

Presentation of the project

REMAKE YKJAVIK GREEN LAB

“A good city is like a good party – people stay longer than really necessary because they are enjoying themselves.”

Jan Gehl

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1. Site location

Reykjavik, the capital of Iceland.

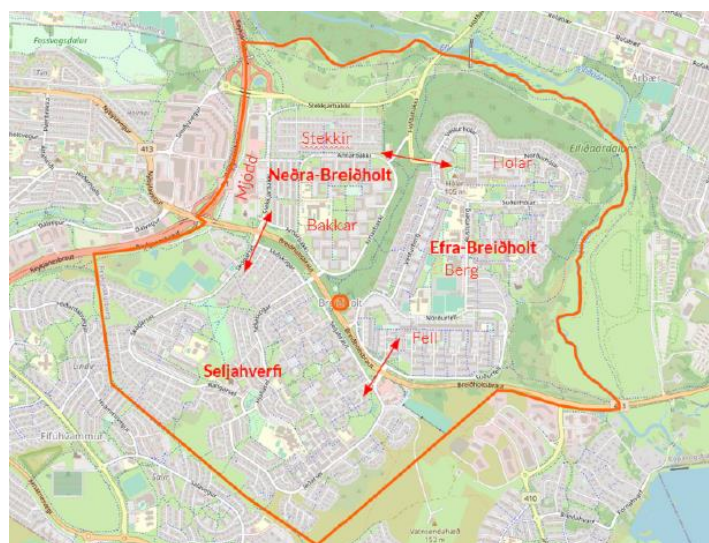
Breiðholt, an eastern suburban area.

Efra-Breiðholt, one of the three quarters.

The proposed site is Austurberg and Gerðuberg.



Breiðholt district, named as a “Reykjavik ghetto” is a forgotten place on Reykjavik map and a place that is not conducive to visiting. The location allows the district to be connected with green city corridors and provides convenient pedestrian and bicycle paths. The planned BRT line will ensure quick communication with other parts of the city. In our proposal we will develop center-forming functions and for this reason Breiðholt will be a popular destination for locals and tourists.

