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## **The Status of Participatory Planning in Norway: A case study**

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**Abstract**

This master thesis is an investigation into the status of participatory planning in Norway. It has a special focus on the effect participating in planning can have on an ongoing process. The aim of the thesis is to investigate an assumed gap between participation as it is presented and how it works in real life. First the ideal and practice in international literature is presented, and a framework is constructed to analyze the literature and find traces of the gap. Then Norwegian system, guidebooks and other literature is presented to show the Norwegian ideal, the policy which is held up against critical literature and studies in the same framework to look for gaps in the Norwegian system. Finally, a Norwegian case is studied and presented. This case is then discussed in regards to effective participation and analyzed in the same framework to see if the same gaps are found in a practical case when studied in detail. After finding gaps in every section the thesis makes a conclusion on discrepancy in ideal and policy, and reality, before concluding on the status of participatory planning in Norway.

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## **Chapter 1: Thesis approach, problem statement and method**

As an introduction, this chapter will describe the initial approach to the thesis and the assumptions behind it, the resulting problem statement and describe the methods used to examine it.

### **Initial assumptions and approach**

The initial approach to the thesis was to investigate whether participation works as intended, or to assess the status of participatory planning in Norway. Theory revolving around participation seemed overwhelmingly positive to the concept, but my own practice at the municipality planning office in Haugesund gave a different impression.

The idea is that there is built an expectation in theory and policy, that is not met in reality. If found to be true, it would cause confusion and frustration that would harm the further development of the well intentioned concept of participation. The identified problem was that there might be a discrepancy between the theory and policy (participation on paper), and the practice or reality. The main aim is to carry out an assessment of the state of participatory planning in Norway. This is important because participation has the potential to become a new branch of government in planning, but as long as there are discrepancies there is confusion which inhibits the concept from growing into a recognized source of input with power. Critical investigation into the status of participatory planning is therefore needed.

Part 1 constructs a critical framework that is used to analyze a Norwegian case. The framework is constructed by reviewing international theory and analyzing the Norwegian planning policy and system, as well as Norwegian research, to identify challenges to participation. These challenges are first identified in international theory, then confirmed in a Norwegian context.

The part 1 assessment shows a gap between the ideals of international, and Norwegian theory on participation – and the Norwegian research evidence. To find evidence for this contemporary phenomenon, part 2 investigates a practical planning case looking to apply the critical framework to a real-life situation.

## **Problem statement**

In order to examine this issue, in order to assess the status of participatory planning, the following problem statement was chosen;

“There is a problem in participatory planning in Norway. Despite legal requirement and encouragement, positive policy impact and an institutional desire for active public participation – real life participation is lacking. This problem has negatively impacted participation as a concept because participation loses trust and relevancy among its user base when it stays incomplete. Possible causes to this problem could be social and institutional. A comparative theory and case study will be done to highlight this gap between the ideal and the real.”

As an additional research question, the thesis asks:

“To what degree can participation impact an ongoing planning process?”

This is to highlight that for participation in real life to reach the ideal, participation must be effective, meaning people must have an incentive to engage in the concept, and make it grow.

The problem statement and research question allows for an investigation into the effect participation has on an ongoing planning process. This because if participation is to have a purpose, it must have an effect. This approach was chosen because it allows for an investigation into the theoretical and actual effect of participation, so they can be compared and a discrepancy might be found. Because this is intended to be an open, qualitative study, an open problem statement was chosen. In investigating the problem statement the thesis will shed some light on the status of participatory planning in Norway.

The thesis aims to present a balanced and neutral review of the possibility for, and effect of participation in Norway in theory and in practice.

## **Part 1: Theoretical background**

This part is a purely theoretical study, where relevant literature from trusted sources is interpreted and presented. This was done as a preparation to the case study, to deepen the understanding of the purpose, history, benefits and challenges of participation. It is presented here with the same purpose.

The theory part is split into international and Norwegian theory. The international literature regarding participation is presented first and is a more general discussion of participation, to find recurring issues to lay the foundation for the further study on the Norwegian planning system. The Norwegian part of the theory study is based on studies, literature and guiding documents from Norwegian authorities within planning. The purpose is to look for correlation between international and Norwegian literature, and to show which strengths and weaknesses to look for in the case study, as well as provide a basis for comparison for the case work. A set of central problems are identified and elaborated in the international literature, and is then tracked through the Norwegian literature. This is to provide a basis for comparison of literature and the case. A weakness to this part is that the limited timeframe of this study does not allow for a deeper literature analysis.

## **Part 2: Case – The expansion of Fv 47 Karmsundgata in Haugesund**

The thesis presents an inside look at a planning process. The expansion of Haugesund's main road, Karmsundgata, is chosen as a case study. This planning process was recently concluded, but there was little prior knowledge of the plan beyond that. The case is chosen because of the large physical scale of the plan and the importance such a decision has on the future development of a city. This means that many people are affected by the plan, making it well fitted for the purpose of this thesis as it should have extensive participation. Either the plan will contain a large amount of data in the form of participation data such as meetings, workshops and public inspection submissions, or the plan will be a monument to weak participation if there is little data available. Either way the data will be significant to assess the status of participatory planning in Norway, and the outcome will be open which makes for an interesting study. The scope and scale of the case both financially and geographically does not represent "everyday" planning.

To do the case study, access to the municipal archives was negotiated. The study was conducted over three weeks at the Haugesund municipality planning office. There was some contact with some personnel involved with both processing and participating on the plan in the form of informal interviews. These were done to steer the work and confirm or deny assumptions and suspicions. The thesis presents the case chronologically from a retrospective perspective, and is a presentation of the available documentation from their archives, with a focus on the conducted participation and the processing thereof. A weakness to the case study



is that the three other major players in the case, is only partly portrayed. The case study does however show a detailed progression of a major planning project.

### **Discussion**

The discussion will handle the findings of the case study. The framework from part 1 is applied to the case to find discrepancies from the ideals of participation in the case study. From there a conclusion on an assumed discrepancy, the problem statement and the status of participatory planning can be made.

# Part 1

## **Chapter 2: Participation in spatial planning**

This chapter is to account for how participation in planning appeared and developed as an international theoretic concept. The literature covered here will cover participation on the most general level, and is not necessarily case specific but serve to show how it is regarded as an idea across the western world. The historic development of participation and practical manifestation, its benefits and its identified challenges are subjects of this chapter. The chapter provide a background for further studies and a comparison to participation as it is discussed and practiced in the Norwegian planning system.

### **The historic development of participatory planning**

The purpose of this section is to give a short historic recap of how participation has developed since its appearance as a concept. How planning has evolved, and how participation fits into this evolution that has made participation a central part of contemporary planning. This explains why planning is what it is today, as it will always contain traces of the past. In order to say something about the effect of participation today, one must include the participation of the past.

The first planning model to adopt any form of participation, emerged around the late 1950s and 1960s and is termed synoptic planning (Lane 2006). This model allowed for comments on the goals set for the planning activity. Its precursor, blueprint planning, was a strictly technical activity, where the “city architect” devised a grand plan for the city which is then followed like the blueprint to a building (Lane 2006). It is considered the “original city planning”, and was dominant in the years 1890 – 1960 (Wikipedia on blueprint planning 2016). This was planning done by experts with the power to make and implement a plan. It did not include any form of participation, and when the plan was in place it was more or less absolute.

According to the Lane (2006), two remnants of this blueprint planning exists today; the concept of a unified common interest and planning as a non-political activity (Lane 2006).

The synoptic model took over as a dominating model around the 1950s and 1960s as US and British cities expanded greatly in scale and reach, partly because of the automobile (Lane 2006). It had an increased focus on setting goals, analysis of the area, evaluation and

consideration of different alternatives and finally considerations of which means would most effectively reach the goals that were set (Lane 2006). It was seen as the rational response to the increased complexity of growing cities, admitting that a simple blueprint was no longer sufficient. It forwarded the assumption that there exists a unified common interest within the society or city, which the author claim weaken both the incentive to participate and the resolve of any opposing participants, as someone objecting to the “common good”, set by the planners, can be easily dismissed as a self-serving charlatan.

The synoptic model was replaced by incrementalism in the 1960s, which embrace a more gradual form of urban planning (Lane 2006). Incremental change means a gradual change that is the sum of many smaller changes. Incremental planning was supposed to have a larger margin of error, admitting that things does not always go according to plan. There would be a decision between a limited set of alternatives with known consequences, which is then continuously evaluated through analysis and improved as the need occurred. This model implies there are more than one unified interest to be served through planning, as there is a need to continuously modify the plan as new issues appear. The model includes consultation, as the need for continuous reevaluating and analysis opens for informal consultation.

Actual participation as we know it today, had its first appearance in what got known as transactive planning, developed in the 1970s (Lane 2006). In this model, dialogue and the sharing of ideas is key and the planner’s role is to put what comes fourth into action. The planner was also charged with distributing information and collecting feedback. Mutual learning and social capital is central to this model of urban planning, meaning that personal or institutional development comes before functional goals. Power was meant to be decentralized by involving the public in planning. People were encouraged to participate. The author calls it the start of a new era.

Around the same time, advocacy planning was developed which also had public participation as a central concern (Lane 2006). In this model, pluralistic interests are acknowledged and the advocacy planner must actively seek out the various interests of a community. The model also acknowledge that there is an imbalance of power, and unequal access to power structures. The planner must therefore advocate for the weaker groups in society.

Communicative planning later emerged to become the dominant planning model (Lane 2006). The communicative ideal seeks principles to guide and evaluate the public debate (Healey 1996). The model aims to open up the previously closed praxis of bureaucratic institutions,

and create a more “bottom-up” system where needs are communicated up the power structure and result in a plan to deal with the issue. The essential idea is to have an authentic and honest face-to-face dialogue with the full range of stakeholders in the project (Innes, Booher 2000). Stakeholders whose interests converge should engage in dialogue, there should be no initial notion of rights or advantages for one group over another and all stakeholders should receive the same information. A decision can only be made when there is a degree of agreement among a majority of stakeholders, and there has been an honest attempt at satisfying all stakeholders equally.

The qualities of this process is that all stakeholders publicly present their interest in the given project, and they in collaboration formulate the purpose and goals of the planning work. The following assessments and plan design can then seek to solve the problem that is presented while taking into account the interests of stakeholders. Then work is done through collaboration, and the result should be a collection of ideas incorporated into a well thought out plan. The process should also emphasize moral and emotions as a basis for decision making, primarily to protect the environment (Healey 1996).

In its essence, it is more of an ideal to strive for, than a realizable model to work after.

The general thread here is how the process has changed in a distinct direction from being a closed, top-down, expert driven and authoritarian process to becoming a more open and collaborative process where discussion and public scrutiny are key elements. The means for doing it are different in the various models, but they all move towards participation.

### **Models of planning manifested in practice**

This purpose of this section is to show how the aforementioned planning models manifest in practice. They show how although the practice of planning might have changed on paper over the years, there is also a model within people. The following are models of thought that can stem from personal conviction as well as earlier planning models. This affect how individuals see participation regardless of what the guiding literature or the stated mission of their institution is. This section is to understand how different agents, with different mindset see participation and how this can affect participation as it can be observed in practice.

Innes and Booher (2000) claim that public participation as it is presented can appear incoherent and confusing to people because there are different approaches to planning that are

held by different professionals, public officials and other participants that shape their view of participation. These include the technical/bureaucratic model, the political influence model, the social movement model and the communicative model.

These models supposedly govern the subject's approach to planning, including how and why public participation is done, and who should be involved. These descriptions originate from the American planning climate, and are extremities. However, they outline a set of different mentalities that are held, and not exclusively by professional planners but also decision makers or social or business individuals of power.

The technical/bureaucratic model rely on technical information, analysis and projections to give officials a basis for a decision (Innes, Booher 2000). It is a model based on concrete goals, and finding and assessing the alternative that is judged most likely to attain the goal. Afterwards, the effect of the decision can be measured by set criteria, and necessary changes can be proposed. Goals, visions or values are given as variables to the analysis as the work commence. The model is judged by the authors as effective where there is a clear goal, political will behind it and the problem is well understood (Innes, Booher 2000). It is judged as insufficient when there are diverse interests and unpredictable and complex scenarios.

Public participation in this model is a requirement of the law (Innes, Booher 2000). It is a useful supplement to understand goals and values already given for their objective. It is subjective evidence, and does not carry substantial weight.

The political influence model is concerned with incorporating the interests of political players into the plan or decision (Innes, Booher 2000). The authors describe the role of the planner as a "fixer", who work several projects into a joint decision. A good plan after this model offer something to everyone involved. This model works well with diverse interest that do not stray too far from each other. This model is not illegal, but in some ways a violation of norm of equal treatment and transparency, and public scrutiny is therefore not welcomed (Innes, Booher 2000). Public participation will as a result happen after deals have been made and the feasibility of the project cannot be threatened.

These two models work well together in the fields of transportation and infrastructure (Innes, Booher 2000). The technical planner needs to know what is politically possible, while the political planner needs documentation to prove the decided alternative is the most favorable.

The third model is described as decisions that result directly from demands raised by social movements (Innes, Booher 2000). These are grass roots movements formed to fight a single battle. The movements formulate their own arguments and forward these, and gain power by making noise in the form of protest, public meetings, public relations campaigns or whatever else gets attention. They can be a response to ongoing or existing public decisions such as laws and regulations, or development plans. Officials cannot ignore these and still claim to champion democracy. Participation seems well integrated and effective in this model because it can be seen as a dialogue between decision makers and the people, but the objective of a social movement has to be narrow and precise in order to speak in a unified voice, thus it fails to represent diverse interests (Innes, Booher 2000). It also implies that unless there is a social movement, there is public consent.

Innes and Booher (2000) claim that the communicative model is the superior way of planning, and worthy of replacing the technical and political models, and at the same time eliminate the need for social movements. Despite few dialogues actually reaching ideal conditions, they claim that attempts at this form of planning yields positive results. The model has an easier time involving stakeholders, as it is more open, equal and relevant for more stakeholders and it encourages mutual learning in the long run both with regard to stakeholder relationship to each other and to the planning process (Innes, Booher 2000).

While both the technical and political model of thought are viable ways of conducting planning, it stems from a patriarchic way of thinking, implying that public opinions are ignorant and irrelevant plan. They also confine power within the established structures of planning institutions and those connected to it. The communicative model is as dependent on technical data and political backing to implement a plan as the technical and political models, the difference is that it opens up the process to the entire spectrum of stakeholders.

### **The benefits of participation**

The purpose of this section is to account for the benefits that the concept of participation is believed to provide planning as an activity and society in terms of governance. It provides the theoretical background for why participation is included in the planning process, and reasons to further its position. This section is to lay the premises for an argument for participation.

Sources in Shipley and Utz's review claim that citizen participation is the cornerstone of democracy (Shipley, Utz 2012). Participation could, if done right, increase the diversity of opinions and cause increased interactivity between residents of a city or community. This interaction is thought to network various interests within the community, and educate each other through the network.

Furthermore, participation is a question of justice and what is fair (Shipley, Utz 2012), by also letting marginalized groups present their case, and defend their interests from external developers or distant government, and to make this relevant to the decision making (Innes, Booher 2000). It is also considered a democratic right to be involved in local governance, to have a say in matters that affect you as a person and a citizen. For example an involved populace in matters that concern the allocation of common resources and goods, is seen to secure a more even distribution (Marzuki 2015).

A second argument in this context is to inform the people who at some point will become the end user of the decision in question (Rydin, Pennington 2000). This will get the inherent conflicts out early, allowing participants to either correct the source of the conflicts, or come to terms with the circumstances before the plan is implemented. It allows for adaptation to, or correction of a social problem.

It could also be viewed as a continuation and strengthening of the freedom of speech, giving free expression on political matters slight institutional weight. Participation is then a channel through which the public can express any common values, allowing them to be reflected in policy making (Rydin, Pennington 2000).

A benefit of participating in public work is that groups and citizens learn about current public matters, and can in that process learn of public programs aimed to help citizens in different situations (Marzuki 2015). A participating citizen will eventually learn what kind of issues are up for public decision, how they are made, how they are important and what can potentially impact the decision (Marzuki 2015; Horney et.al. 2016).

