

Urban Task Force Schipholregion

Flash report

19 april 2006

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1. Introduction

This is a 'Flash Report' on the findings of the Urban Task Force (UTF) Schipholregion. A Flash Report is a short UTF-report with main findings and conclusions.

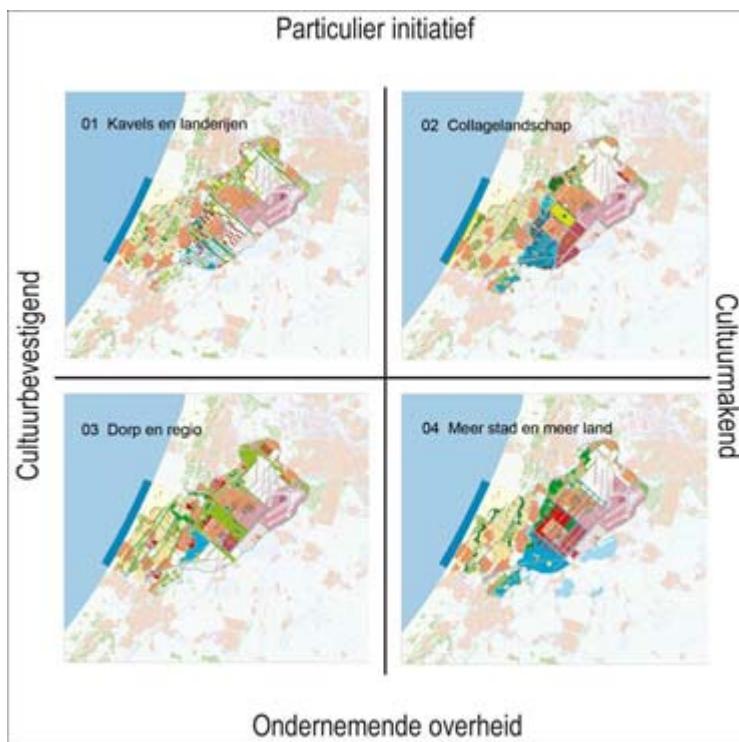
The Urban Task Force Schipholregion is an initiative of the Gebiedsuitwerking Haarlemmermeer-Bollenstreek and Isocarp. The Gebiedsuitwerking is a planning initiative of regional and local authorities at the request of the minister of planning and housing.



The area

The goal of the initiative is to produce an integrated spatial plan or vision for this region for the years to 2020, comprising 10-20.000 housing units, business development, leisure, infrastructure and water excess storage areas for 1.000.000 m³. The area is located between

Schiphol Airport, the North Sea coast, Amsterdam and Leiden/Den Haag. One of the main issues is to look into the possibilities for housing, giving the noise and development restrictions caused by nearby Schiphol Airport.



Four models for development, drawn by the Gebiedsuitwerking-team

The Urban Task Force was asked to give reflections on the preliminary results of the Gebiedsuitwerking. This was organized as a 2,5 day workshop with participants of the Gebiedsuitwerking (Municipality Haarlemmermeer, Province of North-Holland) and 6 members of Isocarp.

2. Observations

- In the 1990's the Netherlands set and promoted highly advanced environmental policies. It seems the environmental focus and its associated advanced position has disappeared completely. In management and planning of transportation congestion is a main issue, the environment is not (any more).



Flowers in the Bollenstreek

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Amsterdam is part of the Randstad, a mega-city-region (MCR) that can be understood as a cluster of towns and cities that is increasingly functionally interconnected across geographical space through virtual communications and travel. The driving force to form a 'hub' in the global knowledge economy is indicated by the interrelationship between informational 'flows' of Advanced Producer Services and urban morphology. Looking at the interdependencies between the highly globally connected MCR cores and their surrounding areas, it is the Amsterdam functional urban area within the Randstad that is the only core area that has a clear overrepresentation of internationally operating multi-location firms. Thus from a national spatial policy point of view, it is crucial to understand the tendency that within each MCR there is only one primary city that can serve as a hub to the global knowledge economy. Therefore large-scale infrastructure investments should be focused on maintaining and re-inforcing the primary competitive role of the Amsterdam urban area.



Fort Vijfhuizen

- Amsterdam scores well as a 'creative city'. But a recent survey by a German management magazine, comparing European cities, rated the Amsterdam Area as particularly poor for family life. Amsterdam scores 0 on 'Familienfreundlichkeit' (Manager Magazin, 12-2005, 'Die Beste Stadte fur Ihre Karriere').

- Why are there so many traditional office parks in Haarlemmermeer? No attempt seems to have been made to create mixed urban environments.



