inhabitant would like to have.</td>
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<td>- The distance to Utrecht City Centre</td>
<td>- The area is really windy for outside activities</td>
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<td>- No real identity</td>
<td>- Lots of goals with different scales</td>
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### Westplein

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strengths</th>
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<tr>
<td>- Strategic and visible position in the city</td>
<td>- Temporary use of the space for activities</td>
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<td>- A community in the nearby neighborhood (Lombok) working with artists</td>
<td>- The parking lot for bicycles will be removed, so extra space will become available</td>
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<td>- Money and strategy to develop the area</td>
<td>- Using the green spot</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Crossing the road in the direction of the city center is not possible</td>
<td>- Disappearance of green space in the future</td>
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<td>- Less accessible area for children due to the traffic</td>
<td>- No connection with the buildings around the space</td>
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<td>- People from the new buildings just across the street are not involved</td>
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### CHARACTERISTICS OF THE AREA

#### Park Transwijk

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>- Great green park</td>
<td>- A potential green park for the city</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Lots of green space and nice parts</td>
<td>- A good place for healthy activities</td>
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<td>- Great mix of partners and involved people</td>
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<tr>
<td>- No real identity besides a place for a yearly festival</td>
<td>- Without efforts at can become a unsafe, contaminated place.</td>
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<td>- Park seems a bit fragmented</td>
<td>- Lack of diversity in use</td>
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<td>- No real money for development</td>
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PROPOSED SOLUTIONS
Long term

Berlijnplein
1. Give artist-in-residence a place
2. Use food to create togetherness with the neighborhood
3. Program for kids

Westplein
1. Restore the crossing of the street in the direction to the city centre
2. Longer term: make a building in a “H” form creation intimate ground yards and a roof yard

Park Transwijk
1. Clear maingates
2. Make a heart in de Park en realign main routes from the maingates
3. Enhance East-West connections
4. Create a larger / enhances active space in the wider area around the existing gym equipment
5. Provide a walkway through the wilderness

Short term

Berlijnplein
1. Look for interesting examples.
2. Start with researching what the new neighborhood wants.
3. Involve artist from the beginning
4. Look for a focus in the program, it is not possible to do everything

Westplein
1. Temporary Skate-area
2. Work on a hybride zone in front of the Mosque to make connection between the building and the public space. Use pots to make the area more comfortable (and as unofficial places to sit on)
3. Add artificial sheeps in the greenery and improve elements in the garden like benches
4. beach and various programming, additional crosswalks, private quiet area, rose and sculpture area

Park Transwijk
1. Simple improvements to have a better overview: remove or lower fences
2. Add sport equipments and
3. Work with local community to rename and create a new identity (local competition?)
4. Ask locals to refurbish the seat or replace them with mosaic seats

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

Berlijnplein - The Municipality needs to create a group with creative people in Utrecht to create a clear vision of which direction they would like to go. And start to look for interesting collaborations.

Westplein - A combination of artist, investors and people who make strong businesscases and a growing community.

Park Transwijk - Build a local community for placemaking.

CONCLUSION
The overall day was really interesting and inspiring. The Municipality experienced the value of sharing challenges with outsiders to get new insights.
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 Utrecht
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