Participation is considered to improve the quality of planning) and decision making in general (Horney et.al 2016). A central argument is that participation can and should be used to unearth local knowledge, not available to large, centralized planning authorities (Rydin, Pennington 2000; Innes, Booher 2000). Participation also adds to the planners understanding of stakeholder demands and needs, leading to a potentially more effective management and treatment of land (Marzuki 2015). As the traditional expert has a tendency of filling in gaps in



knowledge with overconfidence instead of admittance of fault, inputs from public participation has the potential to correct assumptions; and serve as a quality check for the benefit of the plan (Drazkiewicz et.al 2015). For example questions such as whether the decision achieves the goals set as a premise for the decision process, or if the costs of a decision is greater than the benefits (Rydin, Pennington 2000). This is regarded as a valuable resource that, if used correctly, can prevent a redundant or harmful decision, saving time and effort. This is especially important in an ecological sense because people generally try to protect the environment they live in (Manzo, Perkins 2006).

In regards to improving the quality of the process itself, the transparency participation supports is believed to both raise awareness of residents of a community or society on social issues, and pressure decision makers into making better decisions as there always is a public watchdog (Drazkiewicz et.al. (2015). As a public official relies on public support for their seat, this should be an important factor to consider when making decisions.

Diverse participation is also thought to be a driver for innovation and creativity (Drazkiewicz et.al. 2015). Involving more minds, is bound to eventually lead to new suggestions which in some cases turn out to be better than the standard. Experimental in nature, these processes obviously do not always carry positive results, but is still preferred over staying on the same track forever.

Lastly participation is seen as an indicator of the political legitimacy of a decision (Hofstad 2013); the more people see, has heard of, has followed and/or expressed an opinion to a plan without outspoken protest, the more legitimate is must be (Rydin, Pennington 2000). The quality of decisions, is thus related to how aligned to the public demands and wishes they are (Rydin, Pennington 2000).

As a summary public participation is expected by people and demanded by law as a byproduct of the notion of democracy, where no one should be deemed insignificant. Every reason for participation has its base in that every voice has value in our society, and that increasing the breadth of the public discussion will increase the quality of the outcome. This is not to say that every voice should be decisive, but simply that the workings of society should be able to withstand public scrutiny. If everyone has a duty to contribute to society, it follows that everyone gets the right to participate – especially if you are directly affected by the matter at hand.

From planning literature, Brown and Chin (2013) comprise a list of criteria that correlates to what is considered good participation. The list paints a picture of what is required to classify participation as good. The list includes concepts such as representativeness, independence, early involvement, transparency, active involvement of stakeholders, convenience, communication, solution quality and outcome influence (Brown, Chin 2013, p. 3-4). These criteria set the bar high, as they seek an ideal situation that is not presently in place. The high roof for success gives the possibility for an honest evaluation, not attempting to plainly criticize or hail each process, but to give a true evaluation where most plans probably end up in the middle. The ones that stick out in a positive way would then be the ones to emulate (or in the opposite case avoid) in the future.

### **Practical challenges to participation**

The purpose of this section is to illustrate that while there are several and varied good reasons to pursue participation in planning, there are substantial challenges preventing the ideal circumstances from coming to fruition. The following section is meant to highlight some of these challenges.

Western democracies has been trying to implement and extend public participation since the late 1960s (Rydin, Pennington 2000). While there has been made significant progress, the concept is far from completely implemented into planning. There is still a lack of common institutional and public understanding of the concept.

Shipley and Utz (2012) cite a variety of sources claiming that public participation is lacking. Hearings do not work. Public meetings do not affect the decision. That there is a general lack of trust between officials and citizens. Leino and Laine (2011) assert that citizens do not have a strong enough institutional status, and that it is unclear what role and function the data gathered through participation has, and that citizens are more interested in specific issues that concern them, than to participate in, and improve, the planning process itself.

The central problems can be categorized as:

- Social problems
  - Lack of public interest
  - Lack of trust between officials and citizens
  - Citizens have egocentric concerns
- Institutional problems
  - Hearings and public meetings do not impact decisions
  - Citizens lack institutional status
  - Unclear role of the data collected

This categorization is a simplification and there are lots of gray areas where the issues interconnect, and it is there is no definitive line to draw between whether an issue is social or institutional or both. The issues are also mutually dependent on each other. For instance because hearings and public meetings do not work, there is a lack of interest. Because it is assumed that citizens have purely egocentric concerns, it is unclear how to weigh the data participation produces. Because citizens lack institutional status, they disengage and might start to distrust the people doing the work “behind closed doors”. Likewise, it could be said that hearings and public meetings do not work, because citizens lack institutional status and it is unclear how to treat the data. Or, that mutual distrust between participants and planners cause disengagement unless there are critical personal interests at stake. The simplification is made to fit the format of a master’s thesis.

The following theory assessment and case work is to elaborate what some of the international literature says on these issues and to trace them through a Norwegian perspective and then an infrastructure planning process in Norway. In doing this, the status of participatory planning in Norway in relation to the international discussion surrounding participation can be examined, and the question of effective impact on the process as a participant can be judged.

The theory assessment revolves around how some of these issues are mentioned and what causes are attributed to them.

## **Social problems**

The purpose of this section is to elaborate on the issues mentioned above; on public interest, trust and the nature of public concern. The section shows the social side of the issues highlighted in literature that hinder meaningful participation, and to highlight some of the proposed reasons as to why that might be.

### *Public interest*

Studies have shown that a majority of citizens are for public participation in public decision making (Shipley, Utz 2012). It is however hard to motivate people to actually engage on a voluntary basis, which can be attributed to a number of factors.

The same claims are made by Horney et.al. (2016), adding that the lack of knowledge or resources to effectively contribute discourage people from participating. A participant might understand what the plan implies, but not how to engage in a proper way. An example of resources can include the free time a working class citizen is willing to spend on public matters (Shipley, Utz (2012).

The argument is underlined by what is called rational ignorance (Rydin, Pennington 2000). This is a consciously chosen kind of ignorance to a subject, because the cost of educating yourself to the degree necessary to make an informed statement exceeds the benefit of having your say in the decision making process (Wikipedia on rational ignorance 2016). It would then be irrational to put in the effort when the ongoing process has already gained momentum, and an uneducated input has a low success rate. Rational ignorance, like all ignorance, can be exploited by filling in gaps with misleading, incomplete or distorted information.

Shipley and Utz (2012) explain a lack of public engagement with the theory of opportunity costs, recognizing that you can only do one thing at a given time, and time is thus a finite resource. This states that when you choose one activity, you exclude all other possible activities at that time. They claim that other activities could be more appealing.

This states that the public cannot or will not engage in public matters. The benefits of participation as listed above all depend on people actually engaging, creating a gap in the reason for why participation is done and how it is done.

*Lack of trust between officials and citizens*

Shiple and Utz (2012) claim that trust is a missing link in connecting theory to practice. Administrators do not trust the public enough to grant them power, and citizens react to this in a negative way because it contradicts expectations. Leino and Laine (2011) say citizens see participation as a smokescreen. Rydin and Pennington (2000) claim that actual participation for all layers of society has been especially hard to implement, and that has led us to a selective participation, where special interests with the loudest voice and the most resources negotiate with the bureaucracy. This concern is echoed by Marzuki (2015).

According to public choice theory, stating that while there are exceptions, most people are motivated by self-interest, or what is best for oneself (Econlib.org 2016). Rydin and Pennington (2000) regard the self's interest in fighting what many consider an unwinnable battle to be low. This could generate a sense of apathy towards the process where you surrender to the system, and accept the costs and benefits as they are given to you, as collective costs are usually not large until the sum of every cost is felt. Thus, the incentive for a small group of powerful interests to make an effort is greater than the incentive for a large group of people make an effort to mobilize to defend common values, the environment etc. Their personal gain is greater than the collective cost. The balance of power between special (the driving, beneficiary force) and public (opposing force) interests in the tunnel view context of a single planning process is uneven as a result.

Simply expanding public participation in a quantitative way without being conscious of this would aggravate the problem (Rydin, Pennington 2000). This is especially true given the scale of mobilization needed to turn an ongoing public decision process, and the number of ongoing processes at any given time. "The Public" as an entity only has the resources to mobilize with force against one process at a time, and only a limited amount of cases. There is a disproportional amount of work. At the same time, the accumulated effect of the sum of all the small decisions shape society through precedence, favoring special interests

This section is an expression of what can be interpreted as lack of trust in the process, or a source of distrust. How it can favor the few and how disengaging from the participation process can increase the imbalance that is harmful to participation as a concept, as it is a direct contradiction to the principles it is built on. . If a citizen does not trust in a successful outcome of participating, the citizen would lose interest. A lack of public interest can

exacerbate the problem because it creates a picture of participation as for and by the individual, in this context primarily the powerful individual.

*Citizens have egocentric concerns*

The issue up for discussion in any given process is regarded as paramount in Leino and Laine's (2011) article, calling it not only a notable dimension, but what a participatory process is about (Leino, Laine 2011 p. 92-93). It determines what is deemed relevant; what can be spoken of and how. Deciding the issues is therefore important. For example issues in locating a building can be access to sunlight, or local water or electricity sources, or it can be access to transport infrastructure. The implication is that this deciding on issues cannot be left to the public because they will try to adapt it to their own personal interests.

Then the expectations of what participation is about is not necessarily shared by the participants and the hosts (Shipley, Utz 2012). Participants might expect to partake in deciding on issues that has already been decided. Leaders and planners might invite participants only to inform of the coming plans, or to propose a choice between alternatives, as the technical and political planners do. They might not really trust the public to be competent enough to involve in matters of policy or physical planning, as problems are too complex to allow opinions to matter (Drazkiewicz et.al 2015).

The participants, on the other hand, might have personal interests they want included in the considerations or expect to have a decisive say in the deliberations. It is, after all, often freedom over property or action that is being discussed, so the stakes are high. Since individuals getting their way in a myriad of interests is rarely the case, this expectation does not match reality. This problem can also be said to be institutional since there is no clear line between what are individual and what are collective concerns.

The sum of the issue seem to boil down to inefficiency in participating. If participation is ineffective, there is no incentive to engage. If there is no incentive to engage, there will be no competence building and when there is no competence building, officials will uphold their belief that the public are ignorant. They cannot afford to grant any power over important planning processes to an ignorant, self-serving public, making it a source of distrust.

To place the blame on public unwillingness or inability to participate is therefore simplified and unfair, as there is also a decision by planners on who to inform of, and involve in the

planning process, and to what extent as illustrated by the technical and political mentality, and echoed by Horney et.al. (2016). An argument of immaturity applies to process, institution as well as people, and placing the blame with an unwilling population is not necessarily true and exacerbates a lack of mutual trust and discourages engagement.

### **Institutional problems**

The purpose of this section is to highlight how the issues of participation are institutional as well as social.

#### *Ineffective hearings and public meetings*

Innes and Booher (2000) describe public meetings as people having a short amount of time, and it may be their livelihood at stake, on a subject they are only vaguely familiar with (Innes, Booher 2000). The ones hearing the case have no obligation to listen, or to give feedback; and the same goes for comments to an Environmental Impact Report, even when the opposition is well informed. They claim this environment in the sphere of public participation in public decision making is alienating people and discouraging them from future participation (Innes, Booher 2000).

While Shipley and Utz (2012) call public meetings ineffective and ritualistic, they also point to positive aspects public meetings as a starting point for further participation. To become aware, receive information, set an agenda or maybe get some press coverage.

In general, wish for extended or increased participation does not match the way modern day institutions are set up. The framework of work routines, time restrictions and rules for decision making can be frigid and limiting to the amount of actual peer participation that can be achieved (Leino, Laine 2011). In the context of this thesis the factor of continuity in the ongoing planning process is especially relevant. The more complex the issues up for discussion are, the more limiting this framework can become. Explanations for this could lie in that institutions by nature are slow moving entities, and can easily fall behind societal development at large. This could be said to be a defense mechanism, as allowing for easy revolutionizing of institutions is volatile and irresponsible.

This is in conflict with the conceived benefits participation, as they require engagement to work. If means for participation have been well thought through and implemented, but these means are ineffective, this suggests that the wish for public engagement is insincere.

*Citizens lack institutional status*

Leino and Laine (2011) say that the legal and policy framework that is presented seem to imply multiple opportunities for citizen participation, but within the strict frames of institutional planning they become very limited. A lack of institutionalized citizen status is seen to have a crucial effect on the relationship and thus the potential for collaboration between citizens and planners.

Marzuki (2015) points to the format of the process as an issue, claiming that the technical and complex nature of planning issues excludes a large part of the population from understanding the public decision process. Effective participation is then impossible until there is equal representation of stakeholders in the process, which includes public concerns. The lack of institutionalized public power in the participation process opens the well intentioned process to capture by forces that has the resources to build trust among decision makers.

This is conflicting with the reasons behind implementing participation. If better planning, better government and better societal development is believed to be achieved from letting the public participate, there would be a strong institutionalized status for citizens.

*Unclear role of the data collected*

The effective treatment of participation data will in summary be challenging and confusing. There is a clear tendency towards increased participation, there are clearly expressed benefits to participation, and a clearly stated desire for participation. It is also a central democratic right. At the same time there is a professional distrust toward the public from administrators and decision makers, based on the issues being too complex for their audience. This speaks for informing rather than collaborating. If it is assumed that citizens only have their own interest in mind, and there is no formal institutional status for citizens; it is up to each planning department in each area to decide how to weigh it, or to weigh it at all (Leino, Laine 2011). Treatment of participation as a concept and the data collected will then vary given the time and resources of each planning authority.

This assessment sets the foundation for further investigation, so these issues are covered more in depth in the following chapter. This being said, it can be gathered here that participation is a relatively new and immature practice that needs tweaking and education. On this basis, the focus should shift on the quality of the participation that does happen. Work on improving the



mechanics already in place before expanding. If the quality of participation should increase, then it would follow logically that the possibility of participation to reach its ideal form would increase. As mutual respect for, and trust in the participatory decision process and the institutions leading them grow, quantitative participation would increase. First step in quality building is adjusting the way one treats the people who stick out their heads and speak for what they believe, whether it is their personal interests, the community or the environment.

### **Chapter 3: Participation in the Norwegian planning system**

The purpose of this chapter is to show how participation is incorporated into the Norwegian planning system. First, the chapter deals with the ideal form of participation found in policy and official discourse. To find why and how authorities want participation. It goes on to describe the how this is supposed to manifests in practice. The methods defined by law and the laws that govern planning and participation as an aspect of planning. Then, studies, literature and attitudes highlighting the challenges and barriers to achieving this kind of participation are accounted for. This is done to find theoretical evidence for a discrepancy between policy and practice. Finally, the findings of this chapter are compared to the central problems framework identified in the previous chapter in order to ascertain how the gap looks in Norwegian planning system in relation to the international debate on participation.

#### **The Norwegian stance on participation**

The purpose of this section is to highlight the Norwegian stance on participation in policy. It covers what is meant by participation and why it is a part of our planning system.

Public participation was in the preparations for the new Planning and Building act of 2008, defined as individual's and organization's right to partake in, and impact decision processes (NOU 2001:7; Ministry of Local Government and Regional Development 2014, p. 8). The purpose of participation is also to allow the public to participate in planning their own future

(Ministry of LGRD 2014, p. 8). Public participation is regarded as important both in the context of the local democracy of Norwegian municipalities, and in the context of communicative planning (Hanssen et.al. 2015; Ministry of LGRD 2014). A politically active population that participates in both planning and decision making processes is thought to safeguard legitimacy and quality in planning, as well as in our common values and society as a whole (Ministry of LGRD 2014). In a compact city context, with several overlapping and conflicting interests within small areas, the complexity and need to cooperate makes public participation in policy forming especially relevant (Hanssen et.al. 2015).

In the guide to participation in planning published by the Ministry of Local Government and Regional Development, they highlight four reasons to why participation is desired (Ministry of LGRD 2014).

First off, to ensure quality in the knowledge base to plan and decide on. Because no individual possess complete information, they want many heads to get together to combine expert and local knowledge to give a more complete picture, while decreasing the potential for inflamed conflicts.

Second, participation is a means to respect different groups within society, giving everyone an equal opportunity to participate.

Thirdly, participation can increase local ownership of the plan and infuse local identity into the planning work. Participation in its ideal form can engage communities and stimulate growth and connection, especially in smaller communities.

