

## What is Next after VINEX?

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### 1 INTRODUCTION

Because of the worldwide financial and economical crisis real-estate development in the Netherlands stopped almost all together because of lack of finances. As a result the people in the Netherlands do not show that much eagerness to move to a new home as they did in the previous years. Before the crisis the Dutch homeowners would often change houses every 5 to 10 years. Coinciding with the economical crisis new social trends surfaced. Increasingly there was awareness and the realization that the Dutch society was starting to change with unexpected consequences for build environment and Dutch urban planning and design. The Dutch population is shrinking this trend is reinforced and combined with the increasingly ageing of the general population. The changing population also changed the demand for new houses, both in quantity and in quality. In short compared to the previous decades there are different types of houses needed and also the quantity of the needed houses changed. This change is reinforced by the effects of the financial and economical crisis.

For the last couple of decades the Netherlands developed and realized new housing by simply building a complete new neighbourhood. In the beginning this development was on the scale of a new town later on it was on the scale of a complete new suburb. The latest exponent of this trend was the so called VINEX neighbourhood. In the world of urban designers and urban planners VINEX became synonymous for the Dutch version of large scale housing development. Over time the concept of VINEX became synonymous for the Dutch version of large scale housing development. Over time the urban concept VINEX became more and more criticized, both nationally and internationally. The most important critique was against the large scale of the development itself and the contribution the development had to the congestion of the Dutch highways. Furthermore overtime it became clear the VINEX neighbourhoods turned into so called “sleeper towns”, urban areas where the traditional functions of a city were absent and as a consequence during office hours became empty urban areas. Over the years that followed, up until the present day, the notion grew that the mono-functional and large scale VINEX development is no longer what the market wants.

Another effect of the financial and economical crisis, combined with the changing demand caused by the social changes, is the increasing realization that the Dutch real-estate market is fully dependant of an ever growing real-estate market. The Dutch real-estate market shows signs of being an economic perpetual mobile, a self-sustaining market. In economical terms this is also called a real-estate-bubble. Over the last years the Dutch noticed a changed relationship between the general economy and the real-estate market. The professional world of planners & designers, housing agencies, government and users feel the effect of the change from a supply driven market to a demand driven market. Because of the supply driven market the Dutch spatial planners and designers developed urban concepts that were easy to sell because of the huge demand for new houses. In other words it was the quantity and not the quality that mattered. Now that the market changed into a demand driven market there is no longer a demand for new houses developed according the traditional concept. The new situation forces the world of planners and designers, but also real-estate developers, housing agencies and governments to develop and utilize a broader scope and vision regarding the planning system. It is no longer just the newly build houses but the quality of those newly build houses that will determine if it's successful or not.

Because the blueprint planning was at the core of Dutch planning for so many decades the whole planning system needs to be changed in order to develop and utilize a new broader scoped planning system. In the near future there should be a focus to change the Dutch educational system regarding urban planning and design but also a change in planning law and principles in order to deal with the effects of the present economical and financial crisis and the future effects of the social changes. This paper will attempt to develop a broader and comprehensive new approach for Dutch planning for the future, focused on the three described issues. What will be the next step in the Dutch planning culture? How will we deal with the central and important themes of the future, such as sustainability and the shrinking and ageing of the population and how do these social processes influence the public and private space in both use and design?

## 2 THE DUTCH SITUATION

### 2.1 Introduction

The Netherlands have a long tradition of blueprint planning combined with an early on very much developed system of planning regulations and legislation. The tradition started around the 1900's with the implementation of the first housing legislation that resulted in the Amsterdam Expansion Plan in the 1930's. Blueprint planning needs a strong government with adequate legislation and regulations in order to for the government to make sure the designs and plans developed according to blueprint planning will indeed be developed. These aspects were both available in the Netherlands early on. In this planning system social sciences in both the world of planners and the government are limited into providing the quantitative goals that need to be met over a certain time. This system was perfect just after the war when the demand for new houses was immense and the urgency was high. Since then the Dutch planning system and its development plans are based on a higher spatial scale and do not take the regional or interregional demands and needs into account. In the following paragraphs the history of Dutch planning and its current planning system will be explained. Lastly the current situation of Dutch planning and design will be explained according to the current global economical and financial trends and local social trends.