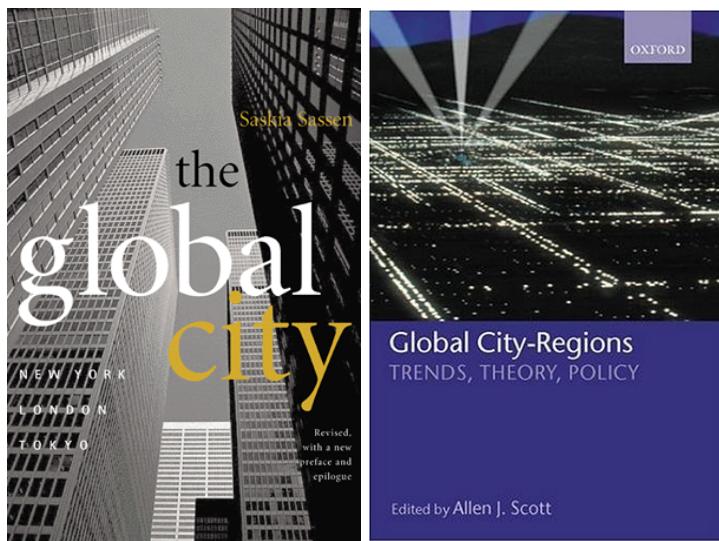
Flowers are big business

3. Recommendations

- **Global City Region**

Urban Regions are increasingly in direct competition with each other. With their playing field shifting to an international level; urban regions such as the Amsterdam Region have become Global City Regions. A main task of planners in such Global City Regions is to specify strategic projects and developments that contribute to the international competitiveness of the region.

This approach is lacking in the Gebiedsuitwerking. The plan as presented seems to be a product of 'inward planning', without a clear position on the development of the Amsterdam Region as a Global City Region. To be more specific: the area is also the suburb of the Airport Corridor between Schiphol and Amsterdam, and of Schiphol Airport and the Zuidas in particular. The communities that will be created have to compete for inhabitants with (often gated) communities in other Global City Regions.



- **Stop & Go**

The proposed developments seem little related to issues of local or regional identity. Both areas, Bollenstreek and Haarlemermeer, seem to be spatially scattered and lack an explicit spatial quality. The development in Haarlemermeer is characterized by 'Stop & Go'-processes, planning on a small scale in stead of the urban area as a whole. In the case as presented the geographic delineation of the current plan was questioned. Is this a functional unit? Is it a next stop & go move? What does it contribute to Hoofddorp as a new town?

To create an environment that is of international quality standards, impulses are needed. The 'Stelling van Amsterdam', being a Unesco World Heritage site, and the water aspect and the grid of the polder offer opportunities for this.

A planning process should be designed that incorporates both flexibility and a clear strategy of how to contribute to the Global City Region and to the development of a bold identity that the international positioning of the region calls for.

- **Environment**

Two issues are important here: The first concerns nitrogen dioxide emissions. European guidelines in terms of local air quality are exceeded. If the problem is as at Heathrow, it arises from a combination of aircraft emissions and emissions from surface transport. The latter has the bigger impact certainly, hence an emphasis at Heathrow airport on 'capping' car movements through a green travel plan.

The second concerns CO₂ and other greenhouse gas emissions. The Gebiedsuitwerking seems not to address the issue of CO₂ and other greenhouse gas emissions (or environmental sustainability in general). If this is to be addressed in combination with air traffic growth, the demand for individual surface transport has to be managed far better. Coupling this with the promotion of efficient public transport, (and walking and cycling) is

relevant. The trick will be to site those new developments in places where people can get to work by means other than the car, while also making those alternative means attractive.

- **Transportation**

A transportation concept is missing in the plan as presented. The relatively small amount of housing units that will be added will probably make it unfeasible to finance major public transport infrastructures. Haarlemmermeer/Bollenstreek being a region with a disproportionately high percentage of car ownership may require specific solutions. One of these solutions might be to connect the private car system in the best possible way to the existing (and improved?) rail system. This can be done by investing in the East-West regional roads and by creating excellent car access and parking facilities for the North-South rail systems (both the Leiden-Haarlem and Leiden-Schiphol railways).

Additionally car access to the Zuidtangent bus system should be improved, in combination with increase of the frequency and network of the Zuidtangent.

In countries like the USA practices have been developed with transportation demand management. Caps on the use of private cars in airport areas are not uncommon (amongst others at Zurich and Heathrow airport). A comprehensive approach is necessary that embraces strategic transport planning by the municipalities, and traffic/CO₂/NO_x reduction targets. The measures to be taken might involve increased investment in public transport funded perhaps through congestion charging, the encouragement of car sharing, and green travel plans by companies and other travel generators.



Schiphol AirportCity

- **Identity**

Keeping in mind the potential of such a development, the present planning approach lacks a clear objective. This region can aim to be a paradigm of futuristic sustainable development at a global scale and a strategic vision that leads up to this seems to be the need of the hour.