The fourth reason is to facilitate mutual learning about government and to further develop the democracy. If groups learn how a plan is developed, it would increase the quality of participation in the next planning process and result in a living, down-and-up structured society.

The Norwegian Public Roads Administration see their role as transport authority as a mediator between those who want to increase traffic capacity, and those who “for whatever reason” do not want further developing of transport infrastructure (Norwegian Public Roads Administration 2014b). Their goals are to both build and maintain road infrastructure, and to facilitate a sustainable development. Thus, one of their main objectives is to create good arenas to handle these conflicting goals and to mediate conflicting interests. They do not seek the solution that all interests are satisfied with. They seek the real conflicts of interests and to highlight them, leaving it to the political decision makers to decide what to do about them (NPRA 2014b).

In the Norwegian Public Road Administration's official handbook for handling participation in road planning projects, the most important benefit of good participation is that the process gets anchored in or has its basis in the visions of the local community (NPRA 2014a). This is to create ownership to the plan, so people in the area cares about how the planning goes, they can get a shared understanding of the problem to be solved and a shared understanding of how to solve the problem (NPRA 2014a). A common understanding makes it easier to decide how to deal with the details of the plan when that time comes. On participation as relating to conflict, the handbook states that conflicts that occur are inevitably latent in the case, and participation would only help to uncover these at an early time, giving time to clear them up early before too many decisions has been made (NPRA 2014a). The handbook emphasize how cooperation as conflict resolution will result in decisions that are more sustainable and publicly accepted, and is preferred over suppressing and steamrolling opponents.

### **Norwegian participation in practice**

The purpose of this section is to highlight how participation is supposed to be led within the Norwegian planning system. It shall show the mandatory methods, as well as available methods that are known, used and recommended, but not required.

Participation is strengthened by the new Planning and Building Act of 2008, most clearly illustrated by being written into the purpose statement of the law. Anyone who instigates a plan, is responsible for facilitating participation, including private developers. The municipality is also responsible for overseeing the quality of the participation procedure in plans even when they are not the plan owner (§ 5-1). The minimum participation is the same as the old law, and includes announcing plan startup (§ 12-8) and public hearings for municipality master plans, partial municipal master plans, zoning plans and area plans (§5-2). The planning program is required to have its own section covering the approach for participation (§ 4-2). The program is also required to be announced and sent through public hearing.

The Ministry of Local Government and Regional Development guide put fourth four principles to meaningful participation, which already are in use and guides the planning work being conducted in several Norwegian municipalities (Ministry of LGRD 2014).

The first principle is the principle of openness, in order to build trust and predictability. This is trust both in the system and in the resulting plans. This principle means that anyone who

needs access to the information necessary to follow the process in a meaningful way should get it.

The second principle is that of effective management, as the process is affected by given timeframes, is profit driven and has many interested parties. It is therefore important to make the process as effective as possible within the given frames.

The third principle is the design for universal accessibility as a guiding principle in all planning. Submissions from, and consideration to all groups gives a better picture of the possibilities and challenges in each case, and makes the city accessible to all.

The fourth and last principle is that of equality. Participation on equal terms, whether you represent yourself, local or international business or other organized or unorganized interests, is crucial to the integrity of participation.

The road administration handbook emphasize that how the process is led, and what questions are asked the participants are vital to the success of the process (NPRA 2014a). To illustrate the meaning, the handbook shows three different results you get by asking three different questions an example case of connecting an island to the mainland. If the question is “how to build a bridge?”, then the result would be varying suggestions on how to build a bridge. If the question is “how to make a road connection?”, then the result could be a bridge or a tunnel. Finally, if the question is “how to achieve a better connection?” the answer is less restricted, allowing for suggestions such as boats and airplanes in addition to tunnels and bridges. The point is to enter the planning process in an open way, where the decision of how to solve the problem, or even what the problem is, gets defined as part of a participatory planning process. Then, as these questions are settled, the scope of the work can be effectively narrowed down.

Announcing plan startup is one out of two mandatory Norwegian participation practices. The new plan and building act extended announcement to include adjacent properties as well as those that share a border with the properties that are being planned for. Hearings and public inspections is the second mandatory participation practice, and the most important form of public participation in Norwegian planning. Hearing is when you send the proposed plan directly to public agencies, individuals or organizations for feedback, while public inspections allow for anyone to comment (Hanssen et.al. 2015).

The new PBA specifies that necessary documentation to participate in hearings and public inspections also has to be made available on electronic media, normally the municipality

website (§ 5-2). New planning tools such as the plan program and area zoning plans mean that a plan will go through several rounds of hearing and public inspection.

Participation is most relevant in municipality general plans, partial municipal master plans and area zoning plans because of the large scope of the work and chaotic nature of pluralistic concerns. These plans lay the foundation for the smaller plans within the area, and set the principle rules for the area (Hanssen et.al. 2015).

The road administration divide their participation process into three phases of planning (NPRA 2014a). The first phase is the creative part, to set the premises for the planning and assessments to come, and should include “others”, working in collaboration with the planners. The next step is to develop these proposals into technically sound solutions, which is done by the planners in collaboration with whatever other experts the project call for. Finally you gather reactions and appraisals from anyone who might have an opinion. This process, if done well, is judged to give a whole and true assessment of available proposals. After public scrutiny and whatever changes it leads to, the result should be perceived as good or at least acceptable among involved parties.

The Ministry of Local Government and Regional Development stress the point that in participation, it is the decision makers people want to get in touch with, as the planners have limited power (Ministry of LGRD 2014). The earlier this happens, the better as also the ministry acknowledges that the standard participation is too little, and at the wrong time (Ministry of LGRD 2014). They urge the municipalities to develop a system to put citizens in touch with decision makers in regards to planning matters, and to lead an open, honest practice (Ministry of LGRD 2014).\_As a general policy in Norway, there is a larger focus on securing that submissions are being included and considered in writing as part of the decision basis of the planning process documentation (Hanssen et.al. 2015).

The easiest form of public participation has been identified as public meetings (Antonson 2015). It is less common to use more detailed data gathering, such as questionnaires, citizen panels, focus groups or issue forums (Antonson 2015). Written submissions, i.e. documents sent in by individuals, organizations, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), companies or authorities are by far the most common form of participation in Norwegian planning, as it is required by the Planning and Building Act of 2008 as the minimum extent of participation in any planning case, along with announcing the plan. The impact of such written submissions is, however, absent in participation research (Antonson 2015).

In the available official guides there is a wide array of specific methods for participation in all phases of the planning process (NPRA 2014a; NPRA 2014b). They are all supplementary to the mandatory practices required by law, and include both public and selected participation. Below is a list of established methods with a short description.

Consultation groups (NPRA 2014b)	Consist of representative from relevant parties, deliberating questions with representatives from planning authorities and/or decision makers.
Open office (NPRA 2014b)	Anyone is invited to attend an open, unmanned display showing current plan premises. To share or gather information/reactions.
Worksheets (NPRA 2014b)	A form of questionnaire, where the respondent is asked to fill in information and preferred solutions to a problem. The planner fills in necessary background information, and process the information. Can be done individually or in groups.
Open meetings (NPRA 2014b; NPRA 2014a)	For anyone who wish to participate. Common to inform first then open for comments and viewpoints. Effective at initiating a larger participation process.
Closed meetings (NPRA 2014a; NPRA 2014b)	To generate ideas and spread information. Invited relevant participants only. Good to start off a process, get people engaged and as a follow up.
Verbal hearings (NPRA 2014b)	Invited parties present their views before a neutral panel/judge. Referendum is written and approved by the parties, and is used as documentation in the decision process.
Brainstorming, brainwriting (NPRA 2014a; NPRA 2014b)	Most common idea generating method, and done in several forms. Activity where participants are encouraged to say or write any ideas that come into their mind. No critique or valuation of the ideas are made until after the process is complete, because the goal is to gather as many ideas as possible. It is used to get a wide selection of crazy, innovative ideas upon which to build realistic suggestions
CPS (Creative Problem Solving) (NPRA 2014a; NPRA 2014b)	A clearly defined process for finding solutions. Divided into five distinct phases; seek facts, seek alternative problem statements, seek ideas, seek criteria for a solution and seek acceptance for a solution. Each phase has a seeking part, and a deciding part. The same principles of idea generation applies as in brainstorming. The process can be backtracked or paused if the situation demands it.
Seeker conference (NPRA 2014a; NPRA 2014b)	An intensive and binding conference, usually over two days with sleepover at the conference location. Involves an assessment, and presentation of the past and present situation in groups. Following this, the groups assess and present their future view, once if nothing is done and once with the groups' ideal future. The groups discuss how to reach this ideal future, before devising concrete suggestions and later a plan.

	This is presented to all groups. Finally the whole conference is evaluated. After the conference is concluded, the proposed plans must be assessed further for feasibility, and finally revised before being processed in the decision apparatus.
Idea workshops (NRA 2014a; NRA 2014b)	Consists of group work. Starts with an introduction, where the factual background of the project and acting space for participants is explained. Then the groups are to discuss and set the goal for the plan, and present it to everyone. The groups are then set to discuss and develop ideas, and present it to everyone. The main points of the workshop is summarized and work is ended. Finally there is a discussion on how to proceed.

As the methods show, most are for specifically invited participants. The road administration attitude towards participation is well illustrated by the following statement:

“Anchoring is not to let anyone who might want to, contribute with opinions and views in all phases of a planning process. It is to engage people with a real responsibility for the result, like decision makers or directly affected interests, in a way that encourages ownership to the product. People needs to experience that they are contributing, and that their contribution came at a suitable time in the process, in other words; early enough.” (NPRA 2014a, p. 19).

### **Practical Challenges to active, meaningful participation**

«... [is that] The formal channels for participation come either too early (announcement) or too late (plan hearing). The process in between, where the developer and the local planning authorities negotiate the design of the zoning plan, is perceived as “hermetically” shut from the public. If the municipality facilitates participation outside of these previously mentioned arenas, in the form of public meetings or informal contact during the process, our findings show that the politicians do not necessarily feel bound by these submissions” (Hanssen et.al. 2015, p. 267).

The purpose of this section is to highlight the issues that block participation from reaching its ideal form. The ideal form covers not only discussion between professionals and politicians, but also public procedural influence. It shall show evidence of a discrepancy and reasons why there is a discrepancy between what is promised and expected, and what is delivered in each individual case.

The road administration handbook on creative participation processes state that participation is a dynamic and unstable activity that could yield innovative breakthroughs, or nothing at all. This is the nature of the process, and should be used to learn from the failures of that experience (NPRA 2014a). Researchers claim that there is a gap between what is being promised, and what is being delivered (Hanssen et.al. 2015, p. 110).

The main focus of the road administration, and main incentive to facilitate participation, is quality and efficiency in the work and proceedings. Their ideal participation is limited to people with a direct professional or financial interest in the process, and does not include public participation. They view participation as a supplement to their work (NPRA 2014a), emphasizing that the planners are responsible for the plan's quality, innovation and goal attainment. Other, external sources' main purpose is to challenge the planners in charge.

A study conducted by Hanssen et.al. (2015) asked local politicians what aspects of the planning process they feel bound by when it comes to the decision. Out of 145 respondents, 13 felt bound by concerns unearthed at public meetings, 7 felt bound by submissions gathered during hearings and public hearings, while 6 felt bound by informal contact with the local community (Hanssen et.al. 2015, p. 107).

The studies also show same qualities that makes large scale, general planning well suited for participation, also makes it hard to engage the public (Hanssen et.al. 2015). Researchers attribute these troubles to several reasons, like the questions being too abstract, the methods used are too general, and timing being off. Later, in the zoning plans, many of the subjects the public might want to discuss have already been decided upon in the general planning. The same study done by Klausen et.al. in 2013, could show good results in projects where both target specific and general participation was utilized. As for the point of timing, researchers recommend specific education programs aimed at when and how of participation is most effective (Hanssen et.al. 2015, p. 103).

The studies presented show that participation in general decrease in quality and width, the smaller the plan gets (Hanssen et.al. 2015). Zoning plans show minimal participation outside of what is required by law, but parent plans usually show a somewhat wider use of participation methods. The studies also show that it is during the zone planning that public engagement is greatest.

The study points to the changed relationship between private developers and the municipality as a likely cause of weak participation. The studies conducted also show that 90 % of zoning



plans that are adopted, are devised by private developers. The same study show that 67 % of asked municipality chief planners report that private developers do not conduct participation other than the minimum requirements. 23 % report that they do, while 10 % did not know (Hanssen et.al. 2015, p. 104).

When the studies tried to ask developers about participation, the responses were too low in quantity to generalize (Hanssen et.al. 2015). Out of the respondents they had, 42 % said that they see it as important to receive inputs from the local community. Over 70 % say that participation has positive effects like early settlement of conflicts, better solutions and swifter proceedings. The remaining respondents say it causes longer proceedings (Hanssen et.al.2015, p. 111).

There are studies showing that announcements are not a sufficient invitation, especially in zoning plans, for NGOs to participate (Hanssen et.al. 2015). In a survey conducted by Hanssen et. al., 82 % of the NGOs they asked responded that announcements are insufficient invitations to participate in planning work (Hanssen et.al. 2015, p. 101). It leaves the responsibility of staying updated, and deciding relevancy on every announced plan in the municipality to the NGO. As a result, engagement from local communities, be it residents or organizations is often too little, too late. The question here is whether the requirement in PBA § 5-1, is fulfilled as long as announcements are made and a hearing is held, but no actual participation has happened. This is however not to understate the massive task of adhering to § 5-1.

Studies show that the use of hearings are on the rise since the implementation of PBA in 2008 (Hanssen et.al. 2015). The results of the study is somewhat contradictory, claiming that the use of hearings are rising, but the average number of submissions per plan are down from 15,2 in 2005 to 13,2 in 2011 (Hanssen et.al. 2015, p. 102), of which a significant part necessarily is official agencies whose duty is to participate.

As hearings and public inspections are so important because they represent the only active participation method required by law, their timing is crucial to what kind of participation they allow. Comments on the planning programme do not really have anything specific to address, as it usually only describes the area the plan will cover, what is being planned and what potential consequences should be assessed. There is in other words nothing substantial to comment unless you have special insight about how area and assessed consequences impact the resulting plan and know how to manipulate these factors. When the resulting plan is sent

to hearing and public inspection, the plan has in its essence been completed, and normally only allow for minor changes. The proposed plan is experienced by interested parties as a finished product that has been negotiated between the developer and the municipality, and carefully assessed by architects and consultants, leaving very little to be discussed (Hanssen et.al. 2015).

Studies conducted by Hanssen and Falleth (2014) and Hanssen (2013) have shown that local organizations that try to involve themselves in the early planning process without formal invitation, are suppressed (Hanssen et.al. 2015, p. 109). When they later are invited to join in, the plan is experienced as set in stone. They are then put in a reactive, and protesting role that can be dismissed as “not in my backyard” concerns. Hanssen et.al. (2015) therefore call upon a revision of the mandatory participation measures on the basis of their insufficiencies.

Other studies show that 3 out of 4 asked municipalities blame lack of personnel capacity as the main obstacle to more active participation. 1 out of 4 say that a lack of political interest in participation is the cause. Over half of the asked municipalities report that a lack of public interest is the reason active participation is hard to achieve (Hanssen et.al. 2015, p. 110).

The researchers also point to an institutional problem in regard to public participation outside of the planning process, such as meetings, demonstrations and petitions. These spontaneous events can be a powerful expression of resistance, but do not fit into the format of the formal written public inspections.

According to the road administration guidebook (NPRA 2014b), there are several human factors it is easy to forget when debating planning. That there rarely is agreement among agents on what the problem really is. That some conflicts of interests are so severe, they exclude any kind of ideal solution. That uncertainty and incomplete information makes it impossible to range alternatives on quality. Lastly, the factor of feasibility, that is; the financial resources, political will and professional expertise available in each individual case, is hard to include in a theoretical debate.

In addition, there is the factor of power in each case. Power can be manifested as money, knowledge, interpersonal/organizational dependency and control over information, control over personnel or control over the media (NPRA 2014b). The will of individuals with power is therefore a factor that can undermine participation, as they can override the reasons for and principles to participation. The road administration recognize they are an agent with close to uncontested power in cases of road infrastructure development, and therefore have a

responsibility to disperse their power in a just and inclusive way (NPRA 2014b). As one of the de facto rulers of the process, they urge themselves and other powerful agents to communicate, and to listen. Most importantly to avoid conflict as a result of power abuse.

