

Leiden: Lakenpark

Hard parkingarea transforms into Green Lakenpark

In the near future we will spend more time on natural soil. Using soil, grass and plants, we will transform streets and squares into a sponge. A natural sponge that absorbs water, rain and heat. And we will need this, because global warming is causing more and longer periods of intense heat and drought and more intense downpours. Lakenplein (Katoenpark, Lakenplein and Kaarsenmakersplein) will respond to this with a significant green impuls. Both Lakenplein as Kaarsenmakersplein are currently used as parkingspaces. That will change. The parkingspots will disappear as will the traffic route that crosses these squares.



Meeting requests from surrounding residents

The design meets the requests and desires of the surrounding residents and other groups of interest. The current situation has 80 percent of Lakenplein hard and 20 percent green. In the new situation 60 percent will be green and 40 percent will be hard. There will be a new green park: The Lakenpark, as part of the Singelpark in Leiden. The new design for Laken park consists out of a green, waving landscape with lots of trees, green and space to play. By alternating in tree types and structure, a lot of biodiversity can develop. It creates an opportunity for children to get to know local plants and animals and their natural processes and the measures we take to fight climate change.

Natural soil works like a sponge

In the park we will plant close to 80 different types of local trees, grasses and other types of plants. Some will be edible, other will just be a pretty sight, but they will always be local and with a high contribution to biodiversity. The trees will offer shade and cooling on hot summer days, they will provide cleaner air and contribute to a better absorption of water during heavy showers. In the park a natural wadi (infiltration area) will be created, a place where rainwater is collected and where it can slowly seep into the ground. With this wadi in combination with other adjusted and diverse types of vegetation, will contribute to the biodiversity of the city. This natural soil plan will turn the soil into a type of sponge that will help battle problems with water and will provide cooling in summer. It will also play a role as an ecological transition area between the neighbourhood and the rest of the city.

The high levels of vegetation offer shelter to small mammals, amphibians and insects such as butterflies and grasshoppers. A consciously designed and consecutive green-blue veining of the city has a large impact on urban biodiversity and quality of life. A more varied plantation - with robust blends of grass to play on and that can withstand longer periods of droughts, mixed with a high level of plantation that enhances the flora and fauna - make the wadi even more attractive. The wadi will have more functions besides water management. More plants will create a more rooted soil, which will be more water absorbent long term.

Intensive participation trajectory

The design came about as a result of an intensive participation trajectory with residents from the area, parties of interest, Friends of the Singelpark and the playground association. Through a panel of representatives, information sessions, workshops, a conference and children participation a lot of enthusiasm and support has been created amongst the people.

As a result of this participation a strong preference became clear for a car-free, green, biodiverse park, with a place to play / a playground. Right across the park there is a Street for play, a squared, swinging path, over which you can cycle, skate, play soccer. Along the path, at some spots, there will be an elevation on which you can sit. In the Katoenpark the enclosed playground will be replaced by a publicly accessible, natural playground. Besides listening to people from the neighbourhood, we have also listened to the children and involved their say in their neighbourhood. This is how we make our city greener!

Cost

The construction costs of this design come down to € xxx. The sponge will contribute €70.000 euro.