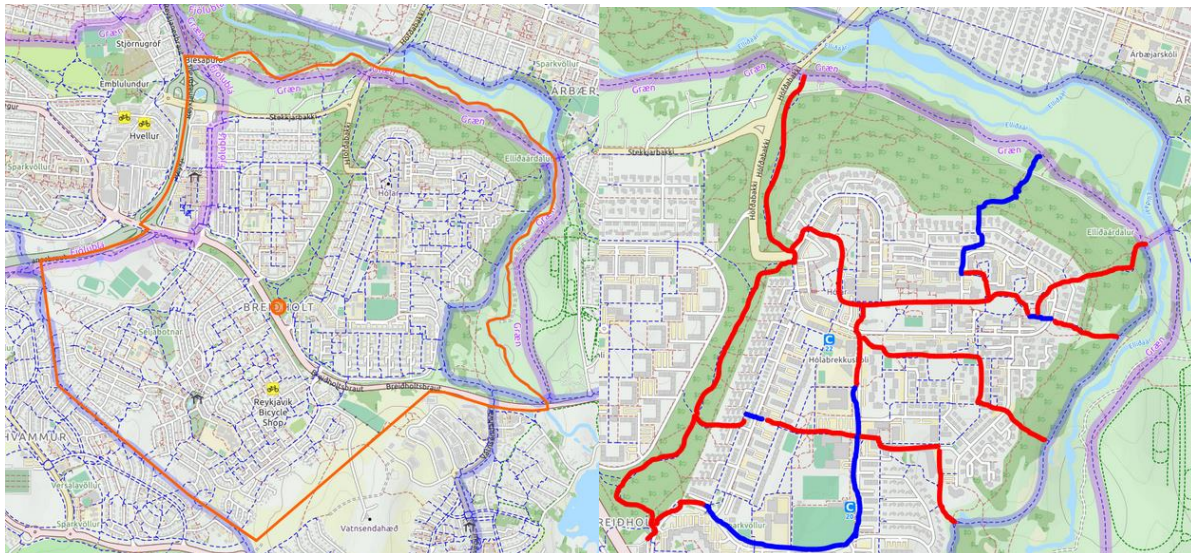


2. The main issue

Streets were designed with car-centric approach, where pedestrians and cyclists were almost forgotten. Because of that streets are dominated by roads and parking lots - wide unpleasant open spaces without places to gather or leisure. That makes them dead for public life and give people no other choice than sitting all day in their cars to get to work or buy basic products - to live in their city.



The streetscape is the main challenge to be addressed with focus on creating a more dense, diverse and more pleasant and sustainable environment for everyone.



Another challenge is providing a network of walking and cycling paths, and also filling the missing fragments of cycling paths.

3. Opportunities

People easily gather around in social media and feel identity with their district. The neighborhood is known in Reykjavik for its multicultural diversity and strong community. Immigrants take a significant part in the local population and are willing to integrate with each other. They are a great source of cultural enrichment as they may adapt their homelands habits to the community.

The college located in Breiðholt offers learning in specialized branches for example carpenter and electrician. This gives people higher qualifications for DIY projects and up-cycling actions.

Large open spaces give great opportunities for new activities. Parking lots provide excellent sites for lightweight pop-up installations and pavilions. They are easy to adapt for basic community

needs and activities such as: playgrounds for children play, greenhouses for food, public squares for gatherings and pocket parks or tree lines for flora diversity.

Planned Bus Rapid Transport (BRT) lane will connect the neighborhood with the city. The bus stop will automatically become the movement attractor and will be gathering people from the whole district. It is a great opportunity to create a multipurpose district center, in the middle of 640m long Austurberg.

“If you don’t like the weather, just wait five minutes” as it Icelandic people say, the city can quickly change its look.

4. Goals

Pedestrian focused design – the district should provide its residents an encouragement to switch from cars to travel by public transport, bike or by foot.

Living streets – residents should have a possibility to access basic goods, utilities and spend their free time within close distance of 400m from their homes.

A place for everyone – district shall provide an opportunity for everyone to express themselves, feel as part of diversified community so the district will no longer be recognized as ghetto.

Safety improvement on the streets – as the district focuses on pedestrians, they shall be protected from dangers of car traffic.

Citizens cooperation – the project will focus on further cooperation of residents with each other

Tourists involvement – Currently public transportation favorize places attractive for tourists, the unique in scale of Reykjavik ethnical and cultural diversity may attract more visitors and generate need for mass transit improvement for the area.

Clean structures – new made structures should be made of recycled resources in

Green corridors – the district shall be surrounded by continuous lands of trees and intersected by linear systems of various plants.

5. Future prediction

Imagine that you are a child and you can draw and build whatever you want, and whenever you wish. From chalks drawings to simple structures. You play with your friends and fill your closest area with child imagination and creativity. You are not limited to the playground. Parents won’t be worried that you play even on the street. You see some people carrying many tools and materials. And you wonder what they are doing, will it be playful?

Sometimes parents walk with you to this giant greenhouse full of small trees. You see Harpa planting some seedling in pots. You ask her what is it. She smiles at you proudly, shows the plant and says “I’m going to have a birch tree”.

Then you grow up. You are a young adult. You have got plenty of energy and ideas. You feel the need to express your emotions and believes. Now the whole neighborhood is your playground.

You chose to do a graffiti on one of many unpainted walls, or to construct some ingenious installation in an interesting place, or maybe you wish to create something that doesn't even exist out of the virtual reality.

