

## Voorwoord voor de ALV (komt niet terug in de definitieve versie)

Naar aanleiding van het kaderbeleid en ons beleidsplan hebben we als bestuur besloten dat we meer met visies willen werken. Deze visies geven duidelijkheid en sturing aan portefeuilles, medewerkers en besturen. Ook voor huisvesting willen wij een visie opstellen. Het onderstaande document presenteert de visie in haar volledigheid - die graag goedgekeurd wordt door de Algemene Ledenvergadering van de ASVA Studentenvakbond.

# ASVA Housing Vision

‘The city is ours’

Adopted on xx-xx-2024

## Introduction

There is a housing crisis in Amsterdam. Students have to wait longer for a room than they take to complete their studies, live in rooms of 6 square meters for 948 euros or do not receive an out-of-house grant because they are not registered. Not only students suffer from the lack of rooms. It is impossible to continue living in Amsterdam after your studies without earning a sky-high starting salary.

However, this does not have to be the case. It can be completely different, in fact, it must be completely different. That is why ASVA has a housing vision. This document contains ASVA's vision of how housing must and can be different in Amsterdam. We outline an ideal picture as well as concrete changes we would like to see in Amsterdam and beyond.

In the first heading, 'The Cooperative City', we outline our ideal situation of Amsterdam as a city. We then build on this in 'Structural Problems, Structural Adjustments,' in which we tackle the structural problems that stand in the way of such a bright future. With the heading 'Goals within municipal boundaries' we focus on short-term solutions in which we go through local and regional measures we are for or against. There are also special themes such as topics that are underexposed within the broader vision that we still want to address. As a result, here is a holistic document in which ASVA reflects its vision. Happy reading!

## The cooperative city

Imagine a city where every student has ample choice about which neighborhood they would live in. A city with ample choice of self-contained and independent rooms in different parts of the city. A city in which every student can find their place and feel at home. A city where students can flourish. Whether in a studio in a quiet suburb of the city or in a packed student flat on the canals.

Imagine that there is not only a wide choice in housing, but that these homes are also affordable, so that students do not have to pay more than necessary to find a place in Amsterdam. In addition, these homes are in good condition, well insulated, and easily cooled during warmer periods. Homes that are green and sustainable: in which every roof either has a garden or solar panels.

Imagine that every student knows exactly what they can expect from their housing and is firm in their ability to get what they are entitled to. That housing rights are not just something that works on paper, but are a means of giving students strength and self-assurance in achieving and maintaining affordable, good quality housing.

Imagine students having a say in their housing rights themselves. Not just as individuals, but as a collective and they can have creative construction within their dorm, flat or neighborhood. That students have not only responsibility, but a say in their housing situation.

In the ideal situation, students not only have it good, but every student can have a nice start in this city. In addition, people should be able to easily move on to find housing within the city when they are done studying.

It is a distant vision, but at the same time this is precisely a conceivable ideal.

In a nutshell, our ideal includes a number of core values:

- The ideal city is affordable, green and accessible in the broadest sense.
- The ideal city is a city where students again have freedom of choice. The city has student housing of all shapes and sizes: large or small, inside or outside the ring, with or without many roommates. Price differentiation between these options should not be disproportionate.
- Students deserve influence: students should have a say in deciding where they live and how housing is furnished. Both individually and collectively.
- Students living in the city should feel that their housing rights matter. To this end, we are committed to broad knowledge transfer about housing rights among students and support students in making use of their housing rights.
- Students should be able to live in the city where they started their studies. Moreover, housing for starters in Amsterdam should meet the same requirements as student housing. MBO students especially are often still 'living at home'. We want to work to give every student, of every level of education, a fair chance at student housing.

## Structural problems, structural solutions

The ideal world is not here yet. Indeed, there are a lot of problems with the housing stock in our city. We see a surplus of expensive student housing, there is a lot of insecurity, low maintenance, a lot of temporary housing, a lot of poor quality housing, little permanence, and the housing market is very insider-oriented. You have to have a network before you get in, but as a result there is also a lot of discrimination based on gender, ethnicity and whether you grew up here.

Student housing is a complex problem. First, much of the problem comes from national regulations.

For example, look at the skewed system for rent subsidies and national building policies. It is complicated for a municipality to work within these frameworks. Second, the time margins are large: it takes a very long time to achieve good, permanent housing. Third, no one person or organization is responsible: the shortage of student housing has been created over the years by, in our view, bad policies in all levels of government. Unfortunately, this also means that you cannot solve the problem by improving one factor.