### **Norwegian and international correlation on the benefits of participation**

The purpose of this section is to identify any correlation between the benefits of participation as they are conceived in Norwegian and international literature. This is to look for accord or discord in the rationale behind participation, as a basis for comparing the central problems identified in the international literature to Norwegian literature. If the goals differ, the issues and means to tackle them would also differ.

There is accord on participation being a part of democratic governance. This includes to be able to get informed on, participate in and affect the societal processes that eventually will affect the participant's interest or values, whether they represent the government, a group, an organization or simply themselves as a citizen. Without citizen empowerment, democracy is just a word.

There is accord on participation increasing the quality of the decision, by letting more potential knowledge enter the process by opening up. There is agreement on the point that the large scope of concerns covered by urban planning cannot be handled by a single authority or individual. It has a greater potential for innovation and creativity than containing the process. There is also agreement on participation giving increased efficiency because it highlights inherent conflict early and gets them out of the way.

There is accord on active participation being beneficial for the communities, for the government and for the democracy, as it encourages networking and the sharing information between likeminded people, as well as opponents. This is seen to stimulate growth in the form of human connection.

There is accord on active participation as a safeguard for justice, both in terms of protecting the weak and to watch over the process to prevent corruption. On a related point, participations is also seen as a source of government legitimacy, by allowing anyone to cast their judgment on a decision.

The literature on participation internationally and in Norway is mostly in accord on every point presented in this thesis. This leads to a conclusion that the policy guiding the Norwegian

planning system follows the communicative model of planning. It is pretty well institutionalized on paper that participation is central to Norwegian planning and should be sought by developers, municipal administrators and decision makers. It is positive for citizens that get to exercise democratic rights and safeguard their environment, it is positive for planners who receive valuable inputs and feedback and it is positive for society that it is ruled by a diverse majority rather than a specific minority. The reason for this is that it is built on the model of communicative planning, and the literature stem from democratic countries so the reasoning will naturally be similar.

This conclusion provides an important departure point from theory to review the practice. As Norwegian planning attempts to follow this ideal, it becomes the basis for analysis of the case study to see whether or how it strays from the ideal.

### **Norwegian and international correlation on central problems**

The purpose of this section is to identify if, and how the central problems identified in the previous chapter appear in the Norwegian literature. It will be explained how Norwegian literature touch upon the central problems. This will contrast the ideal, showing a discrepancy between policy and practice. This will clarify the status of participatory planning in Norway in terms of literature. This will also indicate the potential for effective impact on the process as a participant, and finally serve as a basis for comparison in the case study.

To reiterate, the issues are;

- Social problems
  - Lack of public interest
  - Lack of trust between officials and citizens
  - Citizens have egocentric concerns
- Institutional problems
  - Hearings and public meetings do not impact decisions
  - Citizens lack institutional status
  - Unclear role of the data collected

## **Social problems**

The social issues of public interest, trust and citizen's concerns can be identified in the literature contained within this chapter, and compared to the literature in the previous chapter.

### *Lack of public interest*

A lack of public interest has been identified in the Norwegian literature as well as the international literature. A lack of public interest is reported in over half of asked municipalities, but it is also shown that project initiation announcements is not sufficient to invite people to participate. As there are a large amount of zoning plans in a given city at a given time, it is hard for people to stay updated on the plans that would concern them. As a result it is hard to maintain public interest as the interesting plans can be lost in the myriad of plans. Public interest would be most relevant in the initial phase, where the questions of what to do are raised. When the public inspections are held they are hard to notice, and are already fundamentally decided on, leaving little to become interested in. Public interest is hard to capture in the general plans, and participation is generally of low quality in the zoning plans.

These findings, supported by the rational ignorance and opportunity cost theories, suggest that the public will not engage because the current circumstances for participation are insufficient. The suggestion that current circumstances are insufficient is a discrepancy from the ideal saying anyone has a right to participate on equal grounds.

### *Lack of mutual trust*

A lack of mutual trust can be identified in the Norwegian literature as well as the international literature. The low share of politicians that feel bound by public opinion is an indicator of a lack of trust towards the competence of public opinion. The fact that non-government organizations report they are being shut out from participating and end up in a protesting role is also a strong indicator of, and reason for a lack of mutual trust. They are being given too little, too late. This is sure to breed conflict when considering the democratic notion of a right to be involved, which is well documented, seems antagonized. The lack of trust is also indicated in the road administrations human factors. That there is a natural conflict on what the problem is, and that the suggestion that the public cannot grasp what is feasible in each project speaks against facilitating active participation on that account. There is a wish for local anchoring of a plan, but an intolerance to dissonance on what is produced.

If participation is done too late to impact the progress of the planning process, then it suggests that Leino and Laine's (2011) characterization as a smokescreen is sound, suggesting public distrust of the process. From agents in power, a lack of trust is here manifested as an unwillingness to give up power over the process, on the grounds that would be irresponsible because the public cannot fathom the complexity. This goes against a policy of transparency.

*Citizens have egocentric concerns*

A social problem of citizens having mainly egocentric concerns is not clearly identified in the Norwegian literature. Both politician's and the road administration's attitude towards public opinions can serve as evidence for a perceived or real view that citizens mainly having egotistic concerns. This is however a weak causal conclusion. The issue is not explicitly touched upon in the literature, which might be because it is not politically correct to say because it undermines participation. If you draw upon the public choice theory, it states that all people are driven by self-interest meaning the whole spectrum of involved agents; public, developers, decision makers and planners alike. It is therefore unfair to attribute it to the public alone.

The point that citizens and planners have different expectations that cause conflict, can however be traced from the international literature to this chapter. The road administration is clearest on this point that external scrutiny is supplemental and meant to challenge the professionals, while policy places participation as a central democratic right. Should conflicts of opinion arise, the experts will represent the majority against the individuals.

The sum of the issues could also here be said to be inefficiency in participation. A lack of interest is suggested to stem from a lack of impact. A lack of interest inhibits knowledge building, justifying a lack of trust that seem to produce the same effect of officials refraining from involving the public on a meaningful level, and cause the public to take a role as protesters rather than collaborators. This suggest that the process is more of a fight than a collaboration, which might explain a lack of interest and an assumption that the other side only have their own interests at heart. These are all roadblocks to achieving ideal participation.

## **Institutional problems**

The institutional issues of participation impact, citizen status and lack of clarity on the role of the data collected can be identified in the literature contained within this chapter, and compared to the literature in the previous chapter

### *Ineffective hearings and public meetings*

The institutional problem of hearings and public meetings being ineffective can be identified in the Norwegian literature as well as the international literature. It is suggested in the literature that hearings have a limited effect, in terms of impacting the plan up for public inspection. Studies show that it is too little, too late and that the plan is experienced as decided on when it is time for public inspection. The other social movement measures that the public can use do not fit within the frames of the process and require a disproportionate amount of work for the protester.

The municipalities also report that they lack the resources to actively engage people beyond public inspections, making it hard to uphold the principle of effective management of participation and the requirement of PBA § 5-1. Within the given frames, the municipality can only maintain participation through mandatory means, which is said to be ineffective. The institutional problem is exacerbated through a lack of political will to strengthen participation.

The institutional framework, and personal framework within, that surrounds the hearing is limiting. This can be available time, money or personnel, past decisions, model of thought within the planning authority or power relations. These factors rule the process more so than the guiding policy, creating a discrepancy.

### *Weak institutional status for citizens*

The institutional problem of weak institutional status for citizens can be identified in the Norwegian literature as well as the international literature. The road administration is quite clear on their stance that participation is to include people with responsibility for and interest in their work. They work in accordance with the technical model, where participation is a supplement, meant to challenge their work. In other words, citizens do not have a strong institutional status in the road administration mentality. As they are an agent with a lot of power over the process, this gives public concern low hopes for impacting the process beyond minor changes that fit within the given frames. Local anchoring of a plan does not necessarily

require public support. The same mentality is shown the decision making apparatus, where politicians who do not feel bound by public concerns and show a low interest in participation.

This supports the claim that multiple opportunities for citizen participation is implied in policy, but within the frames of institutional planning it becomes very limited, creating a discrepancy.

#### *Unclear role of the data collected*

The institutional problem of the role of the data being collected is identified in the Norwegian literature in this chapter, as well as the international literature. The role of the data collected seems to be to ensure efficiency by anchoring plans in local visions, thus tackling conflict early and gaining legitimacy. A better plan is a byproduct that can occur while doing this. This is however somewhat contradictory to the studies showing that invitations come too late, and participants report being put in a protesting role. Also, developers, politicians and the public roads administration also share a view that the data do not carry much weight.

This is contradictory and represents a discrepancy between the importance of participation and the data collected is presented on paper and how it is seen in practice.

Despite the claims to inclusiveness, openness and equality, the Norwegian literature suggest that participation is ineffective because hearings come too late and announcements are lost in the crowd. This leaves a short timespan to participate and with questionable impact. There is evidence of the same issues presented in international literature recurring in Norwegian literature. This is a strong suggestion of a discrepancy between what is presented as the official policy on participation and how it manifests in practice.

This concludes Part 1. Here it is found that a discrepancy between participation in literature; in how it is adopted in policy and presented as an ideal, and in critical research and studies. To structure this, a framework surrounding central problems has been identified, traced and discussed through both sets of literature. This framework that has been constructed in Part 1, will later be used in discussing the case study findings. When the practical dimension is added and tested within the framework, the conclusion should be able to assess the status of participatory planning in Norway.



## Part 2

## **Chapter 4: Case Study – The expansion of Karmsundgata Fv47 in Haugesund**

This chapter will present the case study that was conducted as a part of this master thesis. The chapter will present the city and the region and explain the background for the plan. This includes documentation from the start of the case on a regional level, to the adaptation of the final plan on a municipal level. The case is presented chronologically as it appears in the available case documentation, and will be discussed in the following chapter. The chapter is very detailed and comprehensive, as the study covers a large area of politics, process and submissions, and the devil is in the details. First the chapter will explain the political work that preceded the planning, and made the expansion of the road possible. Then it will explain a central participatory seminar held in preparation to the planning, where challenges were identified, goals were set and ideas were discussed. Finally, it will explain the actual case as it progressed with a focus on the conducted participation, the handling of participation data and how it impacted the plan.

### **Case background**

The purpose of this section is to introduce and describe the County, region and municipality within which the case study takes place, as well as a short introduction to the case.

Haugesund is a medium sized Norwegian city, with 36 738 inhabitants as of 2015 ([haugesund.kommune.no](http://haugesund.kommune.no)). The city is described as the regional capital for work, trade and culture, servicing a greater region of around 100 000 – 150 000 people (Wikipedia on Haugalandet 2016; Botsfor 2010), depending on what areas are included. This greater region is called Haugalandet. It is an informal region with no legal borders, and therefore the included municipalities can vary. In the context of this thesis, Haugalandet includes the municipalities Bokn, Etne, Haugesund, Karmøy, Sveio, Tysvær and Vindafjord ([vegvesen.no](http://vegvesen.no)). These are the participating municipalities in Haugalandspakken, a large regional road project that collects road tolls, and reinvests this money into new road or road maintenance projects (Transportplan for Haugalandet 2004).



Fig. 1: Rogaland county in red. Hordaland county is north of Rogaland. Source: Rogaland fylke on Wikipedia 2016

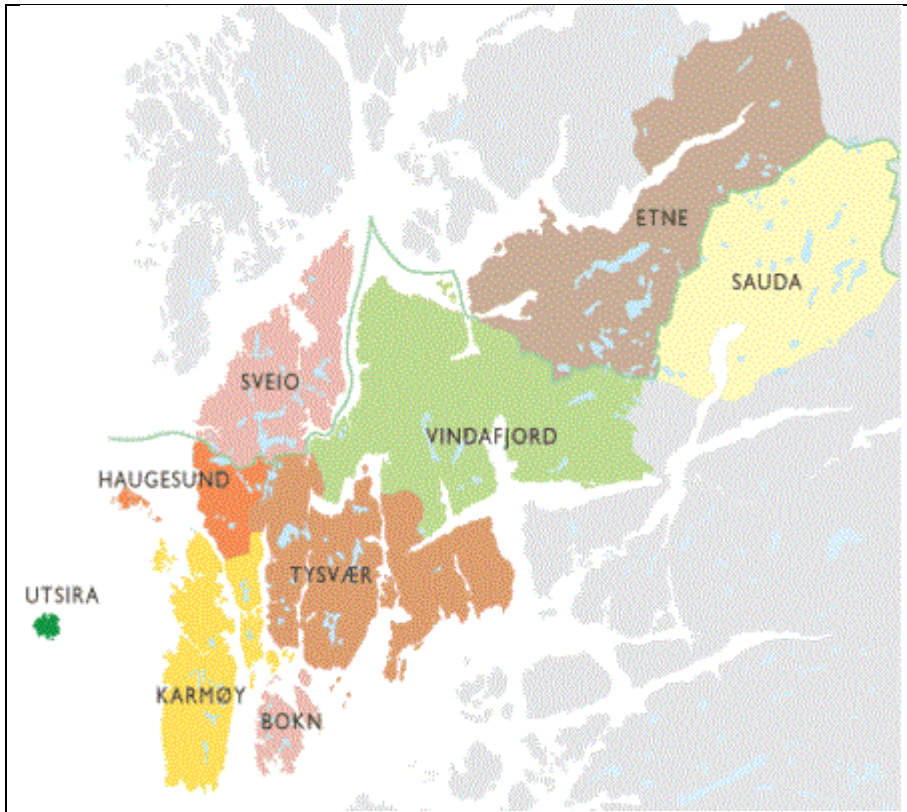


Fig. 2: Haugalandet region on the northern border of Rogaland County. Municipalities Sveio and Etne are in Hordaland County. Source: @haugalandet\_no on twitter

The focus of this part is the expansion of Fv47 Karmsundgata, which is funded by Haugalandspakken (Transportplan for Haugalandet 2004). This part will study the planning process of the case, with a special focus on the participation aspect of the planning process; to which degree participation was encouraged and wanted, and to which degree participation in the planning process had an effect on the final outcome – the plan.

The road is owned by Rogaland fylkeskommune, the county Haugesund city and municipality is in. The road has been subject to heated discussions for decades, due to relatively high traffic resulting in morning and afternoon congestion, and the resulting air and noise pollution. The road was



Fig. 3: Illustration of how Fv47 runs through Haugalandet. Source: Fylkesdelplan for areal og transport på Haugalandet

originally built in parts through the city from 1968 and on (Botsfor 2010), and is one of the primary components of the city's traffic system today. The road stretches from Skudeneshavn, through Karmøy and Haugesund municipalities, to Sveio municipality where it connects to E39. Through Haugesund, the road cuts through the middle of the city, with an average daily traffic of 19 000 – 30 000 vehicles (Botsfor 2010).



Fig. 4: A map showing Haugesund city with Karmsundgata (Fv47) going through the center.

Source: Google Maps screenshot

The plan that will be subject for this case study is a result of a strategic road plan devised by Rogaland County, Transportplan for Haugalandet, handlingsplan 2006-2020, which paved the way for the public, road toll funded road financing company Haugalandspakken. The company is owned by the municipalities Haugesund, Tysvær, Bokn, Sveio and Etne as well as Rogaland County.