You have access to the local workshop, where necessary resources always wait for you to be used. And again you choose what to create and where. While working on your project with friends you take a look at the nearest house and see Mr Gunnarsson cultivating his small vegetable garden. He stops his work, waves to you and is walking to you. When he reaches you, gaze on your work and give you advice on how to compose the oven pieces to achieve an interesting effect. After that he turns around and goes back to his work. At the end you take the picture of what you have done and let it live on the internet. After a few days you see that someone from Denmark posts the picture of himself posing with your sculpture as a scenography.

As an adult you care about your family, you want to keep them safe and ensure their future. You care about the environment and want to live in a clean habitat. As all your neighbors you segregate your wastes, deliver your broken equipment to the local recycling center and goes further to work.

At the noon, on your break you look out of the window and see some group of teenagers gathering around some strange installation that wasn't there yesterday. They are posing, taking photos, and play with some elements. You look closer and you recognize your old microwave or rather door left from it. Then you pull out your phone and try to research what is it. You quickly find the place, read that the installation was made by your friend's daughter and that it has already been posted on Instagram by six people.

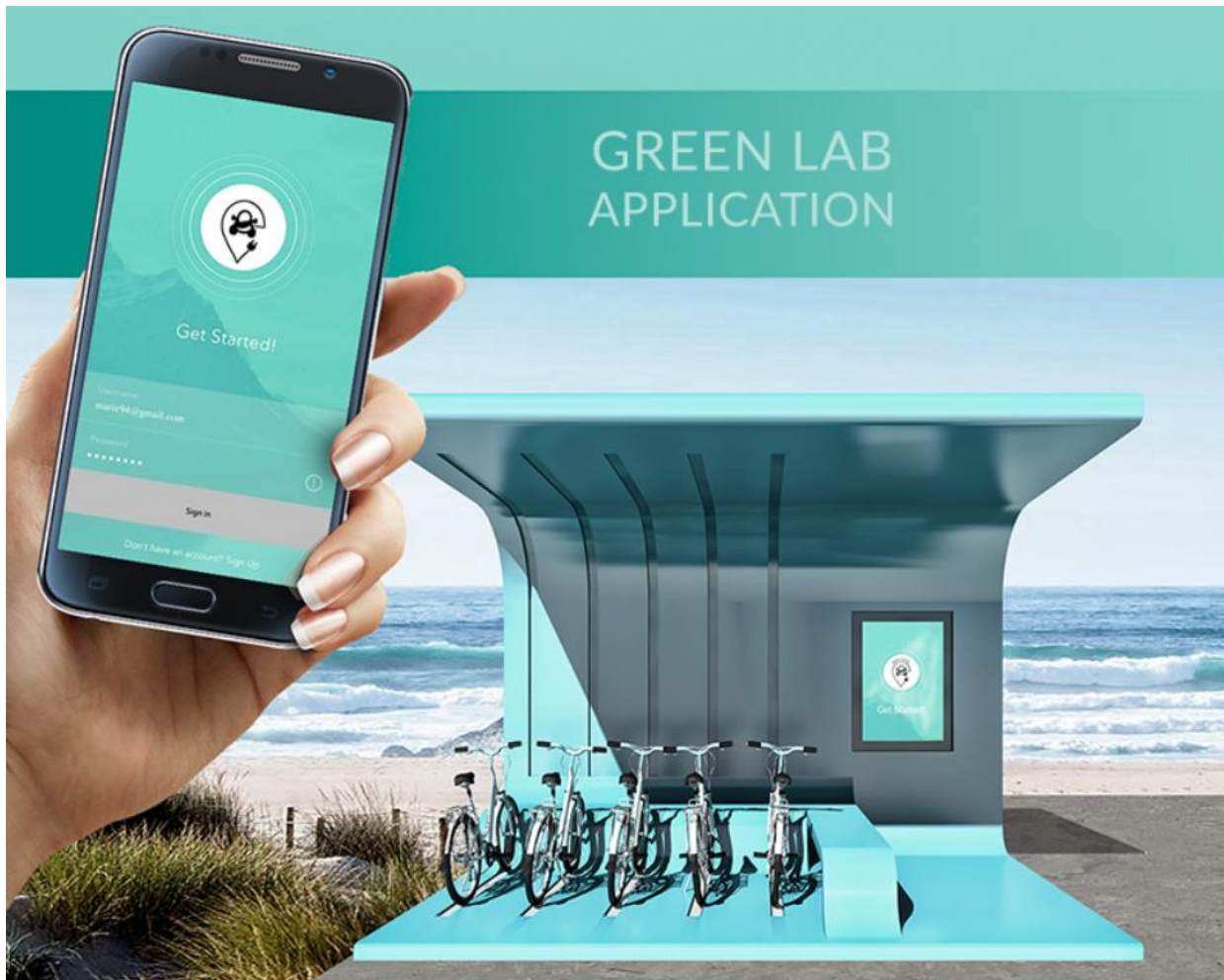
Time passes by, you observe how people work and play together. Sometimes you inspired others to create, sometimes they helped you with your work. You wrote a few stories and can advise younger people to write theirs, on your brakes from gardening. Sometimes when your children come on dinner you serve them cabbages your grandson helped you collect.