### 2.2 The Dutch planning system

#### 2.2.1 Meaning and role of the Blueprint planning in the Netherlands

Blueprint planning is the dominant planning principle in the Netherlands for the last decades. This planning concept is directed at and deals with the ideal end situation that needs to be achieved. Preparing and drafting new urban plans was mainly the task of the designer and the role of social sciences was very limited. Urban planners contributed to new designs by developing the quantitative demands that needed to be achieved in order to change the physical structure within the set timeframe of the design or plan. With blueprint planning the main focus is on the spatial physical shape that is very easily represented by a map or maquette. With this kind of planning system the government need to have a very firm grip on spatial development, through legislation and regulations, in order to make sure the spatial developments will be realized.

This system of planning was developed after the Second World War when the Netherlands had a huge demand for new houses. This demand was the results of the hostilities during the occupation and subsequent liberation of the country that saw a lot of houses being destroyed or made inhabitable. It was in the interest of the central government that enough houses were being developed in the shortest possible time. This demand combined with the already very much developed spatial regulations and legislation were the birth ground for blueprint planning.

#### 2.2.2 Basic Dutch planning system

##### **National, provincial and local scale and legislation**

The spatial planning and its responsibilities are divided between three different layers of government on national, regional and municipal level. Governmental powers are divided between various bodies at the National Level. They are the queen, minister-president and the different ministers of the various ministries. The Dutch public administration is made up of the central government at the national level, the provinces at the regional level and the municipalities at the local level. Formal regulations and informal practice assures that the different plans and legislations at all level complement each other, rather than conflict.

The provincial and municipal level are organized by the constitution. They have the responsibility for looking after the welfare of the community within the limits of the law. The provinces play an important part regarding spatial planning. They are responsible for translating national policies and regulations onto the provincial level and set out the framework for spatial planning policy at the local level. The municipalities also implement national spatial planning policy, but these always have to fit within the framework set out by the provinces.

Policy that controls the whole national area and provides a key legislative basis for spatial planning is prepared at the national level. The first legislation employed which related to spatial planning was passed in 1901 and was named the Housing Act. And in 1965 the Spatial Planning Act was introduced. Both laws, after being revised, are still operational. One of the key changes over the years to the Spatial Planning Act



was to strengthen the position of the national government in spatial planning and ensure that the objectives of the Act are carried through to the lower levels. In order to guarantee the objectives are rightfully implemented at the lower levels the Decree on Spatial Planning has been set up and this decree holds rules and regulations on the implementation.

### 2.2.3 Spatial plans

Since the 1960's the national government has prepared national plans on spatial planning to accommodate the reconstruction and alternation activities that resulted from economic growth and a growing population. The plans integrate all spatial aspects and set out the framework for the spatial development of the Netherlands as a whole and for the spatial plans at the provincial and local level. At the moment the National Government works with the National Spatial Plan, the fifth one since the introduction of the National Plans. This plan replaces the Fourth National Policy Document on Spatial Planning which dated from 1994, and its updated version the Vinac, which dates from 1999. What makes this National Spatial Plan stand out in comparison to the previous national spatial plans is that it integrates all spatial aspects of policies in the Netherlands. It not only focuses on traditional spatial planning aspects but also on also for instance on the mobility policy, spatially relevant agricultural policy and others sectors.

Since the 1960's provinces have prepared regional spatial plans, to regulate spatial planning. These so called Structureplans are mandatory and are elaborations of the national spatial plan. Some provinces have one plan others have multiple structure plans for their territory. In these spatial plans the provinces sketch the outlines on where agriculture, nature and recreation can be developed or exists and where there is room for offices, housing, industrial sites and infrastructure. The provincial structure plans form the framework for the spatial plans that are being set up at the local level. More and more provinces are choosing to integrate their policies on spatial planning with policies on environment, water and traffic and mobility.