Precarity and scarcity within student housing also create other problems. For example, we see that students often lack knowledge of their housing rights, and if they already have them, they often do not dare to use them. Consequently, many serious defects, such as mold, wood rot or poor ventilation, go unreported in student housing. This allows unpleasant or even unsafe living situations to arise.

Structural adjustments are needed to get the system functioning again. We continue to work at the regional level and in cooperation with national parties such as the National Student Union (LSVb) and the National Consultation of Student Tenants (LOS) to improve national arrangements. Below are some of the goals we have for national policy. Goals within municipal boundaries are detailed in the next chapter.

ASVA strongly supports construction by housing corporations. Housing corporations provide social housing in the Netherlands and have the goal of building affordable housing. In our opinion, housing corporations should have priority on land in Amsterdam. Think of parties like DUWO and DeKey, the large student housing corporations.

These are only hindered by the system. There is not enough housing supply, quality is low, and smaller and smaller homes are being built. Housing associations have too little disposable capital and too little security. This leads housing corporations to sell large social housing units to build temporary or small units in their place. On balance, this is positive on the municipality's annual construction figures, but it is not an actual solution. We therefore look beyond the housing corporations of today. We must get rid of the capitalist market model in which they are in competition with greedy developers and they must be given the space to build solid social housing that can last for a hundred years. This must be balanced with affordability first and foremost.

Buyers are now pushing ahead of students and young people in the Amsterdam housing market. Partly to enable a broad investment agenda, it must become less attractive to buyers in the Amsterdam housing market. It cannot be the case that based on your parents' wallet, it is determined whether you can study in Amsterdam. Some buyers make it even more bonkers and buy houses purely as investment properties and clearly leave it empty. Not only should the vacancy ban be further tightened, but the national ban on squatting should be lifted, with a clear way of how collectives can be legalized.

Briefly, the problem analysis and solutions from ASVA:

The state of Amsterdam's public housing is poor. If you get a roof over your head at all, it is often an insecure, low-quality and expensive home. This is due to a mosaic of contrasting national and local regulations and an ideological marketing of housing in Amsterdam and throughout the Netherlands. We therefore demand total systemic change at every level.

- First, we see this through strengthening and favoring housing corporations, which must be disengaged from the neoliberal housing market so that they build quality and affordable housing.
- Buyers should instead be priced out of Amsterdam: it should no longer be profitable to buy a house as an investment property or as a privilege for a studying child.
- Where there is vacancy, squatting should be allowed.

## Goals within municipality borders

Despite being limited by national regulations, this does not mean that the municipality is sidelined. The municipality is therefore one of our most important partners in the field of housing. We maintain good contact with the policy staff on this subject and are present at important consultations. We are also committed to cooperation agreements, in whatever form. We are critical of the housing share policy. Housing sharing in Amsterdam has been made more difficult in recent years because landlords with more than two tenants must have a special permit. However, this has mainly led to students often living in properties illegally, as only two contracts are possible. We are in favor of broadening the housing share policy, but this can only be done if students' rental rights are properly protected. After all, it is also not our intention that students end up living in cramped, unlivable rooms. It is important to stay in contact with the municipality, the LSVb, and other bodies such as the ombudsman to come up with a creative, useful solution together. At the same time, we are in favor of transformational construction. There are many empty office buildings. Amsterdam should facilitate their conversion to student housing.

We demand rent law enforcement: too often we see students bear the brunt of bad landlordism. With the new Good Landlord Act, the municipality has the tools to tackle bad landlords. In this we cooperate with external organizations such as the !Woon Foundation, but also internally with our own legal office.

We support the building of housing cooperatives. The municipality has set a goal that 10% of new construction should be dedicated to housing cooperatives. An excellent initiative that we want to facilitate for students and starters within Amsterdam. Do you want to move on to actual housing with the students in your dorm, or do you want a chance to live together in Amsterdam? Then this is perfect.

We take a keen look at the politics of land: Although ground lease is quite a complex bureaucratic layer within the land of Amsterdam, it is an incredibly important way for Amsterdam to make agreements and enforce various things. We are therefore big supporters of ground lease and want to explore as much as possible how the system can especially benefit affordable student housing.

- Options for home-sharing should be broadened, but rental rights should be protected. The municipality should maximize contracts that protect all tenants without shrinking the stock.
- Vacant offices are perfect for student housing and should be transformed.
- The municipality must make an extra effort to implement the "Good Landlord Act"; we will work on this as well.
- Leaseholding is a useful means of maintaining common control over private housing stock, let's keep it that way.