6. Developing an application

We imagine the district as living theatre with plenty of stages. The locals shall be directors and scenographers, while the tourists will be like actors. The application aims to connect as much as possible local citizens and tourists. We want to provoke collaboration between those two groups.

There will be two ways of using the application - one for residents and one for tourists. At the time the application would gather all sorts of information that helps improve local life and touristic attractiveness of the district and the city.

The most basics functions would not require registration. Anyone could check the bus table, electric car and bikes charging point, search for news, events, some utility services or for landmarks and prepared stage sceneries. Citizens of Reykjavik would have the possibility to register in application and gain access to information about community programs and projects that are being developed. We would focus on the system of preparing stages.



All starts with an idea. Any registered user could propose an interesting place and/or the scenography he would like to see on it. After that the ideas would come through voting process. Citizens would vote if they support idea or not. After approval the idea would become a project that will be developed by author and/or other residents. The finished stage would be then tagged on city's map and shortly described by information like: theme, date of construction, materials, list of authors if they wish.



The app would also help creators to gather needed materials and reserve necessary equipment in local workshop.

Marked stages could help tourists develop their own sightseeing routes. They would be obviously free to take photos and to interact with scenography. They could later publish their memories from Breiðholt and inspire residents to new ideas, as well as to simply promote the neighborhood. This will help to tackle the “ghetto” stigma.

7. New road design

The new bus line – BRT – will create an attractor for pedestrians movement. This will increase the opportunity for small businesses around the district center. Austurberg will become an axis of social activity for residents and tourists. With objects like schools and sport fields it generates mass movement in the morning and afternoon. It needs new places to gather people in different age and to fulfill their basic needs. We propose to fill it with pocket parks, greenhouses and small squares for further adaptation by residents. We provide spaces for different cultural activities.

In this project we propose to redesign the main road Austurberg to make it safer for pedestrians and cyclists, more pleasant and with the environment in mind.

To achieve those goals we propose to create a separated bus line for BRT to avoid traffic at rush hours and make buses an attractive alternative. For cars we propose a long woonerf on both sides of bus lines. This will encourage drivers to drive slower and more careful and it will increase safety on roads. Coves will be fulfilled by bus stops, parking lots for electric cars, trees, benches and small squares mentioned above. Buses and cars lines will be bordered with trees lines to separate visually the automotive traffic corridor from bicycle lines, sidewalks and activity areas like restaurants and bar gardens or private greenhouses.

This linear separation of users will ensure safe flow of people through road and also will provide pedestrians places to gather and interact with their neighbors.

Additionally in this project we want to promote a healthy way of communication. We propose to implement a few bike service stations with all necessary tools for basic repairs and conservation. At the stations residents could also rent a bicycle for free for a limited time, enough to move to the next station for example in the city center. In addition to this we propose to implement electric car and bikes charging stations in the neighborhood.