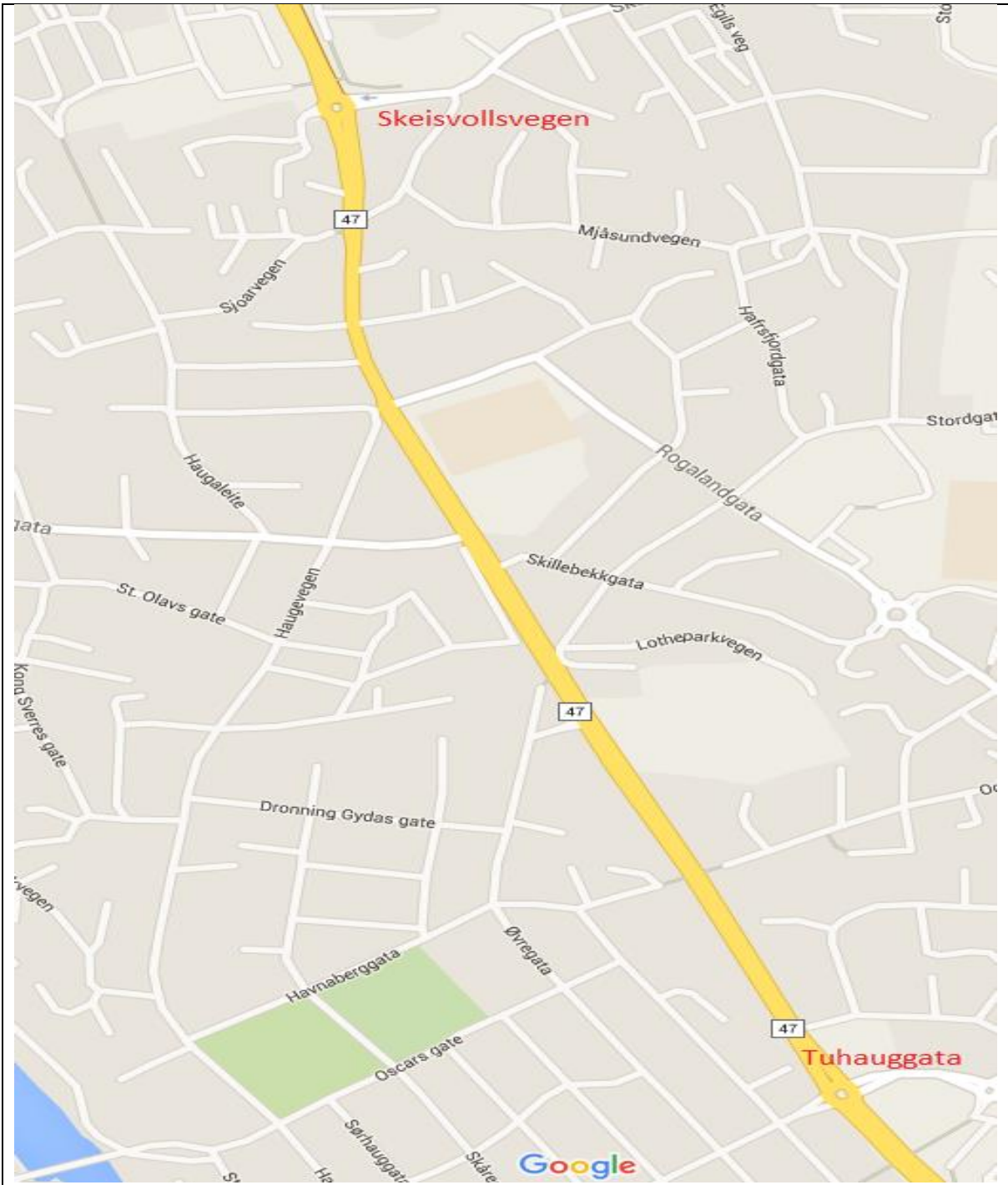


Fig. 5: The northern stretch of the road affected by the plan, from Tuhauggata to Skeisvollsvegen. Source: google maps screenshot

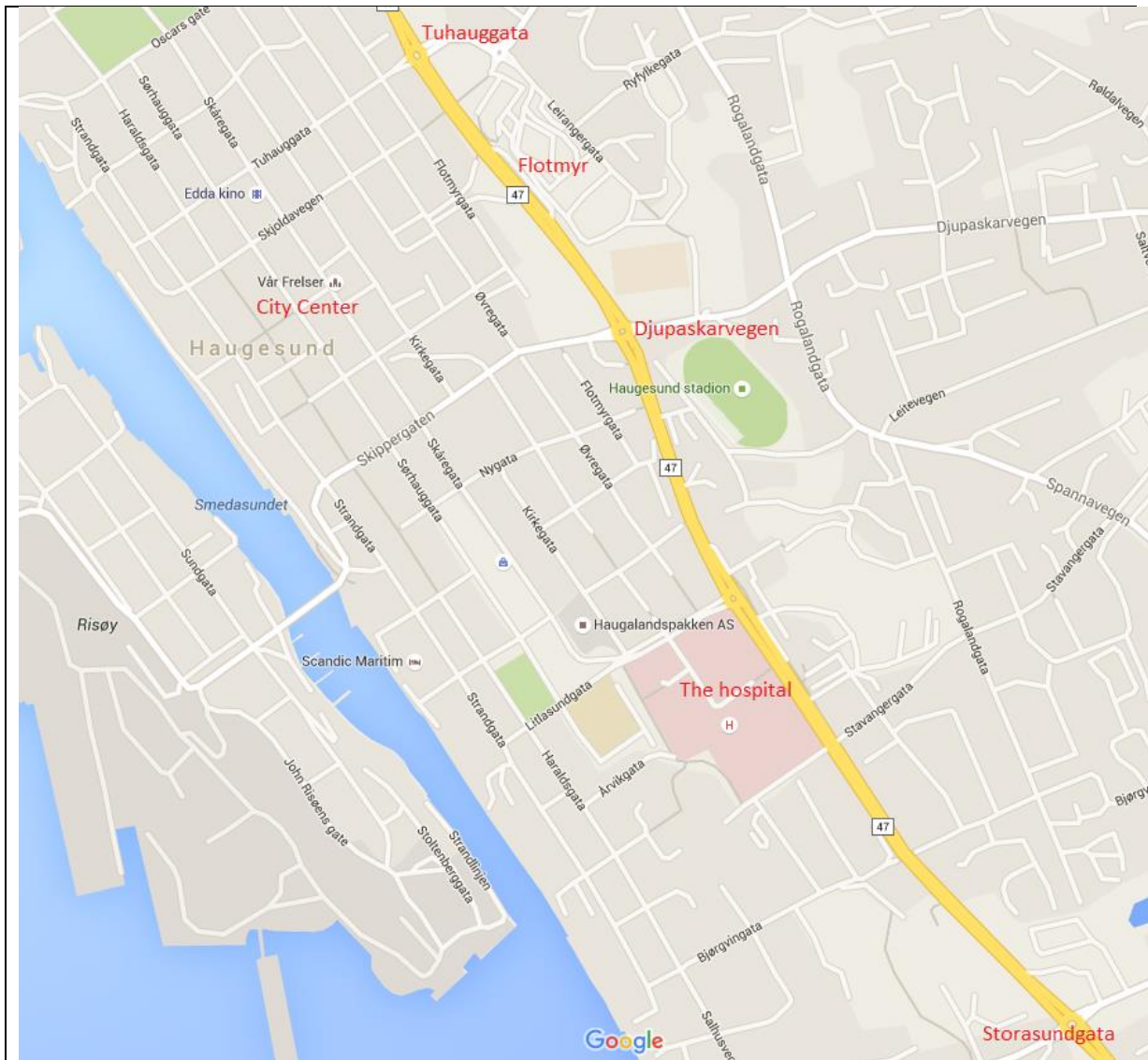


Fig. 6: The central stretch of the road, from Storasundgata to Tuhauggata, containing the city center, the Flotmyr development area and the hospital. Source: google maps screenshot

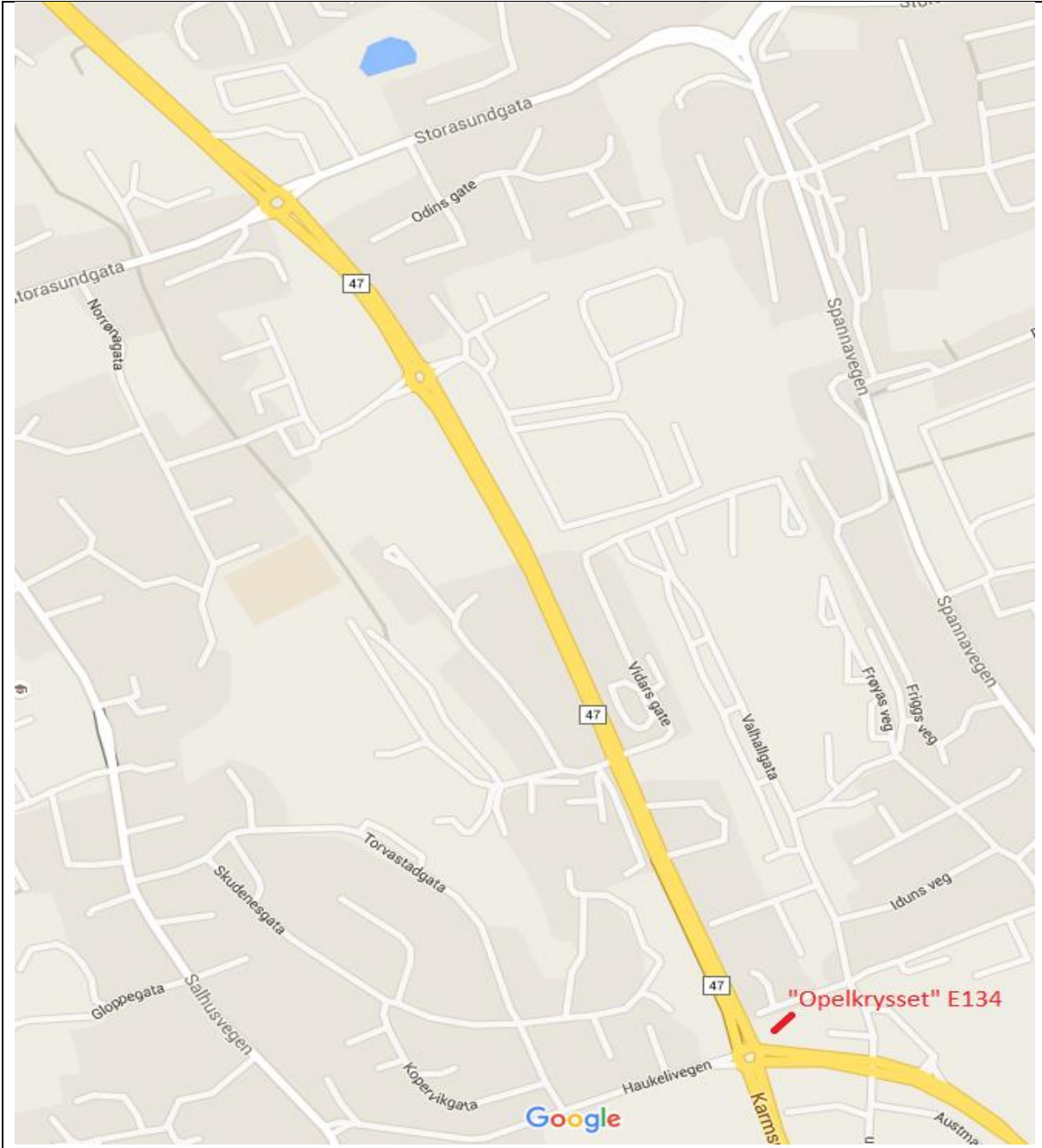


Fig. 7: The southern stretch of the road, from “Opelkrysset” where E134 meets Karmsundgata Fv47 to Storasundgata. Source: google maps screenshot

## **Case part I: Project initiation**

This part covers the plans and preparations preceding the actual planning work on Karmsundgata Fv47. The preceding work up until the plan initiation and work on the planning programme began. This includes the County parent plans and the resulting establishment of the toll ring and Haugalandspakken to implement the County master plans. Then a brainstorming seminar named Botsfor, hosted by the road administration will be presented. This is to understand this is a project that started long before any plans were discussed.

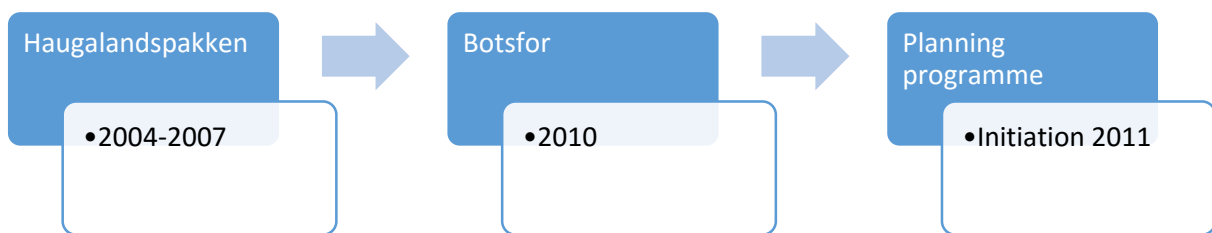


Fig. 8: Initial project timeline up to planning programme adaptation

### **Haugalandspakken**

The purpose of this section is to explain the political and financing processes that preceded the planning of Karmsundgata. This is important to understand because it is the political and financial foundation on which the plan was built, and central to the progression of the resulting plan.

The plan to expand Karmsundgata is part of a long political process. The first piece of adopted planning documentation that mentions upgrading the road in this particular process,



is the joint General Plan for Land use and Transport for the counties Rogaland and Hordaland (Fylkesdelplan for areal og transport på Haugalandet), adopted in 2004. The plan concerns the Haugalandet region, and Karmsundgata is denoted as a road of central importance (Rogaland County, 2003). A raise of standard is mentioned as an important step in the continued development of the region's transport system, as the region is a typical widespread, car dependent area. The plan also points to the need to implement measures to increase the amount of travel by public transport and bicycle. The plans for Karmsundgata at this point is to improve crossings, remove private exits to the road and establish some walk- and bikeways along the road. The northern and southernmost parts of Karmsundgata are suggested expanded to a four lane road. Further down the road, in the long term, certain stretches could be put under ground in a tunnel (Rogaland County 2003).

Based on the general plan, a development and financing plan (Transportplan for Haugalandet, handlingsplan 2006-2020) for the specific infrastructure projects is conceived. Karmsundgata is also here denoted as a central road of great importance, in need of comprehensive measures in the years to come (Rogaland County 2004). Measures are still to expand the road on some stretches, and alternatively dig the road underground on other stretches. Strategic principles for the upgrade is to establish a network of main roads to divert traffic away from other roads, reduce car use, improve traffic flow and the environmental conditions around the roads (Rogaland County 2004). To achieve this, the document recommends to increase frequency and road priority of buses and focus on noise protection. In this long term plan, public transport is important, as well as walk- and bikeways. In order to follow up on the environmental goals, the document emphasize the need for further planning to consider the effects spatial use has on behavior.

The stretch from Storasundgata to E134 is mentioned as first in line of roadwork. Parallel to this, planning measures towards establishing walkways and bikeways, improving access to public transport and other measures improving safety and the surrounding environment is to be made. This should lay the foundation for an extensive improvement of the road, while preparing for the central parts of the road to go underground to give basis for a spread of the city center to the east across the road (Rogaland County 2004).

The overall budget for all projects up to 2365 - 2765 million NOK, of which 1700 - 2100 million is expected earnings from the toll ring, 505 million is national grants, and 160 million is county grants. 415 million of the national grant money is to be distributed between 2006

and 2015, while the remaining 90 million will be distributed “early in the subsequent transport plan period” (Rogaland County 2004, p. 9).

The toll ring is established in the planning document, with a planned period of operation from 2006 to 2020 (Rogaland County 2004), relying on state approval by 2005. The toll ring was approved by the Municipal Council presidency (Formannskapet) in November 2004; despite a petition with 27 000 signatures opposing it, on the grounds that the societal development would halt if it was rejected (NRK.no 2016). The case documentation also reveal that upgrading Karmsundgata was a major motivator for gaining public support for the toll ring (Haugesund Municipality 2014a).

The development and financing plan was approved by Stortinget in St.Prp. nr. 57 on March 3<sup>rd</sup> 2007 (Ministry of Transport 2007) as Haugalandspakken. This decision ratifies the toll ring and the projects it is supposed to fund. The proposition was first up for a vote the fall of 2004, but was delayed because of the public opposition to the toll ring, causing the municipality of Karmøy to pull out of the collaboration. The county attempted to push the plan to a vote through despite Karmøy’s refuse to contribute, but was stopped by state authorities. The proposition had to be adjusted, causing a delay for state approval (Ministry of Transport 2007). The financial framework was reduced to 1700 million NOK as the earnings and spending from Karmøy was removed (Ministry of Transport 2007). On a general note, the state sees the inter municipal collaboration, and the attention to environmental concerns in the project as positive.

