

27 August - 4 September 2018, Ghent (BE)

International Summerschool 'Green Climate Axes in Ghent'



KU LEUVEN



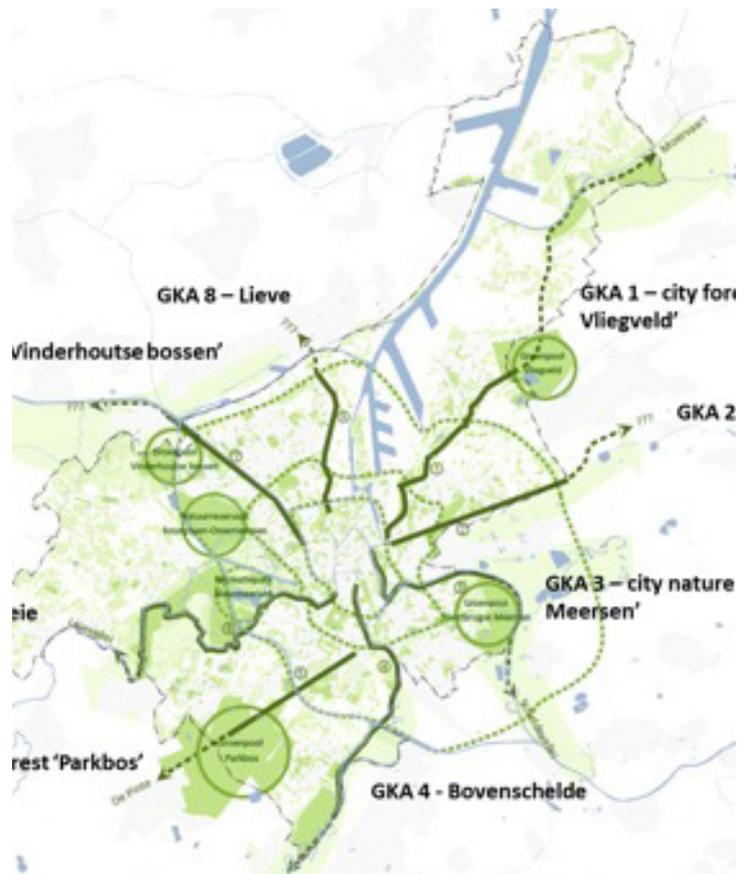
Cities are extremely vulnerable for climate change. Qualitative blue green networks help them adapt to these changes. The notion 'blue' in blue green networks refers to water retention and water discharge, 'green' to less sealed surface and to extra trees and shrubs in order to reduce heat stress and air pollution. The blue green networks not only help cope extreme weather conditions, they also contribute to an attractive and child friendly living environment as they lead nature to the city and bikers from the city center to the more massive green elements and urban agriculture in the fringe.

Policy context

Already at the end of the 1980s, the City of Ghent introduced the concept of 'green axes' as connecting elements within a city-wide green structure. The axes were meant to provide in an optimum distribution of existing as well as new recreational elements: more intensive recreational elements such as sports grounds, and more extensive recreational uses such as hiking, jogging and biking, water sports, allotment gardens, residential recreation, larger and smaller green infrastructure at neighborhood level and agriculture. Next, the construction of underpasses and bridges should guarantee uninterrupted separated bike and walk ways along these axes.

Eight green climate axes are currently mentioned, covering more than 50 kilometers throughout the city. They form a coherent ensemble with five massive green poles in the fringe and with the green recreational rings in the city. Some of them are planned in specific land use plans, parts of other axes are already realized on the field through specific green development and management projects or as an addition to infrastructural projects.

Some of the green climate axes are visible today, such as GKA3 and GKA5. Some green climate axes, however, remain a real challenge. For GKA1, GKA2 and GKA8, the search for a qualitative trajectory is still open... GKA7, on the other hand, runs through a very built-up area.



Design challenge

It has become very clear in Ghent that it takes much time and a lot of small and fragmented actions and projects to make green climate axes become real. Research by design combined with a grounded vision on the future green management is a key element in the development of these axes. Plan defines the following starting points.

- Water infrastructure, green infrastructure and quick, continuous bike connections are the carriers of the green climate axes.

- The green climate axes are like necklaces with a diversity of large and small beads in the form of green and public spaces, and with the bike and the water infrastructure as the cord that guarantees orientation, readability and continuity.

- The meaning of the green climate axes as landscape elements is strengthened through green infrastructure development, conservation of landscape elements such as avenues, vistas and canals.

- As the width of the green climate axes can vary in relation to the specific urban tissue, it is possible to reduce missing links in the network. A width of 30 meters and a solid tree lane are minimally required.

- The green climate axes penetrate into the heart of the city.

The summerschool acknowledges these starting points for the research by design of green climate axes. However, the exploration of the axes will cover a wider area as the ambition is to assess the current and future potential to embed and integrate the green climate axes maximally within the urban tissue. That is why the summerschool will explore possibilities in adjacent neighborhoods, within a distance of 300 meters on both sides of the central water or green infrastructure, to create a coherent ensemble of green and blue elements that penetrates in and interweaves with the built environment. The potential to keep or add green public and private elements, to unseal surfaces, to add water, bike and walk infrastructure will be explored.



Besides the obvious ambition to have a vegetation in the green climate axes that is of high ecological quality, an extra more specific design goal is the ecological relevance of the axes to the migration and residence of (urban) animal species, such as stone martens and foxes. In other words, the design for the green climate axes also has to be animal friendly!

Practical information

During a nine day summerschool, students will explore the design challenge for a number of green climate axes in Ghent. This exploration will cover different scales (axis, neighborhood, cross section) and will deal in a multidisciplinary way with urbanistic, green management, landscape and biological issues.

The summerschool is intended for 25 students in architecture, urbanism and (spatial) planning, landscape architecture and development, biology, bio-engineering, green management or related disciplines. English is the language used. Candidates are invited to send a short CV or portfolio and a motivation letter to hans.leinfelder@kuleuven.be (before April 30th 2018). A notification of acceptance will be sent before May 15th.

This summerschool is free of charge and offers you overnight stays during the summerschool, a rental bike, lunch during working days (Sunday is day off), printing and plotting possibilities, tutoring, lectures, and an excursion on Saturday.

The summerschool will be tutored by professors and researchers of University College Ghent and KU Leuven and by officials of the City of Ghent. Lectures and additional tutoring by nationally and internationally renowned speakers will be provided. The master builder of the City of Ghent and the directors of the Cities' Planning Department, Environment and Climate Department and Green Department will be curating the summerschool which will guarantee the dissemination of the summerschool results in the city's policies.

Co-ordinators:

Hans Leinfelder (KU Leuven-Faculty of Architecture-campus Ghent), Eva Troch (City of Ghent-Green Department) and Sylvie Van Damme (University College Ghent-KASK)



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