In the meantime there will be new buildings filling voids in urban fabric and increasing density. They will arrange the area and clarify road and habitats layouts.

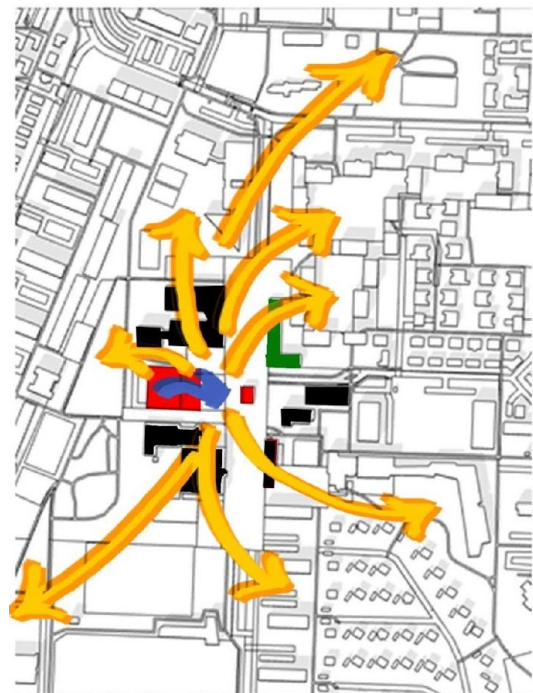
8. Science & Research Zone

On a parking lot between Frístundamiðstöðin and Íþróttamiðstöðin Austurbergi we propose to create a factory 4.0 with additional function like small recycling center. People could bring their broken electrical equipment here. Building will also gather segregated wastes from the neighborhood and make preliminary segregation on materials that can be reused after minor repairs or can be easily up-cycled and on those that need advanced technology to recycle it properly.

All goods that can be recycled in place will be available for residents to use them in Do It Yourself (DIY) projects, experimental work or manufacturing suitable goods. The rest will be moved forward to professional recycling centers.

The building will accommodate such functions like: Fabrication Laboratory (Fab Lab), carpentry shop, art workshops, experimental laboratories, meeting place and educational areas. Facility will provide tools, equipment and knowledge for arts and crafts and also basics for engineering.

It will be the core of all scenography program. Inside the building people will prepare prototypes and perform tests of their work. After finishing the final form, the stage will be temporary mounted in front of the workshop. After that the stage will be moved to its end destination.



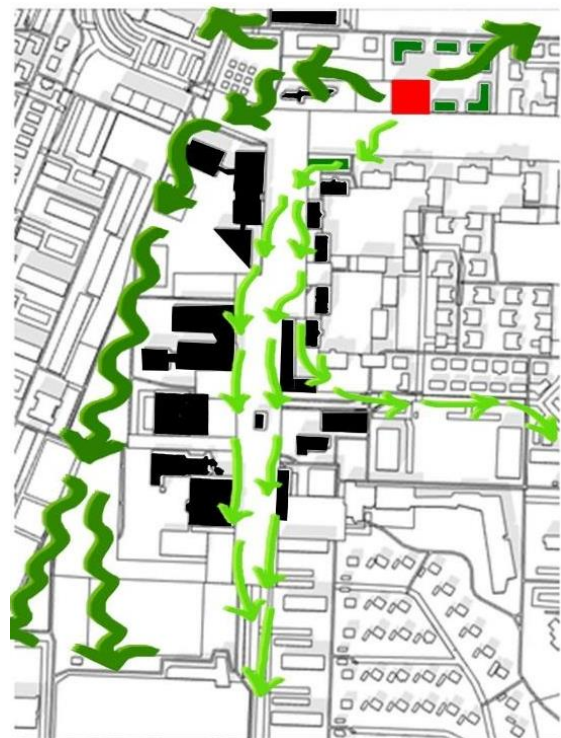


To even greater effects, college should start few new departments oriented on architecture, art and design. The facility should be in close relation with the college and collaborate in various projects made-up by residents.