Every municipality is obliged to set up a structural vision according to the rules and regulations in the Spatial Planning Act and has to update this plan every ten years. The structure vision focuses on the future development of the municipality as a whole or parts of the municipality. Part of the structural vision is a ground exploitation scheme where the financial aspects of the plan are regulated. Without the exploitation a municipality cannot get funds from private parties to pay for public works. The most concrete plans are being set up at the local level and are called zoning plans or land use plans. Because these plans are the most concrete they are the most important for what the actual spatial structure of the country will look like. The Spatial Planning Act holds rules and regulations on the content and procedures surrounding the zoning plans. These plans are mandatory for the whole area of the municipality. The rule is that every zoning plan has to be revised every ten years. All the zoning plans have to fit within the framework of the Structureplans of the provinces, therefore the province always has to give permission and approval for the zoning plan to be legitimate. The zoning plans do not only hold rules and regulations concerning the land use but also concerning maximum heights and widths of buildings and constructions and more.

## 3 FROM TOP DOWN TOWARDS BOTTOM UP PLANNING

### 3.1 Introduction

Before we can develop the next step in Dutch urban planning we first need to take a look at how the tradition of blueprint planning always has been part of the Dutch planning system. The implementation of the Dutch Housing Act in 1901 was the starting point of modern Dutch urban planning that evolved into the planning system we know today. For over a century the planning system developed itself into the system we know today. During this process we can identify key moments that have shaped and formed the planning system, and of course we should not forget the Dutch urban landscape, more than at other moments. In order to formulate a new way towards a new Dutch urban design and planning system we first need to take a closer look at these moment and their corresponding urban plans to understand the importance of blueprint planning and how much it is embedded into the Dutch way of planning. Also we need to take a quick look at the evolution of the planning law and regulations, did they develop together with the planning system?

In the history of Dutch planning we can identify three critical moments in Dutch urban planning, in 1934 the "Algemeen Uitbreidingsplan voor Amsterdam" (UAP – general expansion plan for Amsterdam), in 1988 the

“Vierde Nota Ruimtelijke Ordening” (fourth policy briefing note on spatial planning) and in 2004 the “Nota Ruimte” (National Planning Strategy).

### 3.2 Key spatial urban plans

#### 3.2.1 Algemeen Uitbreidingsplan voor Amsterdam (AUP)

The AUP marks the change in urban development in the Netherlands from urban design toward urban planning. As such this spatial plan is one of the most important urban plans in the history of Dutch spatial planning. The new direction was part of the international spatial movement of which the Congres Internationaux d'Architecture Moderne (CIAM) was at the centre. The members of this movement were strong advocacies of the realization of the functional city and they drafted the manifest of Athens, analyses and basic principles for a functional city. The AUP was strongly influenced by CIAM and the manifest of Athens. The plan for Amsterdam is based on accurate statistical analyses and predictions for the future total population all the way up towards the year 2000. A full 64 years away at the time of implementation of the AUP. The predicted total population in the future determined the whole plan and all its sub plans. The AUP divided the whole city into clear neighbourhoods of about 10.000 inhabitants with their own public and private space and needed school and other social functions. The AUP took advantage from the change in the Housing Act that gave room to the implementation of a basic urban plan that could be more detailed later on by means of sub-plans. This gave room to implement changing demands and new possibilities over time. In the AUP there is central role for the scientific approach of urban planning. Specifically statistical research into the future is one of the cornerstones of this era of Dutch spatial planning, the urban planner with a scientifically approach had taken central stage.

