

# A GREENER AND BETTER EVERYDAY LIFE

LOCAL AGENDA 21 PLAN FOR COPENHAGEN  
2012 - 2015



SHORT VERSION



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” Very many Copenhageners would like their everyday lives to be more green and they would like to take positive steps favouring the environment. It is important that the City of Copenhagen actively supports the commitment of the citizens and provides them with tools to facilitate their actions in ‘going green’ on an everyday basis.

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**LAYOUT** TMF Design

**PHOTO** Ursula Bach and Birgitte Røddik

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# TOWARDS A GREENER AND BETTER EVERYDAY LIFE

The core of the plan 'A Greener and Better Everyday Life' is a series of activities which, taken together, create new opportunities for citizens, users and businesses where environmental and climate considerations are part of everyday life in a natural way. Activities are grouped into five themes: at home, resources, urban spaces, transport and an interdisciplinary theme including innovation and education.

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Copenhagen's visions for the environment and the climate are ambitious. Copenhagen must be a better, greener, cleaner and healthier metropolis for the benefit of everyone and green growth must be the basis for improving the quality of life and enhancing urban living. One major goal is a carbon neutral city by 2025.

At the same time, the pressure on Copenhagen is constantly growing. Great numbers of new citizens will be heading for Copenhagen. An increase in traffic is expected. The competition to create and attract green growth is tough and the challenges to achieve the goal to become a sustainable metropolis are numerous.

High ambitions and the pressure on the city make citizen involvement imperative. In fact, action taken by citizens, users and businesses is crucial in order to achieve the climate and environmental goals of Copenhagen. Roughly one third of the potential CO<sub>2</sub> reductions by 2025 will come from initiatives where citizens have direct or indirect influence on whether the goal of a carbon neutral Copenhagen will be met. This includes green mobility, energy-saving measures and more recycling.

## CONCRETE ACTIVITIES TO MAKE EVERYDAY LIFE GREENER

When asked, Copenhagengers will say that they want to live in a green city providing a high quality of life. Environmental concerns are high on their agenda and they are basically very active in environmental and climate matters. There are, however, a number of challenges and barriers which, at times, makes it difficult for the citizens to be green on an everyday basis and 80% of the citizens believe that it is

important for the City of Copenhagen to help create the scope for them to do something for the environment themselves.

That is why the City of Copenhagen has launched the plan 'A Greener and Better Everyday Life' which contains a number of concrete activities to facilitate being 'green' on an everyday basis.

## THE CITIZENS ARE THE EXPERTS

All activities have been developed together with the Copenhagengers themselves since they are the experts when it comes to living and working in Copenhagen: they know a lot about environmental and climate challenges and barriers, they possess a wealth of relevant competences and they have useful ideas about what is required to make everyday life greener. Their knowledge has been studied and used and they need to be involved in the innovation processes and the concrete solutions so that we, together, can create a greener and healthier city.

Ideas for activities and views on barriers and expectations from Copenhagengers have been gathered at a series of meetings with the city's local committees and Copenhagengers, at which children and young people were also heard. A series of home visits to Copenhagengers have been made in order to gather information about the specific challenges and barriers experienced by citizens in their attempt to be more environment and climate friendly.

A total of 12 families and households in Copenhagen were visited and interviewed. These qualitative interviews were designed together with a research scientist in anthropology as part of a major research project on the life practice of citizens and the role of local government in this respect.

## A REALISTIC AND HOLISTIC APPROACH

The core of the 'Better and Greener Everyday Life' plan consists of a series of activities which, together, extend the scope for citizens, users and businesses in Copenhagen to include environmental and climate considerations naturally in their everyday lives.

A total amount of 17 activities were developed which, taken individually, will help create a greener and better everyday life and contribute to the quality of life in Copenhagen. The activities are based on the ideas and experience received and will contribute to:

- developing the scope for going green
- facilitating environment and climate friendly behaviour for citizens in their everyday lives
- increasing quality of life in the city.

The activities will contribute to meeting the goals set by the City of Copenhagen for climate and environmental concerns. The activities have been selected on the basis of those City of Copenhagen goals requiring special action by the citizens, since meeting these goals is entirely dependent on citizens participating actively and changing their behaviour and habits. In addition, the activities have been designed according to their ability to eliminate or reduce barriers and challenges experienced by the citizens with regard to climate and the environment.

In this way, the activities are closely linked to the City of Copenhagen's other plans and visions on the environment. This is true, for example, of the Municipal Master Plan 2011, 'Green Growth and Quality of Life', which deals with green growth and quality of life and sets the framework for the physical development of the City of Copenhagen, and also of the CPH 2025 Climate Plan which is intended to realise the vision about Copenhagen as the world's first carbon neutral capital.

During the work to develop the activities, it became apparent that Copenhageners consider it important to be able to take action themselves in respect of the areas of daily transport, energy saving measures in their homes and reducing the quantity of waste. At the same time, these are the same three areas where they find it most difficult to take action on their own. For this reason, these areas have become central for the selection and development of activities.

