

# Citizens' Council Statenkwartier

Advice for the municipal council regarding  
climate change and adaptation



## Preface



Over the next few years the city of The Hague will be required to take a number of important decisions on measures aimed at curbing climate change and making the effects of climate change acceptable for all city residents.

The municipality has asked the residents of the Statenkwartier neighbourhood, through a burgerberaad, or Citizens' Council, for advice. Over the course of four meetings a number of residents of the neighbourhood advanced and discussed numerous ideas and proposals, supported by a group of experts from the municipality. We herewith present the results of these meetings to you: 23 proposals for the municipal council to tackle and adapt to climate change.

During May and June 2022, with the help of the municipality's experts, participants from various backgrounds and ages explored various climate change topics. After introductions by several experts, participants debated and discussed diverse issues, culminating in several proposals. These proposals give a clear signal: Do not hesitate! Get set to shape the energy transition in The Hague. Be truthful towards the residents of The Hague and get started on climate adaptation.

Judging from the energy generated during the sessions, we all concluded that these topics are very much to the heart of the residents of the Statenkwartier. We all realize the urgency and accept responsibility for confronting the issue. We want to start as soon as possible but cannot do so without you. All our proposals should be adopted and the municipality, in collaboration with the neighbourhood's residents, should get to work.

If it does, we are confident that we can achieve results in curbing climate change and arrive at climate adaptation in our neighbourhood in the short term!

Another important fact is that all this is not only confined to the Statenkwartier. Climate change affects the entire city and demands a

different approach for each district. Climate adaptation may even be more urgent in other neighbourhoods. It is up to you to tackle this, take initiatives to curb climate change, and involve all residents.

We would welcome the opportunity to explain our proposals to you, allowing you, the municipal council, to arrive at the proper decisions. We wish you every success and firmness of purpose in the follow-up.

*Best regards, Burgerberaad  
Statenkwartier*

# Overview of the Advice

The following pages contain proposals made by the Statenkwartier Citizens' Council.

The proposals listed here are the same as those formulated in our last meeting; recommendations requiring more explanation are in each topic's introduction. The Annex to this Advice sets out the proceedings of the Citizens' Council sessions – the results of the votes, which experts were consulted, and how the entire process was implemented.

## Topics

The Citizens' Council selected five topics from many presented during the meetings as most pressing to work through regarding climate change and adaptation. These topics are:

### Housing and Energy

To make our homes as energy efficient as possible and transition to renewable alternatives. The aim is to have the municipality commit, support, and facilitate this mission for the residents of the Statenkwartier and make this mandatory wherever possible.

### Knowledge and Information

Addressing climate change and adaptation together demands more knowledge and information. We require the municipality's support in supplying a physical meeting point where data and advice are available for the community.

### Alternative Transport

The municipality will take measures to encourage car-sharing and improve public transport to reduce the consumption of fossil fuels and make sustainable alternatives even more attractive.

### Cars and Parking

On foot, bike or public transport is the preferred mode of transportation in and to the Statenkwartier. There will be less focus on cars. Cars and parking will become more restricted where possible.

### Green and Public Spaces

To promote climate adaptation, increase water storage, and improve the quality of life in the city and our neighbourhood. The city, in general, and our community must become greener than green. Green corridors, joint composting, water storage and dozens of other initiatives are needed to make our neighbourhood greener.

### The Neighbourhood

The Statenkwartier neighbourhood is known for its quaint old houses, which makes them a tricky prospect for the energy transition. These houses are from the early 20th century and are difficult to insulate. Adapting them to other forms of energy can be problematic. This poses a challenge; it has been possible! Dozens of residents have taken initial or significant steps to make their homes more sustainable and transitioned to other energy sources. Solar panels are becoming common



in the Statenkwartier, as are other forms of sustainable energy. Sustainable alternatives are welcomed, and many residents can take these measures.

However, this is not the case for all residents of the Statenkwartier. As the Citizens' Council, we resolved that everyone should be offered assistance in making their residence in the Statenkwartier more sustainable. Whether they own or rent their home, live in subsidized or non-subsidized housing, or whether or not they possess the financial means or necessary expertise. Working on making our neighbourhood more sustainable involves all of us.

Furthermore, the Statenkwartier is not isolated from the rest of the city; it connects through rails, bus and bicycle lanes. In the past few years, bicycle safety in the neighbourhood has improved. Public transport is undergoing significant changes as well. Nevertheless, car traffic and parking are still very much present in the community, and many residents still own one or even several cars.

The Statenkwartier is an old neighbourhood, characterized by one-way and wide streets. Although gardens and small scattered parks are prominent, much of the public area is paved. One of the effects of excessive pavement is that local temperatures rise higher during the summer.

# Proposals accepted by the Statenkwartier Citizens' Council

## Housing and energy

1. The municipality should ensure that households in the Statenkwartier can share electricity at a district level, similar to the 'Groene Mient'. The municipality should lobby at a national level to adjust regulations to make electricity sharing possible, under the condition that privacy for users should be guaranteed.
2. Upon the sale or transfer of homes, replacing single glazing with double glazing must be made mandatory without affecting the original appearance of the building. The obligation lies with the buyer.
3. The municipality should make insulation, up to a certain level, mandatory. Using a generic measurement should be considered, possibly the energy label. Low-interest loans should be made available and remain available.
4. Residents of the Statenkwartier need to know that there will be no collective heat solutions available for the coming time. Residents must receive tailored advice on alternatives, such as (hybrid) heat pumps, from an independent group appointed and funded by the municipality. Residents will make their own considerations and or decisions.
5. The municipality should continue to reimburse the interest on the loans from the Heat Fund (government scheme) and bring this to the attention of neighbourhood inhabitants.