#### 3.2.2 Vierde Nota Ruimtelijke Ordening (VINE)

The VINE marks the change in urban development where the government expresses its desire for more decentralised development and accordingly urban planning moved towards a postmodern urban planning system. The key factor for this change can be found in the economical recession during the years 1979 – 1984 where Dutch planner asked themselves how spatial planning could stimulate and facilitate economical recovery and economic growth in the future. The VINE identified the process of globalization and aimed to stimulate and facilitate the internationalization of the Dutch economy by identifying and developing opportunities and existing qualities. Cities and regions needed to be revitalized in order to create the right kind of localization factors in order to develop and facilitate new economic opportunities. Problems in the urban fabric no longer took a central role but opportunities and strengths took central stage in Dutch urban planning. This change with the past came with a renewed trust in the capabilities of the market and their capabilities to identify and utilize opportunities. The VINE aims to develop regions according to their own strengths. One of the key regions identified is the western urban region Randstad, the triangle Amsterdam – Rotterdam – Utrecht. In accordance with the role of the Netherlands in the international globalization as a distribution country the two mainports, the harbour of Rotterdam and the international airport Schiphol, are made very important for the country and the Randstad. Because implementation of the VINO got delayed because of elections new ambitions are formulated and the Vierde Nota Ruimtelijke Ordening Extra 1991 (VINEX) is drafted. In the VINEX the government designated specific areas for large scale housing development (VINEX-neighbourhoods) in order to accommodate the expected population growth. The VINO is the result of the change in spatial planning, from social-economical programming based on needs towards the design of spatial quality. This forces planners, designers and policymakers to research the facts, confront arguments pro and contra with each other and to make a division between ideals, goals and interests of stakeholders involved. The spatial plan became the tool for reaching consensus and the spatial planners took an even more central role in the urban planning process.

#### 3.2.3 Nota Ruimte (NR)

The NR contains the vision of the government on the development of the Netherlands in order to realize a strong economy, a safe and liveable society and attractive land. The main goal is to realize space for all the different functions who need a place in the small country of the Netherlands. The NR specifically aims to improve the international competition, stimulate strong cities and a vital rural area, safeguarding and developing important (inter)national spatial values and improving the safety. The NR contains spatial policy



aimed at development and gives room to once again realize the Dutch tradition in urban design, landscape design and architecture. It no longer sets rules and limitations but tries to stimulate development. The urban planner needs to be more an urban designer and the urban designer needs to be more an urban planner. But in the NR the local governments and the market need to make even more decisions. The process of decentralizing the government is even more increased compared to the VINO and VINEX. This time there is no map depicting the projected sites for housing development, like in the VINEX. As a result of this further decentralization, private companies and housing agencies take the lead in housing development. This results in small scale developments where there is only room for high quality and therefore expensive housing, with almost no attention for improved infrastructure, public transport and other social needs like for instance schools. Based on the NR it is not possible to realize new large scale housing projects like with the VINEX. Also partly caused because the Dutch government did not reserve adequate funds for the development of the public space. The NR is the results of the change from the equity planning in the VINO into development planning. The different governments are more a partner in the development process and together with the private companies and housing agencies they want to take better use of the spatial possibilities and improve spatial quality. Just like during the VINO and the VINEX there is still a central role for the urban planner.

### 3.3 Planning law and regulations through the years

As the key spatial plans in history show there was a transition from design to a more scientific approach that was followed to a more developing approach where consensus is reached with the spatial plan. Nowadays the planning policy actively advocates less rules and more development planning. But while the planning system changed and adapted to new developments, the planning law basically did not. In 1965 there was a new spatial planning law implemented that was based on rules and regulations. In short spatial rules and legislation dictated which functions are not allowed and which functions were allowed. Then in 2006 a new spatial planning law was implemented in accordance with the desire to make development possible and reduce the number of rules. But after implementing the new planning law was revised and updated. As a result of this revision the new planning law now works in the same way as the planning law from 1965. It is still based on rules and legislation. Therefore the situation developed where the central government advocates less rules and more development planning while the legislation does not offer the room for this to be realized. In short the planning system and planning law are out of sync. As a result it is even more difficult to develop new housing and Dutch spatial planning is less capable to deal with the challenges offered by the financial crisis and the shrinking and ageing population. And as already mentioned in 3.2.3 the traditional Dutch planner still is the focal point within the planning system even though development planning asks for a different kind of planning professional. This results in the question which way to go towards a new Dutch urban design and planning system that is capable to deal with the challenges and demands of the 21st century?