In addition to the municipality of Amsterdam, municipalities in the region are also relevant to us, such as the municipalities of Amstelveen, Diemen and Haarlemmermeer. We also try to cooperate with them whenever possible and in the same areas as with the municipality of Amsterdam. However, Amsterdam has the primary focus and we basically want students to be able to live in Amsterdam. As far as this is concerned, living in the region in the current housing crisis is "a necessary evil" and not a permanent solution. For this reason, we also fight for good public transport connections and enough facilities on the campuses in the region. We work closely with the RAC (Traveler's Advice Council) and the transport region of Amsterdam. In the coming period we will do more research on the conditions for living in the region, such as what travel time students find acceptable. Finally, we work with, but are also critical of other important parties in the city, such as housing corporations and educational institutions.

## Themes

In addition to these points, ASVA has a number of key themes that need real attention for the housing market. "Student and City in harmony," "Starter after student," and "Sustainability and climate control" are all key themes. For each theme, we have a number of concrete actions we want to implement to make these pieces better.

### Student and City in Harmony

Every student deserves to feel safe in their home in the broadest sense. A sense of safety and community makes the difference between a house and a home. Therefore, we want housing providers to be committed to the social and physical safety of their homes. Here, of course, the rule applies: nothing about us, without us. Residents should have a say in how their sense of safety and community is enhanced.

Too often we see failures in this area. For example, too often the social safety, physical safety and fire safety of student housing falls short.

We strive for student housing where there is a strong sense of community, acceptance, solidarity and safety. Where students feel connected to their neighbors, as well as to the neighborhoods and districts where they live. We strive to ensure that choices about student housing situations are made by students. This may be through resident committees or other forms of resident organizations.

- Social cohesion: we promote and support the start-up and operation of resident committees, RAs and other ways to connect residents to each other.
- Physical and social safety: we look with students at how they feel safest. Special focus is on the fire safety of student buildings. We often see that fire safety is severely lacking. It is up to the government and housing providers to ensure and maintain this fire safety.
- We try to ensure that the student and the neighborhood live together in harmony: too often the image prevails that students cause nothing but nuisance, while they also do many good things for neighborhoods. This includes continuing to look at students who

are paired with other vulnerable target groups, such as status holders. What is important here is that this should not be introduced as a disguised cutback. For example, professional help should be included as standard in such cases.

- We are committed to building more non-self-contained rooms. This is good for the housing stock, social cohesion, diversity of housing and efficient use of space.

## Starter after student

Even though the student is ASVA's main target group, throughput is very important to us. Even after your studenthood, you have the right to appropriate housing, which in turn benefits the housing stock for students.

- We promote throughput and appropriate housing for students and first-time buyers. Many students by necessity stay longer in housing that is only meant for students after graduation because they cannot find other housing. Therefore, it is also in ASVA's interest to support the construction and supply of other housing. We are therefore also looking at housing for young people under 28 and other forms of starter housing.
- At the same time, we remain critical of the transit times that apply to student housing. In the current situation, it is not possible to expect students to move out of their housing immediately after graduation, given that there is not enough housing for young people and first-time buyers either. Therefore, we believe it is important to give graduates ample time to find new housing.

## Sustainability en climate control

Sustainability is a wide-ranging issue that is everywhere, including housing.

Amsterdam is miles away from meeting its own climate goals, and many student residences still have single-glazing or poor insulation. Not only is this bad for the future of the planet, this is also a waste of students' money, who have to dig deeper into their pockets due to higher energy bills. This also affects the well-being of students living away, who wake up with icicles on their toes during the winter and boil away in their rooms in the summer.

The space around student housing should also contribute more to the environment.

ASVA strives for climate-neutral and sustainable housing, during and after construction. We also strive for green neighborhoods that contribute to local biodiversity.

- We demand climate-proof rooms. Climate change affects housing a lot. For example, we see rooms getting much too hot in summer and too cold in winter. Climate control will therefore remain a big issue in the coming years. We give tips and requirements to the municipality and housing organizations to prevent these problems.
- We advocate future-proof, permanent housing of good quality. These last longer and are therefore more sustainable.
- We fight for a green environment. A green living environment is good for your mental and physical health. We can work together with the sustainability portfolio to create a green living environment for students.



## Conclusion

ASVA outlines in this vision statement the purpose and bottlenecks of housing. We strive for a city where all students who want it can find affordable and quality rooms. At the same time, we mention the major obstacles that prevent this, such as the mosaic of national and local government policies, the heated housing market in which the social price has to compete with the free market, and the lack of opportunities to combat vacancy rates. ASVA advocates for better policies within and outside the region.