

Interview with Tako Postma, Stadsbouwmeester Delft

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When a million new homes are needed nationally, your own neighbourhood is as good a place to look for possible opportunities and implications as anywhere else. Marja Elsinga and Harald Mooij (1MH) met digitally with Tako Postma (TP), 'Stadsbouwmeester' (city architect) in Delft since 2019 and overviewing the municipality's aim to build 15.000 new dwellings before 2040.

1MH: *How does the aim for such a large number of new houses relate to the policies and realities in a city like Delft?*

TP: What is interesting and quite unique in Delft, is that it is a small city with metropolitan qualities and issues. It is extraordinarily well connected, hosts (inter)nationally acclaimed companies and institutions, yet is organized on a relatively small scale. At the same time, there is a huge distinction in its population, dispersed over the various districts and neighbourhoods. This is extra compelling when you realise that Delft has reached the outer limits of its municipal grounds, so any new developments need to be implemented within the existing built fabric.



A view of the Delftse Schie, with the Oude Kerk in the background. Credit M.Minderhoud/Wikimedia Commons.

1MH: *So where do you think this densification could take place? And how does that relate to the various target groups in Delft?*

TP: Currently we are working in Tanthof on densification and the introduction of better housing options for the elderly. The banks of the *Schie* canal are prone to redevelopment in high density, including small scale industry and housing. And do not forget the potential of the existing neighbourhoods: we try to bring more green area and density. Also around and on the TU Delft campus: there's a growing demand to live in the academic ambience, also from people who don't study there, but just feel connected.



A view of a street in the Tanthof neighbourhood. Credit Steven Lek/Wikimedia Commons.

1MH: *Is there any way we can help, with our research and education?*

TP: We already work together with TU Delft in Tanthof, both in research and education. But I could think of many more collaborations: a living lab on the campus where we could test new housing concepts, both for students and more permanent residents. And since we face concerns about the amount of high-rise developments, it would be interesting to investigate the potentials of high rise living. So let's continue this conversation!