

# Oases van rust in stedelijke gebieden

GGD Amsterdam

**How to arrive at a local policy for urban quiet areas**

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**Contents**

- What would an urban quiet areas policy look like?
- Obstacles
- Opportunities
- Present quiet areas and policies to reduce noise

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**Enjoying the quiet in the inner city**



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**Still enjoying the quiet in the inner city**



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**Still enjoying the quiet in the inner city?**



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**What would an urban quiet policy look like?**

- Objectives and effect of policy
- Criteria for a quiet area
- Protection measures + enforcement
- Budget

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## Possible objectives and effects of policy

- To improve public health, especially of vulnerable groups  
*if effect is significant*
- To increase quality of public spaces  
*most likely for iconic spaces, how to measure quality?*
- To balance high noise levels in neighbourhood  
*help solve problem of high noise levels, alternative to reducing high levels*

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## Health perspective

Necessary elements:

- Peace and quiet in house and garden/balcony
- A quiet, green space near the house
- A park at walking distance
- A natural area (countryside, main park) at distance to cover by cycling/public transport

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## Criteria for a public quiet area (1)

Proper criterion for quietness:  
the (relative) absence of unnecessary and inappropriate sounds;  
it implies the presence of pleasant (necessary/appropriate) sounds

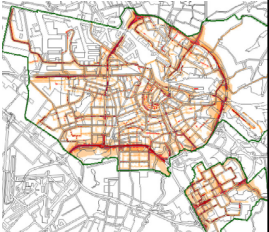
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## Criteria for a public quiet area (2)

- Easy: below 55 dB Lden transportation noise

e.g. quality classes:

- very quiet (<40)
- quiet (40-45),
- moderate (45-50)
- not quiet (50-55)
- noisy (>55 dB Lden)





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## Criteria for a public quiet area (3)

- Challenging: other noise sources (and traffic noise >55 dB);




distinguish (in)appropriate and (un)necessary sources  
inappropriate: stationary: below 45-55 dB  
non-stationary: criteria in dB hopeless, in duration of time possible; best to prevent

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## Protection measures + enforcement

- Check space is < 55 dB
- Put signs up to explain quiet character
- Reduce loud stationary sources
- Prevent loud mobile sources
- Keep space clean and safe

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13


## Budget

At start:

- draft policy
- list / map quiet spaces
- inform/involve public
- review policy and list
- upgrade/refurbish spaces

Continuously:

- enforcement
- keep up list / map  
(maintenance in usual budget for public space)



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14

## Obstacles for a quiet areas policy

Example of the "tragedy of the commons"

- Not perceived as an (urgent) problem
- Quality of urban space already important (though visual quality dominates): why extra policy?
- No concrete threats to quietness obvious, so why bother?
- New policy increases work load of municipality and number of regulations for public and business
- Communication could be a problem: what exactly must be prevented? (traffic, airplanes, pubs, people?)



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15

## Opportunities for a quiet areas policy

Concrete/strong:

- helps to solve high noise level problems
- part of EU noise action plans

Abstract/weak:

- helps create a healthy and high quality city
- populair and positive (but not urgent) topic

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16

## Qside: support for quiet area policy?

Aims:


- Calculation methods for quiet façades and quiet areas: sound levels and effects
- Recommendations for EU cities to use Qside results

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17

## Present quiet areas and policies to reduce noise

- Parks: quietness in city parks is distinctive value alongside recreational, natural and visual values. Reinforce this notion.
- City oases: small tranquil urban spaces of acoustic, visual, architectural and/or historical value. Best option: overall quality to be protected, not just visual or architectural.



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18

## Other policies affecting sonic perception

In Amsterdam several policies address noise impact (in)directly:

- shift from motorized traffic to walking/cycling and public transport
- concentrate motorized traffic on main network
- shift from combustion to electric engine
- acoustic insulation at busy street side
- noise free façade at other side