### **The Botsfor seminar**

The purpose of this section is to explain the central participation feature of the planning process. This also gives an introduction to the project, and what the issues are. It contains a description of the goals that were set, the activities that were carried out, what ideas it produced and what it resulted in, in terms of how to proceed. The basis for this section is the rapport that were made after the seminar.

To devise a plan for Fv 47, the Norwegian Public Roads Administration arranged a two day planning seminar popularly named the Botsfor seminar on the 15<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup> of September 2010 (Haugesund Municipality 2010). The seminar had 47 invited participants, divided over 7 groups. The participants represented Haugesund municipality (15), the Norwegian Public

Roads Administration (7), Botsfor (7), Rogaland County (4), Karmøy municipality (1), Tysvær municipality (1), the regional plan coordinator, the local chamber of commerce (1), two regional bus companies (2), the fire department (1), the police department (1), a national bike union (1) and Norconsult (2). The seminar was led by leaders from the road ministry, Botsfor and the Public Roads Administration (4) (HM 2010).

The stated goal for new Karmsundgata was to "...develop it [Karmsundgata] as part of the total traffic system and city development, and to achieve:

- Improved traffic flow for all traffic groups: public transport, pedestrians, cyclists and cars.
- Increased share of public transport users.
- Reduced growth in car use.
- Reduced number of accidents.
- Reduced environmental disadvantages, especially for residents along the road.
- Actively facilitate a good city development and land use, including lessening the barrier effect of Fv 47." (HM 2010, p. 3)

The purpose of the seminar was to contribute with:

"- Good solutions that maintains the needs of the city, of Haugesund municipality, and the Public Roads Administration and Rogaland County's constructions and plans.

- A positive working climate and a common understanding of the plan between Haugesund municipality, Rogaland County, the Public Roads Administration and neighboring municipalities.
- A good and creative planning process.
- A good connection between local and national competence, to secure morale and good solutions." (HM 2010, p. 3).

The introduction papers to the seminar goes on to explain the importance of, and challenges connected to the road in different contexts; in the context of city development. Traffic safety, the current status for pedestrians, cyclists, public transit users and cars. Universal accessibility and traffic flow are also mentioned as important points for the brainstorming.

The seminar opened with presentations from the chief regional planner from Rogaland County, a landscape architect representing the road administration, the leader of the Botsfor seminar and a city geographer both representing the Directory of Public Roads. The chief regional planner speaks of the importance of a good transport system. The landscape architect speaks of ways to make transport infrastructure both functional and aesthetically appealing.

The two final speakers speak against the norm of continuously building and expanding roads in city context, favoring public transport and human powered transport as the future of planning (HM 2010).

First, the seminar asked the participants to characterize Karmsundgata (HM 2010). The description should be for a stranger. The groups would go around, giving each participant a chance to give their description and finally make a general description based on the common denominators. Secondly, the participants were asked to define the challenges that are calling for a solution (HM 2010). They are asked what the real problem is, and to define the main issues that arises in solving the problem. The last phase of the seminar was brainstorming ideas, where participants were asked for ideas for a future Karmsundgata, on a principle level (HM 2010).

Responses to the character of Karmsundgata are largely in unison, characterizing it as a road for cars, with little to offer pedestrians or cyclists. The road is also largely seen as a compromise, or less than ideal, for the car as well. Most groups call it the city's main road, or the city's main traffic artery. The road is characterized as a green avenue, a road with great potential, and an unattractive barrier producing dust and noise pollution (HM 2010). The contradicting nature of these characteristics is probably due to the length of the road and the diversity of the groups. It will change character several times on the stretch they are planning for, making an overall characteristic hard. The general tone of the characterization is negative.

When asked to define challenges, or the problem to be solved, most groups' answers were connected to the future development of the city, and to long term thinking. To take control of the development. Participants also wanted the barrier effect of the road to be a main issue. They mostly agreed that giving public transport, cyclists and pedestrians better conditions is important, while still maintaining the needs of the car. Noise, aesthetics and safety were also put forward as challenges to address (HM 2010).

The ideas for the road's future were varied and detailed;

Group A propose a 30m broad green city street surrounded by tall buildings (HM 2010). An urban street, with the same basic layout for the entire stretch. Crossings would happen over the street, regulated by traffic lights. The different traffic groups would be separated by assigned lanes. They envision an "Engineering Valley" office district on the stretch from E134 to Storasundgata. A high frequency buss line will run along the road.

Group B envisions a differentiated road that changes in character as you move from the periphery to the center (HM 2010). The southernmost and northernmost parts of the road could have a highway characteristic, and the road would change into what they call a center street. They focus most of their attention on the center. They propose crossings over the street.

Group C propose a similar solution, where the part of the road that runs through the city center would be a two lane road with a 30km/h speed limit, focusing on people and city life, where efforts are put into giving the area a lift in quality (HM 2010). From Storasundgata, south to E134 they suggest a dual carriageway. They oppose the idea of a tunnel, and would rather spread traffic to other roads.

Group D propose a tunnel through the city between Storasundgata and Skeisvollsvegen (HM 2010). The existing road is changed to a city street with a lowered speed limit. They suggest a new bridge to Risøy. The roundabouts that are present in Karmsundgata today would be changed to intersections and the city would focus on densification along the road. As a part of the strategy, they suggest a large underground parking facility in the city center connected to the tunnel.

Group E echoes group D's solution, with a slightly shorter tunnel, underground parking and the ground level street being upgraded to a nice city street (HM 2010). Bicycles, pedestrians and public transportation would be given the advantage on the ground level.

Group F wants Karmsundgata to remain a two lane road, focusing on raising the quality rather than making drastic changes (HM 2010). Crossings would happen on ground level, regulated by traffic lights. They would focus efforts into incorporating the bicycle into the road as it is, and into making crossings more bike and pedestrian friendly.

Group G propose the tunnel from Storasundgata to Skeisvollsvegen to relieve traffic through the center (HM 2010). On ground level they suggest differentiated speed limits, going lower as you enter the center. This will give a more defined city center. The plan also includes a central parking facility to alleviate street parking, making room for bike lanes. They also suggest a new boat service between Haugesund and Karmøy, and increased frequency on city buses.

Based on the seminar, three sketches showing a principle solution was produced (HM 2010). The three sketches all suggest a four lane road throughout, with different solutions to lane use and pedestrian crossing, to illustrate all those different alternatives can be done within the

same cross section. It is made clear that these are only some, out of many future suggestions (HM 2010). The arguments as presented for this layout is that it would allow for future adaptation as traffic and public transportation evolve. The greatest disadvantage of these solutions are safety and appeal as experienced by bicyclists.

The rapport concludes that the success of the project depends on the continued collaboration between the organizations that were present. An arena for continued cooperation should be established. The rapport is finally designated to be the basis for all further planning work (HM 2010).

### **Summing up the preceding work**

The parent plans for the case project had a long history. The first piece of regional plan was finished in 2004, meaning the process started before that. In these initial documents, there are mentions of improvements to the road, expansion in the periphery and a central tunnel. To reduce car dependency is also mentioned, by giving public transport an advantage and having more accessible walk- and bikeways. An important note is how most of the national grant money is distributed before 2015. Adopting the plan for the Haugalandet region which contains the Karmsundgata plan, was a long and conflict ridden process. Large opposition to the toll ring and a municipality dropping out as a response, cost the project two years, and could possibly have affected the extent of later participation.

The Botsfor seminar carried on the ideas from the regional plans, proposing solutions within that framework. Diverting traffic away from the city center and incorporating the central stretch into the center structure to be reclaimed by pedestrians and cyclists is a major theme, something all groups propose to some degree. The “Center Street” is a road inspired by the principles of shared space, prioritizing humans and aesthetics. The concluding solution is, though not definite, not representative of the general idea put forth during the seminar and in the preceding plans. There are also no alternative solutions built on other suggestions from the seminar. The solution presents itself as a result of the Botsfor seminar, without having basis in its general ideas when it comes to the city center. It is then included as a central planning document.

## **Case part II: The planning programme process**

This part covers the process of devising a planning programme for the expansion of Karmsundgata Fv47. The planning programme process will be presented here. This part covers what happened before, during and after the hearings and public inspections before adopting the document, from the perspective of the municipality.

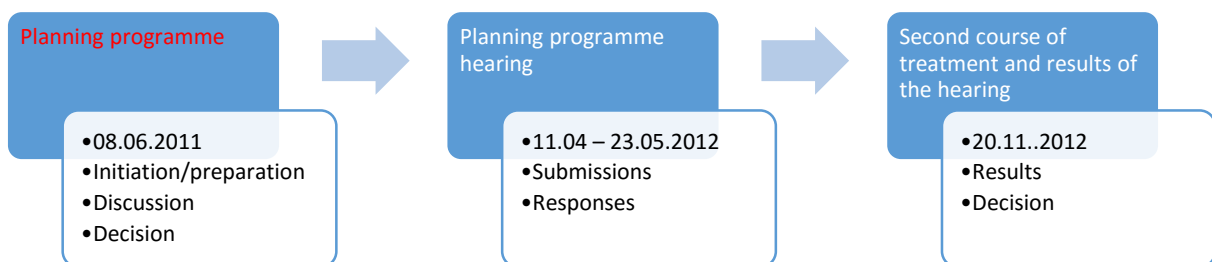


Fig. 9: Timeline of the planning programme process. Current section in red.

### **Preparing and initial treatment of the planning programme**

The purpose of this section is to explain the process of devising the planning programme, as part of the planning process of Karmsundgata from the perspective of Haugesund municipality. This is important because it gives some insight into what happened between the Botsfor seminar and the planning programme hearing.

#### *Initiation*

The meeting officially kicking off the process of planning Karmsundgata was held June 8<sup>th</sup> 2011, and included representatives from Haugesund municipality, the road administration and Rogaland county (Haugesund Municipality 2011a). The letter calling the meeting emphasize the great importance of getting started as soon as possible, and that the work proceeds with haste. In the meeting, it is decided that the private consultation company Asplan Viak will devise the plan, and the municipality administration is to assist in any way necessary (Haugesund Municipality 2011b). Asplan Viak is tasked with presenting the physical boundaries of the plan two months later, on August 23<sup>rd</sup>.

### *On weighing goals*

In a later letter to involved parties, the municipality emphasize what they want to see as guiding to further planning (Haugesund Municipality 2011c). First off, a conducted survey of travel habits in the city and a mathematic transport model should be central to the plan. Furthermore, they want the environmental impact assessment to cover pedestrians, bicycles, public transport, cars, public health, universal accessibility and conditions for children and youth. As the results of the Botsfor seminar was decided to be the central document for further planning, the municipality suggest arranging a new mini version to structure the ideas presented into concrete suggestions. The letter also states that Haugesund municipality sees city development as a primary concern in this process.

### *The discussion*

The next piece of documentation is the transmission of the planning programme on January 26<sup>th</sup> of 2012 from Asplan Viak to the municipality (Haugesund Municipality 2012a). The case is presented to the Plan and Environmental Committee on February 14<sup>th</sup> 2012. From the documents presented to the committee as they vote to send the planning programme to hearing and public inspection, it reads: “In the presented planning programme it is planned that only one alternative is to be assessed in addition to alternative0. The reason only one alternative is chosen, is because there has been pressure from political leadership in Haugesund municipality that such a solution will speed up the work, sparing unnecessary assessment of alternatives that will not become a reality” (Haugesund Municipality 2012b, p. 2). It goes on to quote the regulation on environmental impact assessment § 6, stating that relevant and realistic alternatives shall be described and it shall explain how they are going to be treated in the following planning and assessments.

### *The decision*



Because of the requirement in § 6 of the environmental impact assessment regulation, and considering how the city's main road is being planned, which will shape the city for the foreseeable future, it is stated as important they do a thorough assessment. The planning programme is nonetheless recommended sent to hearing and public inspection. During this time more alternatives can be added so the planning programme can legally be adopted (HM 2012b).

It was already here evident that the project has to be rushed, and the quality will suffer as a result. Despite obvious flaws, the planning programme is approved and sent to hearing and public inspection.

### **The planning programme**

The purpose of this section is to highlight the important features of the planning programme that was sent to hearing and public inspection. It contains a description of alternatives, goals and how participation is mentioned in the document.

The final planning programme is a long and comprehensible document describing the purpose of the planning, the financial and plan framework surrounding the project, the needs that triggered the project, the goals for the project, indicators of success, the physical scope of the plan, alternatives, what the environmental impact assessment will include and how will be assessed (Rogaland County 2012). Finally, there is one 3<sup>rd</sup> of a page out of 49 explaining the participation process. The programme designates Rogaland County as plan owner, Haugesund municipality as the responsible planning authority and Asplan Viak as the executing consultant.

The alternatives presented in the planning programme are a four lane road with:

*(1) free lane use*

*(2) reserving two lanes for public transport*

*(3) a mixed use option where two lanes are reserved for public and business transport, and carpooling with 3 or more passengers (Rogaland County 2012).*

The goals and the indicators of success for the project are:

*“The main objective of the project is to develop Karmsundgata as a part of the total [regional] transport system and to contribute to a strengthened city development in Haugesund. It shall retain its function as regional and local traffic artery, for cars and*

*business traffic, public transport and walking and bicycle traffic in addition to facilitate environmentally friendly transport” (Rogaland County 2012, p. 19).*

Following this, there are five secondary objectives with precisions:

- Karmsundgata shall function as an integrated part of the regional and local transport system. There shall be good traffic flow and safe, universally accessible solutions (Rogaland County 2012).
  - Increased capacity for all traffic groups outside of the city center; Development shall especially consider aesthetics through the city center; Good accessibility between the city center and Karmsundgata; It shall be designed in a way that reduces accidents and improves the navigability for emergency vehicles in rush hours; Universal accessibility is the basis for planning, building and daily operation.
- Karmsundgata shall strengthen Haugesund as the regional center and facilitate functional city centres (Rogaland County 2012).
  - Karmsundgata shall be given a function and design that strengthen Haugesund center as a pedestrian and cyclist center, and facilitates accessibility for all groups to the center; Karmsundgata shall present itself as a visually and functionally integrated part of the center; There shall be good avenues of communication crossing the street; Karmsundgata shall facilitate the development of the city center towards Flotmyr in the east.
- Karmsundgata shall facilitate an increased share of environmentally friendly travel (Rogaland County 2012).
  - Public transport shall be given predictable and unhindered accessibility in prioritized parts of Karmsundgata; The accessibility to the public transport for persons with movement impairments shall be improved; Karmsundgata shall be planned with an uninterrupted and separate option for pedestrians and cyclists; Crossings for pedestrians shall be frequent and close to points of interest.
- Environmental downsides from the traffic in Karmsundgata shall be minimized (Rogaland County 2012).
  - Noise pollution from the road must be limited; The barrier effect on the surroundings must be limited; Harm to important cultural elements must be limited; Local pollution must be limited.

- Karmsundgata shall present itself with a unified quality that reflects the given area's character and quality (Rogaland County 2012).
  - Have a high standard on the central sections, and the road as a whole; Maintain and build on area specific qualities; Maintain central elements constituting local identity; Ensure a satisfying quality reflecting the area's character.'

The planning programme is aware of the nature of these goals, stating they will not pull in the same direction – and some are contradictory. The degree of conflicting goals must be described and mitigated throughout the following planning work (Rogaland County 2012).

To judge whether the alternatives contribute to achieving these goals, they will be evaluated after indicators such as: change in travel patterns; change in travel distance; change in travel time during rush hours; noise pollution for affected residents; air pollution; damage to cultural elements; crossing quality; communication across the road in central and functional points; further development of pedestrian and bicycle options (Rogaland County 2012).

The planning programme says there will be a broad participation process. There will be established a group of advisory participants (referansegruppe). There are no further details about this group. Relevant news and documents will be published on the municipality website, and announced in local newspapers. It is explained that Rogaland County and Haugesund municipality has a goal of providing good information about the planning work, in order to achieve local participation (Rogaland County 2012).

The indicators of success are retrospective, meaning that the goals and indicators of success are redundant. After the road is built it is too late to discard the project if found to not satisfy the goals. The planning programme show no real efforts at conducting participation beyond public hearings.

## Planning programme hearing

The purpose of this section is to describe the hearing and public inspection phase of the planning programme. It contains the submissions to the programme from official agencies and others, and the response they were given that was presented as part of the decision process.



