

Light relief



The first stage of the Aarhus Light Rail system will be inaugurated later in 2017, coinciding with the city's tenure as the European Capital of Culture. The Light Rail will improve both mobility and the environment, while also working as a driver for urban development, as **Jens Velling** reports

This has been a significant year for Aarhus, the second largest city in Denmark. In 2017 the city has been the European Capital of Culture, and at the same time, the first light rail system in Denmark is set to be inaugurated.

The first stage of Aarhus Light Rail consists of two parts. The existing railway from Grenaa to Odder via Aarhus will be upgraded and made

part of the light rail system. The second part will be a new city line reaching from the central station in Aarhus, to two new districts at Lisbjerg and Nye, located north of the city centre.

Aarhus Light Rail has ordered two different types of trains: on the route to Grenaa, the speed will reach 100 km/h. Hence, it will be operated by a tram-train offering high comfort for longer journeys. In the city of Aarhus,

passengers will be serviced by a slightly smaller tram.

Common to both types of trams is the simple, uncluttered Scandinavian design. Great effort has been put in to providing availability for wheelchair users and other passengers with disabilities. The selection of materials and colours are coordinated to give Aarhus Light Rail a distinct, yet elegant identity.

Much thought has been given to the interior design of the light rail system



AN ALTERNATIVE TO CAR QUEUES

One of the lines of Aarhus Light Rail will run on Randersvej, which today is one of the busiest roads in the city. In the northern part of Aarhus, the line will make a turn off Randersvej and continue towards the new University Hospital. On the way, the light rail will pass several companies, residential areas and educational institutions.

As such, the Aarhus Light Rail will become an alternative for thousands of current users of public transportation. Furthermore, it has the potential to attract many motorists, who will be able to move quickly and smoothly from the city centre to the north of Aarhus.

During rush hours, the light rail will have a frequency of eight departures per hour, making it unnecessary to look at timetables – passengers will simply arrive at the station and take the first available tram.

ENVIRONMENTAL ADVANTAGES

All 26 trams and tram-trains are electrically powered, which will benefit the environment in many ways.

An electric tram is very quiet compared to buses, diesel-powered trains

and cars. Furthermore, pollution from car exhaust and harmful particles will also be substantially reduced.

The electricity for the trams is made from renewable energy such as wind power and biomass. Thus, Aarhus Light Rail will make a substantial contribution to the fulfillment of Aarhus's ambition to become CO2-neutral by 2030.

A TOOL FOR URBAN DEVELOPMENT

Aarhus Light Rail is not merely a transport system, but indeed a tool for urban development. Experience from other countries shows great interest in investing in real estate along the corridors of a light rail system. When the rails are first laid down, you will be guaranteed efficient public transportation for years to come. Such a long-term outlook attracts investors and developers alike, increasing investments in both businesses and real estate.

The municipality of Aarhus also focuses on urban development along the light rail system. Two new neighbourhoods are planned as clusters around the first stage of the light rail, respectively in Lisbjerg and Nye, north of central Aarhus. The total population of the two new areas is estimated to reach 40,000.

The Light Rail will also boost the development of the existing parts of the city that it will run through. The outcome, when the modern, quiet and pollution free light rail replaces the more noisy and polluting buses, is a completely different and improved urban environment. 🌱



Aarhus's new light rail system is set to go live later in 2017



FYI

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