At the regional scale the idea of the green port needs to be linked with development of this region. Already a rich landscape with a World Heritage Site, the bulb growing region, an international airport, existing waterways and proximity to Amsterdam, this potential can be developed into a unique environment suited to a high end lifestyle at a global scale.

A major aspect of the future planning of this region will be the integration of a highly qualitative recreational corridor. The idea of the strategic green, its exact extents, uses to be incorporated as well as design framework need to be carefully laid out keeping within the projected global image.

Therefore along with providing state of the art facilities, the environmental design could make use of existing and new waterways and integrate the old defense line 'Stelling van Amsterdam' into the cultural landscape thus catering to a global clientele using local distinctiveness. The Netherlands could regain a strong environmental position by promoting sustainable development schemes and the like, adding to the global competitiveness of Haarlemmermeer-Bollenstreek.



The Urban Task Force at work in Fort Vijfhuizen

- **Bird's eye view**

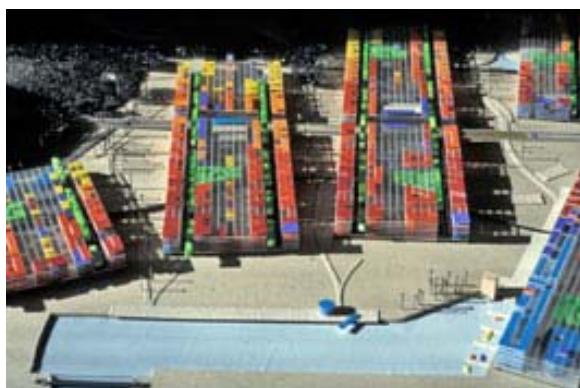
Having a holistic vision for the region would benefit not only the planners and designers but most importantly serve as a means for communicating their ideas to government agencies and stakeholders. Thus the required amount of awareness and interest imperative to the success of such a project could be created. A region nearby a globally linked airport

could take advantage of its proximity already at the very first glimpse. There are few sites which can promote themselves already upon arrival or departure from the air. Within the Schipholregion Amsterdam city is easy to recognize. The (southern part of) Haarlemmermeer could become a highly recognizable landscape. The area can make itself remarkable from its under sea level up to the visitor in the airplane: by daytime while strengthening its original and symbolic shape of the land use and water irrigation pattern – main canal, side canals and Stelling -, and during nighttime the same pattern can be highlighted by special marks and spots.

Attraction from the bird's eye perspective in a plane country could become a very unique characteristic of the area in development, contributing to the global marketing of the area.

- **Approach**

Form follows strategy. The (regional?) strategy in the context of the Global City Region development could be leading in determining the market focus: for whom are you going to develop what? What will be the balance between housing for expats and locals, knowledge workers and blue collar workers? What kind of lifestyles should be planned for? Is this the project to improve the family-friendly image of the Amsterdam Region? What kind of lifestyles will be planned for? How can this be translated into location concepts or marketing concepts? The housing scheme should call for a variety of different accommodation types (international, local, with family, without family, knowledge worker, blue collar, different ethnicities), for different needs (permanent, temporary, primary or secondary residence, and for the different household sizes (single, couple, children, young, old, etc.).



IBA Emscher park

The area seems to have a huge potential to create new mixed use districts, with ready access to the park and water areas. The older office parks have potential for mixed use redevelopment.

The IBA Emscher Park in the Ruhr Area is an example of how a development concept and a targeted marketing strategy can result in a successful development approach

(www.iba.nrw.de/main.htm). It also shows how a network of different projects contributes strategically to the development of the region. The ‘juice’ to make the project appealing ('cool') is lacking in the case of Gebiedsuitwerking.

Further, it is difficult to see how the proposed plan addresses the specific senses of urgency in Haarlemmermeer (quality of life, amenities, infrastructure) and Bollenstreek (future of the bulb sector).



Amsterdam Zuidas

- **Governance**

The connection of the Gebiedsuitwerking with the airport planning project (and the Mainport project) is missing. Some crucial parties are not at the table (or are hardly visible in the process): Amsterdam (Zuidas), Schiphol Airport, the National Government. This reduces the ambition of the development and illustrates the weak coordination between developments within this Global City Region.

Designing a process, involving key stakeholders of the Global City Region might be a key focus for the next stage of the project.

4. Conclusions

So, improvement of the Gebiedsuitwerking draft-plan seems to be possible. Key issues are the international perspective of the Amsterdam Global City Region, an innovative environmental and transportation approach, elaboration of the issues related to the identity of the area (landscape, cultural heritage, bird's eye view), a governance approach and last but not least, an innovative and appealing image of the project.