Fig. 10: Timeline of the planning programme process. Current section in red. Submissions start in **bold**, and responses start in *italic*.

### *Announcement*

The planning programme was announced on April 10<sup>th</sup> 2012 (Haugesund Municipality 2012c). The letter announcing the public inspection, includes a description of the road, including why there is a need for an upgrade; financial frames, and the E134 Opelkrysset to Storasundgata plans. Is announced that work is starting on both the partial municipal master plan for the entire road, with a parallel process of devising a zoning plan for the E134 Opelkrysset to Storasundgata stretch.

### *Public meeting*

An open information meeting was held on Thursday the 3<sup>rd</sup> of May, from 18:00 to 20:00, where the planning programme, the alternatives and what the environmental impact assessment will cover was presented (HM 2012c). In the announcement, it is explained that specifics will not be discussed in this meeting, as this belongs in the hearing of the partial municipal master plan and zoning plan.

In a later decision statement, it is commented that the information meeting the 3<sup>rd</sup> of May was attended by the county, road administration, municipality and Asplan Viak. Not many other interested had attended, but there was a good dialogue with the ones that did (Haugesund Municipality 2012d). The memo states that another meeting should be arranged when the finished plan is sent to public inspection, and hopefully there will be a larger turnout then.

### *Submissions*

During this first hearing and public inspection, nine written submissions were sent to Asplan Viak (Haugesund Municipality 2012e). Three of these were from private citizens, two were from municipal bodies and one each from the local bus companies and hospital. The remaining submissions came from the road administration, the county and the county governor. The municipality also wrote a comment after the hearing.

The submissions were all collected to a single document where the responsible authority gives a response. This document is presented to the municipal council presidency. Asplan Viak responds to submissions sent to them, while the county responded to the comment from the municipality administration. The following is a transcript of every submission with the following response. The recurring issue in the written submissions are connected to the choice of only assessing the one alternative.

**The bus companies** support the alternative with the mixed use lanes, which is duly noted by Asplan Viak. **Helse Fonna** wants to be involved in the further planning because being situated along the road, this extension is highly relevant for several factors in their daily operations (HM 2012e).

The document responds with arranging a meeting to establish dialogue is set to be arranged with the municipality and the county (HM 2012e).

**The private submissions** include a correction of the historical facts in the planning programme, which is duly noted (HM 2012e).

**A second person** living along the road would like to receive blueprints as they are building

fences around their property that might obstruct the future road and must then be demolished (HM 2012e).

*The response* is that this plan is to clarify principle solutions for the road, and there are no blueprints as of yet. The actual building of the section relevant to this person is far ahead in time, and will include a zoning plan that derives from the current plan (HM 2012e).

**The third submission** has similar concerns, asking about the fate of the trees along the road and whether or not they should build a sound barrier as planned (HM 2012e).

*The response* is that elements of cultural value will be preserved to the degree this is possible, and when the section in question is being planned in detail issues concerning noise will be of central importance. They reiterate that this section of the road lies ahead at an unknown place in time (HM 2012e).

**The road administration** are in their statement highly critical of decision to only assess one alternative, referring to the different proposals from the Botsfor seminar. They also state that the current proposal does not align well with national, regional and local plans and goals to shift towards environmentally friendly transportation. They are worried that the decision is rushed, and point out that the proposal claim large, central areas and the solution will not be reversible. They stress the importance of noise in such a project and recommend following the guide published by the Ministry of Environmental Protection as a basis for noise mitigation<sup>1</sup>. Lastly they are concerned that universal accessibility will be hard to maintain if a four lane road is built (HM 2012e).

*The response* is that the goals naturally are contradicting because they cover such a large spectrum of concerns, and it is the purpose of the following planning work to assess how the goals can be reached. They point to the municipality and county wish to only focus on the most feasible alternative. They back this up, saying that according to the traffic measurements, the amount of traffic require four lanes regardless of any other hypothetical alternatives. Other alternatives could be more feasible in the future, and it is stated that they are not necessary excluded by this process. The planning programme will be adjusted to specify the use of guide T-1442 in regards to noise mitigation. The environmental impact assessment will clarify how universal accessibility can be maintained in the project (HM 2012e).

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<sup>1</sup> Rundskriv T-1442

**The County regional planning department** says the planning programme largely capture the important factors for future traffic management. They are pleased with the consideration of traffic safety, noise, environment and the preservation of valuable buildings in the environmental impact assessment. They also note that the choice of only one alternative is a weakness that will make it hard to highlight the strengths and weaknesses of the alternative. They recommend that a second, optimal alternative is included. They note that it is normal to first consider how to affect traffic by improving present circumstances before embarking on large development projects. Further, they stress the importance of good crossings to combat the barrier effect. Crossings must be frequent and of high quality. A tunnel through the central areas must be considered to highlight the effects of a four lane road through the city center (HM 2012e).

*The response* assures that the project will have a long term perspective and where it is possible, soft traffic is given high priority. The capacity of Karmsundgata is exceeded at present, threatening to lead excess traffic into smaller side streets. The use of an optimal alternative was not furthered because traffic models favor increased capacity and the prognoses predict an increase in traffic. Additionally this process is for the entire road, where optimizing today's circumstance and decide standard is of main concern; a detailed consideration of optimal solution for each section is better saved for later. Any other alternatives are therefore discarded with the opportunity for reconsideration in the future. A tunnel through the central parts could admittedly reduce traffic here, but would require additional area to construct entries (HM 2012e).

**The County Governor** support the statement made by the regional planning department. They add to this that the municipality has a mission to significantly increase the use of bicycles and public transport in the city, which they hope to see incorporated into the plan. Further they want the assessment of consequences of increased traffic on safety, noise and air quality to be of great importance, and based on the guidebook on air quality concerns in planning published by the Ministry of Environmental Protection<sup>2</sup>. The risk and vulnerability assessment has to be mindful of the hospital emergency vehicles and how this is handled during the building phase (HM 2012e).

*The response* is that goals set in the planning programme mainly are able to reach overarching goals of changing travel patterns to more environmentally friendly alternatives, within the

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<sup>2</sup> Retningslinjer for behandling av luftkvalitet i arealplanlegging T-1520

framework of expanding the road. They assert that goals for this particular project cannot reflect goals for society at large. Safety, noise and air quality is already taken into account. Special regards to emergency vehicles will now be specifically mentioned in the planning programme (HM 2012e).

**The municipal council for persons with impaired function** suggest a focus on simple crossings of Karmsundgata, stating that four lane crossings are illegal in regard to universal accessibility, and that underpasses and bridges are both expensive and hard to maneuver (HM 2012e).

*The response* is that these are subjects that will be assessed thoroughly, and they are included in the project goals. The most feasible option as of now are crossings with traffic lights and area for resting in the middle (HM 2012e).

Finally, **the Haugesund municipality administration** comments that along with the other agencies, they want to see an optimizing alternative incorporated into the planning process. This, in addition to the reasons given by other agencies, is specifically to encourage a transfer of means of transport from the car to walking, bicycling or public transport (HM 2012e).

*The response* is now from the county (HM 2012e), and is that these concerns already are central to the planning. The goals of this process has been established through collaboration with the agencies now objecting to them, and Asplan Viak work after a framework given by the municipality. Throughout the process, the issues assessed in the environmental impact assessment will show consequences, and means to mitigate negative impacts will be suggested. The alternatives that are presented may have the same use of space, but represent principally different alternatives with different consequences. Considering how the present alternatives are realistic and relevant to the goals set, and no agency formally object to the planning programme the county consider the demand of different and relevant alternatives in the environmental impact assessment regulation § 6 to be met. The wish for reduced car use as an outcome is considered maintained by alternatives dedicating lanes to public transport or mixed use. All alternatives facilitate increased walking and use of bicycles by upgrading and establishing lanes for this purpose. The county do not think any of the traffic goals can be met without increasing the capacity of Karmsundgata. Other alternatives does not have the same potential to attain the goals that have been set, and are not recommended. The purpose of the present planning work is to determine the need for space, and decide lane use. Within these frames, there are possibility for adjustments later (HM 2012e).



The document recommends leaving the decision of which alternatives to assess with the municipality. If new alternatives should be entered, there must follow clear instructions on what this entails.

### **Second course of treatment and results of the hearing**

The purpose of this section is to show how the hearing and public inspection impacted the planning programme before being decided on by the municipality.



Fig. 11: Timeline of the planning programme process. Current section in red.

#### *Results*

As a result of the hearing, the municipality decided not to add any principally different alternatives, but added a fourth variation of the main alternative (Haugesund Municipality 2012f). This alternative is a variation of alternative (2) with reserved bus lanes, where the work is divided into stages. Stage one is to build pedestrian and bicycle lanes and to upgrade the central parts of the road to a “city street”. The second stage is to expand the rest of the road with bus lanes. This is as a response to the comments from the hearing. The alternatives are then referred to as different enough, and the presented plan was referred to as good enough (HM 2012f).

Other minor changes were made in response to the hearing, including a new progress schedule, clarifications to the themes of the environmental impact assessment, to specifically include the noise regulations of T-1442 as a guiding document and the considerations to the hospital in further planning and building phases (HM 2012f). Also, there was a precision stating that all alternatives shall have good options for pedestrian and bike traffic.

### *The decision*

On November 20<sup>th</sup> 2012, the plan programme was adopted by the Plan and Environmental Committee and the municipal council presidency (HM 2012f).

In their next meeting, on December 5<sup>th</sup> 2013, the municipality council presidency attempted to change their decision to include a possibility to construct a tunnel through the central areas in the planning (Haugesund Municipality 2013a). This decision was quickly reversed as this constituted a significant change in the adopted planning programme and triggered the need for a new hearing. The reversal included a comment saying they are especially interested in issues concerning the road past the hospital being highlighted in the continued planning process (HM 2013a).

### **Summing up the planning programme process**

The process around the planning programme is characterized by haste. An explicit need to keep the process moving as smooth as possible. The hearing is announced once, and has a six week duration. Which alternatives are deemed relevant or realistic is decided upon before hearing the planning programme, because there is no time to lose and looking into other alternatives is assumed a waste.

This is criticized by almost every participant as steamrolling the process and limiting the scope of the work. All criticism is referred to a decision made in a meeting, based on an assumption. The hearing was not able to change this, as that would only happen if a formal objection was raised, which it was not. The new alternative do not match with the zoning plan for E134 to Storasundgata, making it redundant as well as weak because it contains bus lanes and ground level crossings with traffic lights, which will score lower on traffic flow test. A framework is being created is to strengthen the road as the main traffic artery, central to the traffic system around tangible, evidence based goals; traffic safety and traffic flow.

Aesthetics, city development, environment, noise pollution etc. will not matter because the

facts of these alternatives cannot differ. The decision, quickly followed by an amendment which is just as quickly reversed suggest a highly divided regard of the planning programme.

### **Part III: The partial municipal master plan**

This part covers the process of devising a partial municipal master plan for the expansion of Karmsundgata Fv47. First the partial municipal master plan will be presented. This part covers what happened before, during and after the hearings and public inspections before adopting the document, from the perspective of the municipality.

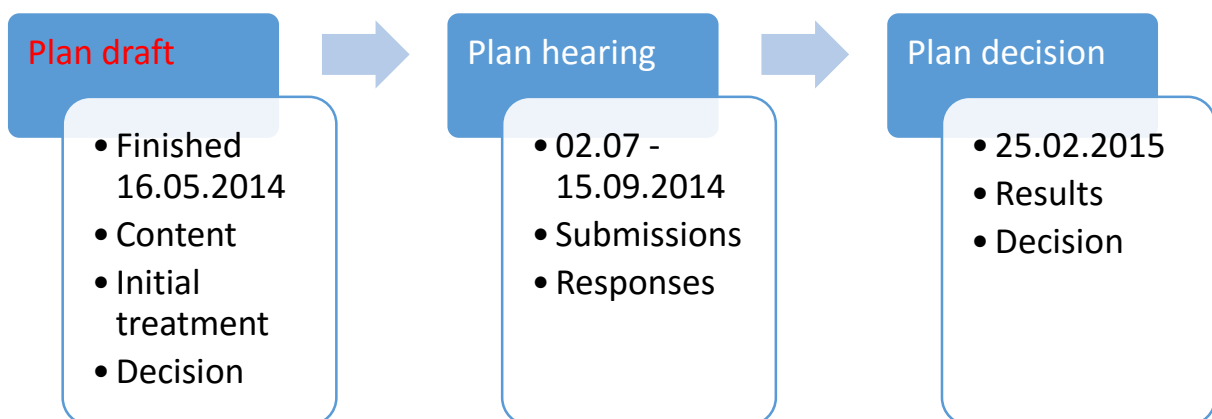


Fig. 12: Timeline of the partial municipal master plan process. Current section in red.

#### **The partial municipal master plan draft**

The purpose of this statement is to give a short description of the main features and conclusion of the partial municipal master plan and environmental impact assessment.

*Content*

The partial municipal master plan on Karmsundgata, RL 1699, is owned by the county and the road administration and devised by Asplan Viak, and was sent to the municipality on May 16<sup>th</sup> 2014; 18 months after the planning programme decision. The first draft of the partial municipal master plan is based off the planning programme and features an environmental impact assessment. The goals and alternatives are carried on from the planning programme to the partial municipal master plan.

After further analysis, a formulation of a main approach issue has been made; “To plan for a traffic artery with strong capacity and at the same time facilitate good city development” (Rogaland County 2014, p. 9). The concerns to mobility and traffic flow has been deemed critical to the city’s functions (Rogaland County 2014). The goal of reducing car based transport is decided to be a regional problem, not possible to operationalize in this particular case (Rogaland County 2014).

City development is put forth as its own assessment, as the connection between city development and Karmsundgata is so important. Here the Botsfor seminar is discussed, reiterating how this is an important basis for this plan both because of the decision to make it so, and the quality of this seminar (Rogaland County 2014). The first suggestions, to upgrade the road as a “city street” on the central stretches, will be considered. This includes low speed limits, focus on aesthetics and priority to human powered traffic meaning ground level crossings. The recommended solution from the seminar: to divert traffic away from the central stretch of the road, is discarded. In the assessment that follows, the “city street” is also discarded in favor of traffic flow.

The plan does not cover participation. The plan concludes, mainly because it scored best on traffic flow models, to go for alternative 1, free lane use. It is admitted that the alternatives makes it hard or impossible to differentiate and indicate consequences between the alternatives (Rogaland County 2014). This means that city development and traffic flow are the only decisive categories. The mathematical model that calculates traffic assumes the same traffic in all alternatives, and naturally concludes that free lane use will give better flow because it has a higher capacity and there is a low share of buses in Haugesund. City development is decided to be synonymous with traffic flow. Conditions for public transport and traffic safety is also considered better in this alternatives because of traffic flow.

### **Initial treatment of the partial municipal master plan**

The purpose of this section is to show how the partial municipal master plan was presented to the municipality before deciding to send it to hearing and public inspection. It contains a judgment of the plan from the perspective of the municipality administration and gives some insight into what issues were raised before deciding to send the plan to hearing and public inspection.

#### *Discussion*

The partial municipal master plan is presented to the municipal council presidency on June 18<sup>th</sup> 2014, with a motion to adopt it and send it to public hearing. As the plan is presented to decision makers, it boasts broad participation as fitted for a plan of this magnitude, referring to the Botsfor seminar (Haugesund Municipality 2014d). Descriptions of further participation states that the municipality had representatives in the “project group”, as established in the planning programme, but the plan is nonetheless considered to be owned in its entirety by the County, as they made all decisions related to crossings, intersections and lane use (HM 2014d).

The documentation then goes on to present an assessment of consequences of their own, presented along with the plan draft (HM 2014d). Their concerns are on the barrier effect, the use of space and the appeal of activity along the street and how they relate to desired future city development. The barrier effect will be increased by underpasses and bridges, because they are unattractive tunnels, they are seen as a hassle and they are far in between. The use of space is mostly in regard to the intersections, decided to be roundabouts. With four lanes they require large areas, and combined with underpasses they will require too much to be seen as a good solution for the city center. Lastly, the municipality has learned that ground level commerce along the road cannot be permitted because it compromises traffic safety by distracting drivers. Even if this concern is mitigated by noise barriers, the plan as a whole is seen to inhibit their desired city development (HM 2014d).