## ACCOMMODATING THE BARRIERS FOR CITIZENS

The activities have been grouped into five themes: at home, resources, urban spaces, transport as well as an interdisciplinary theme including innovation and training. As regards their content, the activities span several

essential aspects of the lives of Copenhageners: energy consumption, homes and home renovation, climate adaptation, the handling of resources, the recycling and disposal of waste, transport and the use of the city's urban spaces and parks.

The activities also accommodate many of the challenges faced by citizens with regard to greener everyday living. Making it easier to try out new things which are environmentally more sound will help to accommodate the routines and the lack of time which characterise everyday life, and the number of daily negotiations will be reduced concurrently with a reduction in the disparity between quality of life and green everyday living. Common and often voluntary activities in public spaces influence and may serve to deepen and enrich everyday relations while also strengthening the use and quality of public spaces.

A number of activities can be finally developed and implemented during the period 2012-2015. The individual activities will be realised in collaboration with various players: the City of Copenhagen, local committees, businesses, citizens etc. The activities can be realised provided the necessary resources will be allocated.

## AN INPUT-BASED METHOD

The activities have been developed with direct participation by Copenhageners. The aim has been process-oriented planning where the City of Copenhagen together with citizens and users have identified problems and solutions in relation to set environmental goals and challenges.

The intentions have centred on a legitimacy of input where the City of Copenhagen through choice of method, and style of participation ensures that the best information and ideas are obtained from those citizens choosing to participate in the relevant workshops, meetings, interviews and similar. It was not the intention of the citizen involvement to secure this information by means of classic, representative sampling.

The choice of method to involve citizens was based on the objectives of the plan: to generate new ideas for solving existing, selected goals within the environmental area - environmental objectives which require the participation of citizens for a solution to be found. Furthermore, the objective is to obtain information about the challenges and barriers which citizens experience in their everyday lives with regard to climate and the environment.





## FOUR MEETINGS WITH CITIZENS

In practice, four types of meetings with citizens have been tested and held. Firstly, a citizens' workshop lasting a whole day on the theme of generating ideas for green solutions, in which more than 100 citizens took part. On this occasion, a total of approximately 200 new ideas were submitted in writing and in the form of drawings. In addition to the ideas, a number of barriers and frustrations emerged and it became clear that many people wanted to integrate a number of green initiatives into their everyday lives, but were unaware of the existing possibilities. Following this, a workshop with the city's local committees was held where selected environmental and climate goals formed the basis for the generation of ideas.

One last meeting with the citizens focused on children and youth and took place at three municipal schools which were all working with the environment as an educational theme. A huge box measuring 3 x 3m was erected at the schools, and both selected pupils and pupils casually passing by were invited to come inside and share their ideas for a solution to the environmental challenges presented in words and pictures inside the box. This resulted in approximately 200 ideas.

All the involved citizens have been free to air their opinions and ideas within the set framework. Generally, the citizen involvement procedure, as described, has formed the basis for the development of the concrete activities. The subsequent work of qualifying the ideas has been done by the City of Copenhagen by e.g. arranging a qualification workshop with external experts.

During the process, a collaborative arrangement was made with anthropologist and PhD-student, Sara Kristine Gløjmar Berthou, University of Copenhagen. She wanted to study the ways of citizen involvement in the Technical and Environmental Administration in Copenhagen as part of a major research project on the life practice of citizens and the role of local government in this respect.

The collaborative project led to the idea about involving citizens through interviews with Copenhagen families in their own homes. This method has the distinct advantage that the meeting takes place in the family's own home within the framework of its everyday life, so to speak, where barriers and challenges are perceived more clearly. A total of 12 interviews were conducted with Copenhagen families. In addition, a series of ideas emerged on how to solve those challenges and barriers perceived by citizens on environmental issues.

## PART OF THE AGENDA 21 WORK

The activities form part of the City of Copenhagen plan, 'A Greener and Better Everyday Life', which forms part of Copenhagen's Agenda 21 activities. Agenda 21 is a plan to achieve sustainable developments in the twenty-first century, adopted by heads of states and governments from 181 countries at the UN Conference on Environment and Development in Rio de Janeiro in 1992. Sustainable development means that the scope for future generations in meeting their needs must not be jeopardised.

The plan demonstrates that sustainable development depends on action at all levels – globally, nationally and locally. Local authorities should start a dialogue with commercial enterprises and citizens to secure sustainable development at a local level.

Since the UN conference in Rio, the City of Copenhagen has been working with far-reaching visions, environmental policies and strategies that will turn words into action. The action taken by citizens and city users is an essential prerequisite for realising the environmental and climate goals. A large part of the initiatives to achieve the goal of carbon neutrality is characterised by being general and structural, but the initiatives set in motion by the City of Copenhagen are not sufficient on their own. The citizens, the users and the businesses in the city are crucial if a solution to the challenges is to be found.

SUMMARY OF ACTIVITIES IN 'A GREENER AND BETTER EVERYDAY LIFE'