## 4 THE WAY TOWARDS A NEW DUTCH URBAN DESIGN AND PLANNING SYSTEM

### 4.1 Introduction

The Dutch planning system is not flexible and very much regulated. Within the system the zoning plan is the most important plan because this spatial plan decided and dictates how the whole country will look like. As the leading planning instrument the zoning plan contains and has to take into account a lot of different rules and regulations which makes the instrument very hard to adapt to different or special situations. The combination with other planning instruments makes the zoning plan very powerful, the perfect instrument to arrange and dictate the future spatial shape of every community in the Netherlands.

The zoning plan has to take into account the spatial plans, regulations and rules of the higher layers of government. For instance the zoning plan has to fit inside the framework provided by the provincial structural vision and therefore the provinces always need to approve the zoning plan in order for it to be legitimate. But in practice the provinces and their spatial planning are not powerful enough to fully coordinate all local planning initiatives. In the current circumstances with a changing housing market, changing and an economic and financial crisis combined with the changes in the Dutch society calls for a strong and all covering vision to be developed and implemented but that is not the case. To illustrate for instance in those regions that are experiencing a shrinking community combined with an aging population the local municipalities try to reverse this process by building more houses. This results in a strong

competition between the different municipalities over who gets the most people to live inside their municipality. Because building is not the answer to the problem a lot of houses are being built without the existence of a healthy demand for new houses. This is only one striking example where the provincial governments are not capable of coordinating demand and supply in a regional scale.

This reluctance and incapability of coordinating and regulating the change from supply to demand orientated market is a direct result of the Dutch planning system. Because it is based on blueprint planning that originated in a demand orientated market it is very hard to deal with the current situation. As a matter of fact the whole planning system, from educational to law and regulations to the urban planning and design educational system can trace its roots back to the blueprint planning and demand orientated market. In order to change the planning system to deal adequately with the changed circumstances all three elements need to change and become either more flexible, more all covering or multifunctional. In the following paragraphs the needed changes will be discussed on three different levels: urban planning & design education, law and legislation and the urban planner & design practice.

## 4.2 Education

The Dutch economic housing system is dependent on the realization of new houses in order to keep the demand orientated market alive. Because the Dutch system of mortgages is also based on the same demand driven market, where the value of houses increases every year, we cannot deal with the change to a supply driven market that is caused by the shrinking and ageing communities. This changing market and its consequences are even more enforced en sped up because of the financial and economical crisis. Suddenly the Dutch are less prepared to buy a new house or they just cannot buy a new house because of financial constraints. And if people are willing and able to move to another house they cannot find the right quality or typology.

Another effect of the demand driven housing market was a huge need for professionals or coordinate, draft and implement all the different housing schemes. Over the period from 1980's till onward on average there were 80000 houses being build each year. (Schenk, 2010) At the same time during this period the regulations and legislation concerning spatial development became increasingly more difficult and strict not to mention the increase in the amount of rules and regulations. During this period the different urban planning and design professionals have increasingly specialized into their individual areas of expertise. The architect increasingly dealt with designing solely the building itself, the urban planner dealt with the exterior of the building and its direct surroundings and the urban planner increasingly dealt with the regulatory and legislation process. As a reaction to this trend the educational system increasingly developed new and more specialized educations to cater to the changing demand. To add to this process of diversification the introduction of the master and bachelor system in the Netherlands increased the number of different educations even more.

The urban planning & design educational system in the Netherlands is into three main parts. Just like in other countries you have educations for architects, urban designers and urban planners. But in the Netherlands there is an extra divide where the urban planning education is split into an administrative juridical part, called planologie, and a more creative part, called urban design. A planoloog in the Netherlands mostly deals with the regulations and rules concerning spatial planning, and it's particularly focused on zoning plans. On the other hand the more creative part of urban planning in the Netherlands, called the academy of bouwkunst, are focused on creative design and do not deal with legislations and regulations at all. This divide is unique in the world and a result of the increasing specialization and separation of disciplines in practice.

The different urban planning & design studies have their roots in the time when there was a huge need to develop housing in great numbers, when town and villages all needed to be expanded and the separation of living, working and other activities was a central theme in the world of planning and design. Furthermore the increased specializations and divide of educations fits perfect in a blueprint orientated planning system. But the recent trends in society combined with the global economical and financial trends show this urban planning system needs some changes in order to deal with the new situation.