9. Agro center

To tackle the issue of alien spaces and low bio diversity Breidholdt shall lead in Reykjavik reforestation and afforestation programs. There is a huge potential for green corridors and great area of forests for whole city but barren landscape with freezingly windy rivers make it harsh for early plants to survive. For this there should be a place such as tree nursery and greenhouse for plants breeding. In the building people could breed trees to the state when they are able to withstand the harsh far-norhtern climate of island.

Close localization to the kindergarten creates an opportunity for children to watch and learn about trees, brushes and other plants and their crucial role in the environment. Children could plant seeds and seedling and watch as they grow. When the plant will be able to withstand climate conditions, they will be moved outside warm greenhouse and planted in one of the pocket parks alongside main



road or in green corridors surrounding the district and to protect it from freezing wind blows. It will provide wind barriers planned in municipal plans.

Not only children and local microclimate will gain from this facility. As a starter for Urban Farming many private and for rent gardens will be spreading from the facility. People could easily learn how to protect plants from harsh climate conditions and dangers from traffic. We imagine that anyone could grow their own food and bring it to marketplace.

Near agro center we propose to build few cohousing buildings. They will provide balance between private and public. And the facility might gain place for accommodation its workers and their families.

10. Creative and Cultural Zone

On Hraunberg street we propose to create a creative street zone. Place specially prepared for restaurants gardens and small outdoor exhibitions. The street should become a passage for multicultural cuisines from around the world, especially from residents homelands to remind their first homes and to let them show their lifestyles by their food.

We imagine three squares: first around the BRT stop with exhibition square for newly manufactured pavilions and stage installations, second near Borgarbókasafnið, the third in close proximity to FB school. All three between Hraunberg and Gerduberg would connect and provide a multifunctional area for tourists and residents.

As tourists might want to “collect” all of the prepared stages they may need a comfortable accommodation nearby. Near BRT bus stop we designed a hostel for tourists and students, so they could easily move around the activity centre and cultural passage.



11. Sports Zone

Last part of district cultural opening for city is creating a winter sport center. It should accommodate equipment to practice like ice rink, snowpark/fun park, gym and fitness club. Multifunction building that can combine various disciplines with additional commercial services on ground-floor will not only generate more traffic, but also will become a landmark at the end of the road making clear border of public attractions on Austurberg street.

In cooperation with existing swimming pool the area will become a full-equipped sports center training new athletes and providing healthy way of spending free time. The growth in active live style will be the best way of preventing troubles with health and obesity that is increasing like in other developed countries.



12. Summary

<p>Connected place Design focused on pedestrians and their possibilities to commucate via BRT, bikes or on foot Support for infrastructure for electric cars and other clean vehicles. Proposed charging stations for cars and electric bikes, as well as bike stations for maintenance and rental of the vehicles Improved infrastructure for electric and regular bicycles Proposed additional cycling paths alongside main routes</p>
<p>Climate education in schools The tree nursery will teach from children to elderly people how to grow plants in harsh climate.</p>
<p>A place for everyone The design make use of the love of local people to graffiti and street art by encouraging them to prepare stages for tourists so they could promote the district and fight “ghetto” stigma</p>
<p>People-centred mobility and thriving streets Wide road is divided into three lanes making clear segregation of automotive traffic from pedestrians to give them safe space for other activities around the buildings</p>
<p>Tackling Space Alienation Proposed closer localization of new building line to prevent from voids in urban fabric</p>
<p>Close to home Designed plenty of attractions for citizens and tourists to integrate and collaborate outdoors</p>
<p>Resource management and Green economy Design promotes recycling and upcycling of broken devices</p>
<p>Green space, climate resilient and nature-based solutions Design focuses on green solutions like reforestation and afforestation for carbon uptake Proposed tree nursery as a starting point for new trees. Implementing pocket parks, semi-private gardens for rent, tree nursery</p>