Ghent, Innovative Strategic Urban Development: New Transitions in the City and along Old Dockyards.

Agnieszka Zajac, Project Leader, Ghent, Belgium
- Surface area 15.643 ha incl Ghent Canal
- 259.281 inhabitants (2017)
- Appr. 500,000 inhabitants metropolitan area
- Over 75,000 students
- 189,123 jobs (2016)
- Job ratio 117.7%
HOW DO WE GROW WISELY?

- **Smart densification and aerating**: doing more with the available space
- **Cleverly interweaving functions**: we create proximity and microcentrality
- **Stimulating sustainable mobility**: a network for pedestrians/cyclists
- **Green and water facilities**
- **The human focus**
TRANSITION INTO...

a most liveable city of Belgium by:

- A strong tradition of strategic urban planning
- An innovative, city centered design of the Spatial Structural Vision 2030
- Small scale ‘acupuncture’ interventions
- Discovering and re-using the water-backbone
Ghent was once a flourishing port city...

- Re-discovering of the water-backbone
- Second life as the new generator
- Sustainable water infrastructure as the basis for city evolution and urban planning
Water in the city - a rediscovery
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Slower means faster!
Acupuncture interventions
REVITALISATION of the Old Dockyards
MASTERPLAN OLD DOCKYARDS 2004

Office for Metropolitan Architecture (OMA)
Concept: Satey - model

1.500 houses
Social housing (20%)
Affordable housing (20%)
Free market housing (60%)

Offices, school,
kinder garden,
sport hall, shops, ...

New inhabitans: ca 3000

Docks: ca 13 ha

Area: ca 16,5 ha:
Recreation zone: ca 10 ha
Terrain: ca 6,5 ha
Public Partnerships

To increase mobility and livability:

- The new city ring road
- Pedestrian and bicycle bridges (2)
- Renovation of the unstable quays walls (2 km)
- Realization of the docks promenade (4 km)
- Creation of new parks (6 ha)
- Brownfieldsite - decontamination vs urban planning
Batavia and Matadi bridges
5 km of quay walls - urgent renovation
Public spaces – 24 ha

Surface area of 3 neighborhood parks, residential green areas, quay promenades and docks
Brownfield: towards an integrated remediation
Re-use of heritage
Pending the development, we offer film, exhibitions, theatre, sports... for the neighbourhood and for Ghent’s inhabitants:

- **DOKvzw (2011)**
- **GRINDBAKKEN (2012)**
- **SMOKE& DUST (2013)**
- **KANGROEN (2013)**

> The Old Dockyards already become a part of the city!
Gravel pits as public space

Before

After
Waterfront: a dream for a developer or for the citizen?

Realization in phases - Search for support – Slow urbanism – urban planning for people?
Public Private Partnerships

High Ambitions:
• Programme (social & affordable houses)
• Mobility (walk, bike, drive)
• Sustainability (recup of grey & black water)
• Co-creation & housing
Synergy between the energy and re-use of the water
What's turning smart cities into emotional cities?

Dare to leave a white space, without a decision, without a destination, without a vision but as an open space and an open mind for an experiment and unknown!
Conclusions and Lessons Learned

- Complexity / time / financial crisis => friends?
- The perfect equilibrium between the urban planning and the economical reality?
- Participation and co-creation?
- Courage + Dream => Sustainability?

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