Nowadays there are different demands made of the quality of housing and of the urbanity in general. The preferred density of new housing areas, the intensification of the existing city and also the increasing individualism of the people are now important elements. In order to deal with the new situation caused by the changes in society and the effects of the financial and economical crisis the educational system in the



Netherlands is faced with the task to develop an integral approach that again focuses on the integral answer to the urban question. Students need to be able to observe and analyse problems from many different angles, not only from their old specialization. In order to form an integral perspective and to be able to understand the points of view from other disciplines the students nowadays need to be less specialized as before. Urban planning & design educations need to change and train their students to be more of a generalist.

The specialization of old is no more and the challenge will be to create a more general overview of the planning procedures and identifying new tasks and questions in practise that are no more related to the blueprint planning of before. This planning system is not adequate anymore because the urban challenges have become of a smaller scale where detailed solutions are needed. The shrinking population, increasing number of the elderly and the ever changing shape of the households each need their own type of housing that needs to offer solutions to the individual need of the people living there.

The challenge for the educational system will be to create a more general overview of the planning procedures. There is no need any more to develop and create new studies, which are focussing only on one subject of the planning. Their duty is to create an urban professional, who is able to react to different situations in the urban and rural context in a proper way. They should focus on the solution in a pragmatic way and not depend on amounts, figures and profits.

### 4.3 Urban planning and design

Since the Second World War the Dutch urban planning and design was mainly focussed on the development of housing in greater amounts, later in the early eighties the renewal tasks started in the inner cities and went on until the redevelopments phase of the harbour areas especially in Rotterdam and Amsterdam in the late nineties. The last 15 years the housing development was very much motivated by the rising price of the land, which is also caused by the special Dutch taxation system.

Aspects for example shrinkage of the ageing population is well an important aspect in the planning and the design, but these facts are well known but are not taken into account. The reason is that the focus was more towards the economical development. This development was especially driven the investors and developers but also the municipalities do very much participate at the profits.

The values of houses have increased in the last years very rapidly, and lead to a development where the short time maximisation of value was more important, than the value in the long run. The expectation was the value of a house is increasing within ten years estimated by 100%.

#### 4.3.1 What has to change in urban planning and design?

The blueprint plans of different periods have usually produced a lot of houses in the same type, for example in the VINEX program most of the buildings were terrace or semi detached houses. In the period of the VINEX settlements houses were developed in a more introverted way located around a cul de sac road to encourage intimacy. The common aspect is that both periods have not much housing variety. Until the start of the financial crisis in 2008 there was not much need to think about the individual wishes and needs of users. The impression was that there could be developed almost everything and it will be sold without communication towards the buyer. The situation now has changed, there are less houses sold because of the uncertain financial situation. Also the user or buyer is becoming more demanding and wants to have more influence on the quality. In this case quality has to be interpreted towards a more individual form of housing, where the whole housing standard has a higher value. The reduction of energy of the upgrading of the flat by attaching a balcony or terrace could be important facts.

Due to the Dutch environment there are not much natural restrictions, besides the water, to develop housing areas in a greater scale. This circumstance caused that a lot of extension settlements built onwards 1995 are consuming a lot ground, by having a low density for mostly terraced houses. The result is that especially in the Randstad natural open space is very rare and the metropolitan region has become a form of somewhere in-between, where there is very often not clear if you are inside or outside. A planning guidance of the future should be the concentration of buildings in the existing cities and no more extension of the urban sprawl. It would be a first simple attempt to plan more in a sustainable way by increasing the density of the existing city.

The aging society is a matter of fact where urban planning has to react. The aim should be to develop urban settlements where elderly people are able to live as long as possible in their own houses. The problem of their houses is that they are still living in the same house where they moved to in 1970 or earlier. In these times the purpose and usage was by a family, now they are often on their own in the same house. Because of the growing number of this group the housing market has to be prepared that the amount of households are increasing, and these needs special facilities for example a barrier-free accessibility.

