Inspire and be inspired: an innovative, crowdsourced design of the Spatial Structural Vision 2030 ‘Room for Ghent’ (Belgium)

PHILIPPE VAN WESENBEECK
Urban and regional planner, director of the Planning Administration of the City of Ghent

GUY VLOEBERGH
Urban and regional planner at the private planning company OMGEVING cvba, lecturer at Antwerp University, department of design sciences, master Urban Planning
GEOGRAPHIC LOCATION
GEOGRAPHIC LOCATION

Netherlands

Ghent

Antwerp

Brussels

Leuven
GHENT LOOKS FORWARD TO AN AMBITIOUS AND INNOVATIVE FUTURE

The city of Ghent boasts a strong tradition in strategic urban planning.

- The current Spatial Structure Plan Ghent (2003) is still accurate
- Some aspects requires renewed insights
- Some emphases and priorities need to be revised
- The result will be a renewed plan:
  - the Spatial Structural Vision 2030 ‘Room for Ghent’
SOCIAL AND SPATIAL CHALLENGES FOR THE FUTURE

- The liveability challenge: transform the city into a liveable environment for young and old with sufficient and widespread greenery areas
- The climate challenge: sustainable and climate proof spatial development
- The demographic challenge: tackle the growth and altering composition of the population in a sensible way
- The mobility challenge: warrant a selective access of the city and its region
- The economic challenge: spatial support of the growing, changing and innovative economy
OPTING FOR A CROWD-SOURCED DESIGN OF THE SPATIAL PLANNING

- A human-centered approach means:
  - pay more attention than before to the everyday spatial planning on behalf of the citizens
  - not only involve experts, sector organisations and decisionmakers, but also give citizens an active role in the spatial policy
- Social scientists and professionals must be involved in spatial policy processes
OPTING FOR A CROWD-SOURCED DESIGN OF THE SPATIAL PLANNING

Broad social debate

- Consultation and feedback runs like a thread throughout the process
- You need a project team representing various municipal services
- The ‘think tank’: a diverse group of approx. 30 broad-minded Ghent citizens
OPTING FOR A CROWD-SOURCED DESIGN OF THE SPATIAL PLANNING

Creating involvement of the broader audience

- Creating ‘urgency’
- Initiate a broader communication trajectory and a social debate
OPTING FOR A CROWD-SOURCED DESIGN OF THE SPATIAL PLANNING

Links to existing initiatives - pilot projects

- Billboards in the Ghent cityscape
- District of the month
- Internal communication, lunch meetings, ...
- The question of the week
- The ‘spacemaker of the month’
- Citizens can suggest ideas that can become ‘pilot projects’
Key findings:
1. The Structural Vision Ghent 2030 is innovative as a crowd sourced structure plan: co-creation and behavior management in view of its implementation.
2. Content related it is innovative because the plan deploys the bicycle as a basis for urban development, boasts the ambition of a 100% space efficiency and fits in the strategic and financial long-range plan of the city.

Question for discussion
What is the role of the urban planner in a crowd sourced planning process?