## Knowledge and information

6. The municipality opens, along the Frederik Hendriklaan, a full-time location where residents can seek independent and objective advice on sustainability, energy transition and climate adaptation.

### Notes to the advice for a physical information center

#### Short term

- Arrange location and funding.
- Staffing of the location, possibly with volunteers, with appropriate expertise.
- Information in the centre supplemented by books, articles, videos etc.
- Visibility and awareness of the centre through letters or flyers to residents.
- Cooperation between the Buurtenergie Statenkwartier (BES) and the centre (BES already actively holds information sessions and offers free energy label checks. Perhaps BES could provide human resources in conjunction with the municipality).
- Give free advice until it becomes specific advice with purchasing.

#### Mid-long term

- This information centre should also be made available for other neighbourhoods.



### Alternative transportation

7. The municipality should ensure, on short-term, that one parking space per 500 meter is reserved for shared cars.
8. The municipality should facilitate the provision of an express tram for visitors to the beach:
  - From ADO stadium.
  - With an intermediate stop at Central Station, The Hague.
  - Low parking fees at the stadium, example 5 euros per day.
  - Reduced rate for the express tram.

### Car use and parking

9. The Citizens' Council wants more space for greenery, pedestrians and cyclists in the Statenkwartier.
10. Turn the neighbourhood into an environmental zone.
11. Turn the Frederik Hendriklaan into a pedestrian and bicycle zone (allowing traffic for loading & unloading vehicles and permanent use for people with disabilities).
12. Enforced fixed times for loading and unloading on the Fredrikhendriklaan.
13. Develop a comprehensive vision for mobility and distribution of space to create a largely parking-free neighbourhood in the Statenkwartier (with exceptions for people with disabilities and for loading & unloading).

### Green and public spaces

14. We recommend strengthening the green-blue infrastructure of the city to promote climate adaptation, create more water storage, and increase the city's liveability.
15. We have read the 2018 'Haagse Iconen' (The Hague Icons). A unique report relevant to strengthening the green structures in The Hague to improve biodiversity, water storage, the heat island effect, green corridors to the surrounding region, and the quality of life.
  - The 2018 report should be updated – short term;
  - Select a few iconic projects to start connecting and reinforcing the green-blue networks in the city;
  - Design specific plans for these iconic projects together with the residents – mid-long term.
16. Establish green corridors between trees where possible, e.g. along the Frankenslag. For example, planting plants or bushes to create green corridors. Extra attention should be given to crossing roads and their passageways. The residents could maintain green corridors after the municipality has planted the first shrubs and plants.
17. Give residents a say in street renewal, giving them a choice of:
  - Less pavement
  - More green zones in the city
  - Water-permeable road surface
  - Fewer parking places
  - More urban gardens/city-jungle sites/ play areas





18. Consider using sound-absorbing cobblestones when resurfacing the roads and parking places with water-permeable paving.
19. When the rerouting of tram 16 on the Mauritslaan is completed, the freed-up space can be reused to install a green zone. This could be turned into a multifunctional area, a playground, community garden with plants and trees. In 2023 the plan to start redesigning will commence. The neighbourhood should be involved immediately.
20. As an experiment, install a compost container in the neighbourhood, for example at the waste collection point on Prins Mauritslaan. The compost can be used for plants and trees in the area. If it works, it could be repeated at other locations.
21. A six-month campaign of the municipality offering garden owners the opportunity to pick up a rain barrel, to encourage water storage and avoid flooding the sewer system.
22. The Statenkwartier wants to participate in the 'tegelwippen' campaign (national campaign to replace pavement with plants) and Duurzaam Den Haag (Sustainable The Hague) campaign.
23. Start a campaign to inform and encourage people to plant plants and flowers in front of their homes.



## Reflection of the Citizens' Council Statenkwartier on the process

For most participants, it was a first-time experience participating on a citizens' council.

We quickly managed to establish a workable situation, thanks to the support offered by the municipality, which proposed a procedure we adopted. They also provided experts in various fields who responded promptly to most of our questions.

At the second, of four six-hour meetings, we worked out how, as a group, we could make decisions. Our discussions were invariably effective and efficient: we made the most of our time, where necessary dividing ourselves into smaller groups. All this resulted in a large number of accepted proposals.

We agreed that adopting draft advice would require a 75% majority. Voting on dozens of proposals took time, and we felt that several important issues were not sufficiently discussed. For instance, the issue of cars in the neighbourhood was prickly. Some felt that the number of parking spaces should remain the same, while others believed that in time cars should be banned from the neighbourhood altogether. We did not explore these differences in opinion in more detail simply because we needed more time, which we did not have and which, in retrospect, we regretted.

The process was an eye-opening and new experience for many participants. We contributed our outcome to the municipality, hoping it might influence their decision-making on climate change in the Statenkwartier and how to tackle it.