Another circumstance of the growing number of elderly people is the increasing importance for a barrier-free access of the public space. Until now there is not much attention for these group in public buildings, train station of the public space. The expectation is that in 2030 around every third person will be 65 years of older in the Dutch society. To develop sustainable cities barriers in form of stairs have to be reduced, but barrier free means also that we have to improve our public spaces for blind and dumb people. The ambitious should be to develop a city which is accessible for everybody.

#### 4.3.2 Who should encourage all these design ideas in the practices?

Until now the Dutch planning was driven very much by economical perspectives. The aim in this process was not to create a financial break even in the projects, as long as the creation of profit was possible in a higher range. The attitude and planning idea has to change now and gives the chance to rethink the intention of urban design and planning. The development of large number of houses in a short period of time is not very actual at the moment. The market is demanding a more individual approach away from the mass production, where the quality and the personal role of inhabitants and users is more important. The question is when do the users and buyers become more active and get more involved in the development of houses. At the moment every player in the game is reacting cautiously.

#### **4.4 Planning law and regulations**

In the Dutch planning system the municipalities have the most power to create juridical plans for their respective communities. The instrument for implementing planning is the zoning plan. This particular instrument and the way it is used in the Netherlands has a strong relation with blueprint dogma. The dogma where no individual solutions are obtained or achieved but pragmatically plans are made. Due to the changing society and the effects of the economic and financial crisis this particular instrument can no longer live up to the expectations needed to full fill its planning task. Because there is no room for flexibility the result of a Dutch zoning plan is that it constrains too much. There is no room for flexible interpretation and the rules and regulations are very fixed. Furthermore the municipalities are dependent financially to the number of houses in the zoning plans they are reluctant to change these plans when social changes demand this. Their whole financial system is linked to the revenue from real-estate development in their communities.

When we are looking at the role of the provinces in the Netherlands we see they have to approve the zoning plans in order for them to become legislation. This administrative bodies are perfectly capable off developing an inter regional overview in order to coordinate developments in the individual municipalities. This is a new role and the provinces have not adapted yet to their new role. Furthermore they still need extra instruments in order to do their new task. At the moment their advice is more like guidance instead of rule.

In order to close the gap between the different government authorities the provinces should become the middleman between the state authority and the municipalities. They can organize on a regional level the interactions and coordination between municipalities. For example in regions where shrinking societies are a problem, the communities are competing between each other by developing terraced houses for younger families.

### **5 CONCLUSION**

The Dutch system of urban planning is undergoing a period of serious and very challenging changes. After 40 years with a continuously positive development of housing and creating new settlements a paradigm shift is happening. The old gidsland has to think about his planning values and principles in a different way. In the last decades the development was always interpreted positive, because it was growing. Well growing in total numbers of houses, but also growing in the diversity of planning methods and concepts. This concepts combined with a richness of creativity has made a well know export product of the Dutch planning. Besides





this the circumstance was always the same; there was a high pressure towards the market to develop and to react of the needs.

Now the situation has changed – the market is not growing in the amount as it was expected and financial needed by the different planning authorities. This causes by almost everybody problems which cannot be solved at the moment. In the first moment the urban planners and architects where trying to develop creative solutions to keep the housing production at a certain level. Why? Because that was their way in earlier times – developing creative solutions. The results are not very successful, because the solution has to be found in the combination of an economical question and a good spatial planning.

Education, urban planning and laws and rules are just three major ingredients to preserve the future development. The core item of the planning will not be guided anymore by the maximum of finances. The maximum benefit does not rely any longer to an increase of the income of value of the housing; a positive result will be a total break even of the projects in the long run. This means that the quality of housing stays on a higher level and keeps the value. We think that this change of the minds will take quite a long period because the tradition of developing has played in the past a too important role and is implemented in the Dutch legal system that a total change will not be easily realized. The change cannot be guided by politics because the decision they have too made are not very popular, so the change maybe can only come by areal economical crisis where the whole economy is under the pressure and the rate of unemployment is rising in the same way as the number of people who cannot pay their mortgage any longer.

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