In relation to the barrier effect, it is noted that decreased appeal of walking and bicycle and increased appeal of car based transport will have a negative effect on public health (HM

2014d). In relation to public health, the municipal administration requests studies on noise effects on health, and ways to reduce noise such as reduced speed, vegetation and noise reducing asphalt.

### *The decision*

The conclusion is that the plan as it stands will make it hard to achieve overarching goals because of its conflicting goals. Objectives concerning traffic flow and bicycle is met in a very satisfactory way. Other concerns such as universal accessibility and public transport, city development and center accessibility due to the barrier effect are not. It is at the same time noted that the road is being planned according to the deals struck in Haugalandspakken. A new and upgraded Karmsundgata was a central argument in gathering public support for the toll ring. At the same time Karmsundgata is the largest avenue of revenue for Haugalandspakken. As time has passed, the projects have all turned out to be more expensive than previously estimated, meaning some of the projects have been dropped. The municipality cannot allow this to happen for Karmsundgata (HM 2014d).

The zoning plan for E134 to Storasundgata, which is deemed less controversial and is desired, is relying on the partial municipal plan to be adopted and they all have to be adopted within this NTP (National Transport Plan) period to be able to claim the funds. The conclusion is therefore to adopt the plan and send it to hearing and public inspection despite its shortcomings and rather make it a future political goal to put the controversial section beneath the ground in a tunnel (HM 2014d). The Municipality Council presidency unanimously decided to adopt the plan and send it to hearing and public inspection (Haugesund Municipality 2014b).

### Hearing and public inspection of the partial municipal master plan

The purpose of this section is to show the submissions that were sent in response to the partial municipal master plan, and how the submissions were processed and presented.

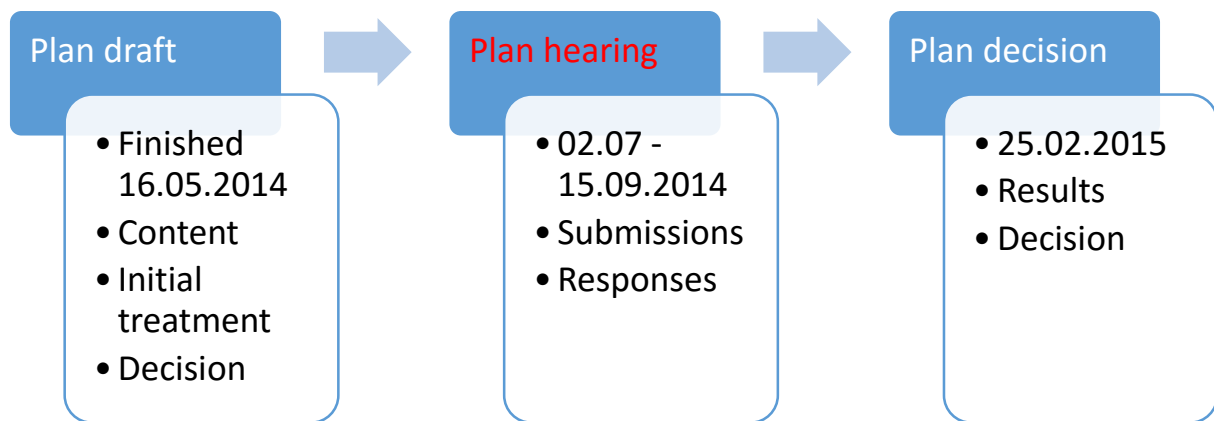


Fig. 13: Timeline of the partial municipal master plan process. Current section in red. Submissions start in **bold**, and responses start in *italic*.

The hearing and public inspection was held from July 2<sup>nd</sup> to September 15<sup>th</sup> of 2014 (Haugesund Municipality 2014c). Submissions were to be sent to Haugesund municipality, and were handled by Asplan Viak on behalf of the road administration (HM 2014b). The submissions are summed up and commented in a single document that is presented as an attachment to the decision documents, as they were in the planning programme process.

#### *Submissions*

During the hearing, according to the document, the plan received 11 submissions. Three were from public agencies and the rest were private submissions (HM 2014b). It is mentioned that

five of the eight public submissions are identical and feature signature lists. A counting of the signatures in the submissions show a total of 31 signatures (HM 2014b). In the attachment to the decision documents there is a final private submission bringing the total to 12 submissions.

The following is a recount of the submissions with the given response as they are presented in the document given to decision makers.

**The road administration** says in their statement that their main goal has been to build on Karmsundgatas function as the regional and local traffic artery, and at the same time contribute to a strengthened city development. This means conflicting goals which has been challenging to balance. The work is built on professional analysis to give the best possible fact based basis for a decision. It has been a thorough process between the county, the road administration and the municipality. They point out that there are no other solutions to the amount of traffic the city center experiences. The work has kept a strong focus on pedestrians and bicycles, shown in the continuous sidewalk and bike lanes along the road. Bus lanes and mixed use lanes have been considered but discarded because city buses mostly run in side streets. They state the importance of adopting this overarching plan, securing area for the new road and determining intersections, conditions for pedestrians and bicycles, how to handle private exits onto the road and more. It forms a strategy from which zoning plans can be devised and the city as a whole can plan after (HM 2014b).

*The response* from Asplan Viak is that the statement underlines some basics of the plan and will be taken into consideration (HM 2014b).

**The County regional planning department** points to their first statement to the planning programme, but recognize that the task of securing good traffic flow to and from the center is difficult in this particular case. They see the solution as less than optimal according to the goal of strengthening the city's future development, especially the areas east of the road. They see the central parts of the road as a barrier that inhibits good communication between east and west. Use of public transport is low in Haugesund, and as this plan continues the increased trend towards car dependency. They wish to see some measures to reverse the trend. Further planning of the central sections of the road needs to find compensating measures for the barrier effect. On the environmental impact assessment they comment that the deliberations has been good according to the chosen premises. Safety and availability for pedestrians and bicycles is good. Universal accessibility has to be central to the further work.



Finally they request investigation into whether the central sections should be a road or a city street, as they see the city street as more beneficial to the development of the city center and alleviating to the barrier effect in this area (HM 2014b).

*The response* is that the plan acknowledges and covers its own conflicting goals in chapter 4 and 8.2 in the plan draft. To the point of public transport the response points to the assessments in the plan draft saying that as buses only use Karmsundgata on short stretches, and therefore bus lanes would inhibit the flow of public transport rather than improve it because of congestion on the free use lanes would spread to side streets. On crossings the detailed plans will try to make the over- and underpasses as attractive as possible. Universal accessibility is upheld where it is possible, but some places cannot be made universally accessible because the topography do not allow it. This is explained in the assessments, but can be subject to change in the more detailed planning. The chosen solution is explained as a hybrid between a road and a city street where traffic capacity and safety for all groups has been important (HM 2014b). Street level crossings would cause congestion in this section and force traffic into side streets, so the city street solution is not viable because there are no good alternatives for the cars (Rogaland County 2014).

**The operational department of the municipality** comments on side roads being opened for traffic, and has suggestions on how to do this. The suggestions will be considered as part of the zoning plan (HM 2014b).

The first and most comprehensive private submission is from **an organization representing interests in the city center**. First of all, the organization questions the results of the Botsfor seminar, asking what happened to the other suggestions. They were especially excited about the tunnel solution. Secondly, they claim that the set goals and the proposed plan do not align, and several of the secondary objectives seems ignored. They are critical to the municipality administration's lack of influence on the plan draft and the treatment of their suggestions. They claim there is a lack of local ownership to the plan. Furthermore, the plan serves to increase the barrier effect which they claim is already very bad for the city. A wider road, long bridges and underpasses, noise barriers, large roundabouts and area lost both to building the road and devaluation cause them to deem the project harmful to city development. They accept the need for purposeful traffic safety and flow, but not if it is at the expense of all other objectives. The lack of alternatives is seen as the reason for the low rate of objective achievement. The plan goes against other local plans and is therefore undermining the value

of those processes. They expect the current plan to be rejected and a new process to start up, where real alternatives are assessed as per the requirements of the law (HM 2014b).

*The response* is that the planning programme decided what alternatives were up for deliberation, and during this process all other alternatives were abandoned. Conflicts in objectives and their attainment were also discussed both there, and in the plan draft up for decision now. The disagreement is duly noted. The response regarding ownership is that while it is true that the municipality administration wanted a different profile to the road in the central section, this issue has been thoroughly assessed by consultants governed by the municipality. In presentations made to the municipality administration and political leadership and in the proposed plan draft it is explained in detail why this cannot be done. Their disagreement is however duly noted. In response to their judgment of the plan as harmful to city development, there seems to be an agreement about the alternatives. The plan owner has, however, decided on this solution. It is upheld that the plan is in accord with other local plans, through compensating measures described in the plan. The alternative the municipality administration and the organization here is promoting, a central tunnel, cannot provide the same qualities in terms of traffic flow and safety as the current proposal. The concluding expectation is duly noted (HM 2014b).

From **private citizens**, five submissions with 31 signatures supporting the claims and statements in the text were received. The text is written as citizens who feel they were sold a pulsating, lively city street during the Botsfor time, pointing to suggestions diverting traffic or tunnels through the city center. The rhetoric of the time promised a street for the people. The premises for this plan has however moved away from the idea of actively reducing traffic, towards building a highway through the city. It is a barrier for desired city development towards the east. The submission recognizes the challenge of combining a city street with the need for appropriate traffic flow, but upholds that this is the easy way of solving it. Car based traffic is supported, but the plan suggestion is “drowning the city in traffic”. The consultation firm engaged by the municipality suggested a vision that will be made impossible by the amount of traffic the new road will lead through the city on the ground level. They reject the basis of the plan in general, which admittedly makes the submission obsolete. They doubt it will be pleasant to either walk or ride a bike along a highway. Noise pollution is already a big issue along the road, and now even more traffic will be guided to Karmsundgata. Isolation might help inside houses, but not outside. Noise barriers will not help alleviating the barrier effect. There is a point in the plan that future technology will most likely reduce car pollution

from each individual car, but they claim the sum of increased amount of cars will cancel out this effect and plans should thus aim to reduce the amount of cars. They recommend that decision makers reject the plan draft and start up a new process with the aim of reducing car based traffic and creating a living city. One of the submissions also added how side streets are being closed, guiding all traffic into Karmsundgata. It is recommended to disperse traffic rather than concentrating it (HM 2014b).

*The response* is that they are well acquainted with the Botsfor seminar as they hosted it. It is reiterated that reducing traffic through active means is unrealistic within the given financial framework. The alternatives has already been discussed and dismissed in the plan draft because they exacerbate the current situation by spending the money on less effective solutions in regard to improving traffic. Means to alleviate the barrier effect are discussed in the plan draft section on city development; the proposed plan will provide better grounds for city development than the current circumstances. It is duly noted that the plan will increase traffic and should be put under ground, with a reference to the decision that it is unrealistic and decided against. This particular plan is supposed to give an alternative to the long distance bike rider, and there are alternatives. Noise will be handled in the zoning plans. Reduced emissions is a stated goal, and will happen through better technology, smoother traffic and increased use of bicycle and public transport. It is duly noted that the submission has a different opinion than the plan owner. Finally, to disperse traffic is seen as a bad idea to handle the traffic challenges. The aim to protect residential areas from traffic is paramount (HM 2014b).

**A single private submission** said their resident along the road had noise reducing work done a few years ago, isolating walls and windows. It worked on the rooms turned towards the road, where the work was done, but did not work in the rest of the apartment. Neither did it allow airing both because of noise and polluted, dusty air. It is feared that the road will exacerbate this, and the plan should therefore assess more thoroughly how the plan will affect noise and how this can be dealt with. It is also an issue that the trees along a section of the road must be removed (HM 2014b).

*The response* is that these experiences are duly noted and will be included in the detailed zoning plans. Trees have been sought preserved to the degree that it is possible, but trees must be cut down to avoid demolishing houses (HM 2014b).

The last submission is **from a real estate company** stating they resist all regulation degrading their property, parking, access or exposure to customers. They suggest placing ramps to one of the bridges over the road towards the bus stops and to use this opportunity to open up a nearby side street that has been closed (HM 2014b).

*The response* is that these concerns are valid, but in the zoning plan that is being devised parallel to this general plan.

**In summary**, the document notes that there were few submissions to the plans. The public agencies had no significant inputs, and were mostly precisions or emphasizing important issues for the following work. Private submissions were more critical, and mostly covered the same issues; the lack of alternatives diverting traffic away from the city center, Karmsundgata as a barrier inhibiting desired city development, a wish for Karmsundgata to be a city street prioritizing human powered traffic and the environmental impact of the road in terms of noise and emissions from increased traffic (HM 2014b).

In regard to the Botsfor seminar, the road administration reiterates that they initiated and led the seminar, as a precursor to the planning programme. The ideas, including the tunnel, were considered and discarded because they were unrealistic and did not sufficiently address the problem of traffic in Karmsundgata. The tunnel would be a great technical challenge, and there was no financing for that kind of construction at the time. The effect on traffic in relation to the costs deemed the project undesirable, and would over time exacerbate the present situation because it would equate to doing nothing and let the problem grow. The municipal council joined in this conclusion before adopting the planning programme (HM 2014b).

On this basis, they do not see the submissions as a reason to revise the plan draft. There are challenges to the plan that has to be dealt with during work on the zoning plans, during which one can consider a “roof construction” over the street. This judgment does however not relate to the physical layout of the street and is better saved for later planning work (HM 2014b).

### **Second course of treatment and the results of the hearing**

The purpose of this section is to show how the hearing and public inspection impacted the plan draft before being decided on by the municipality. It shows how and why submissions from the hearing and public inspection did or did not impact the final plan.

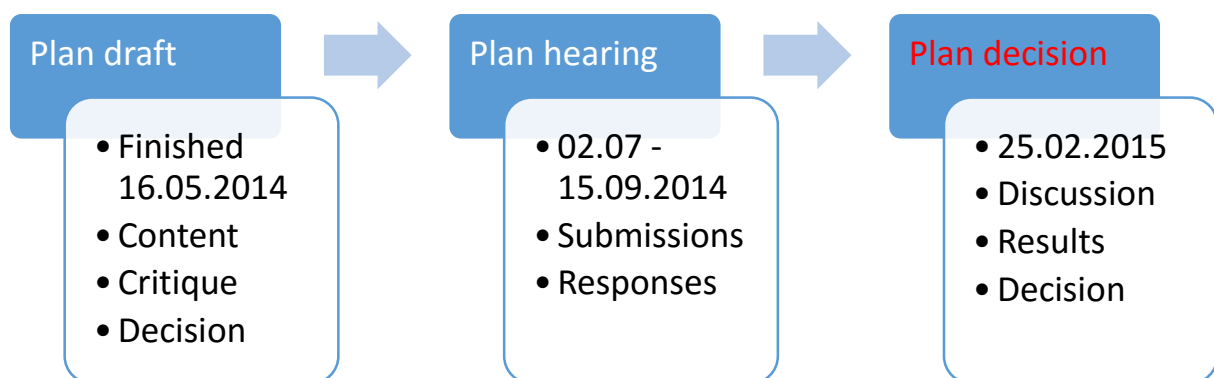


Fig. 14: Timeline of the partial municipal master plan process. Current section in red.

#### *Discussion*

In the documentation presented to decision makers the submissions from the city center interest organization and the signature lists were specifically mentioned, with a comment concurring with these submissions (Haugesund Municipality 2015a). The plan is described as the best one can get in terms of capacity for cars and bicycles. It is seen as poor for pedestrians because of the low frequency of crossings creating a barrier, and therefore availability to the city center is lowered for all classes except cars. Universal accessibility is

somewhat lacking. The grounds for desired development of the city is not achieved in a satisfactory way as there is a large road going through it, not a city street like they wanted (HM 2015a).

It is explained that the municipality is forced to adopt the plan in its entirety. The reason being a need to continue plans dependent on a decision on Karmsundgata, to keep earmarked funds from the National Transport Plan and to improve car and bicycle capacity. The County also threatened legal action should they decide to adopt only the southern stretch from E134 to Storasundgata, claiming such a decision would be invalid and based on incomplete evidence meaning the environmental impact assessment. On this basis the administration made some changes to the plan regulations and map, to comply with the wishes stated by both the administration and public submissions (HM 2015a).

### *Results*

To reduce the barrier effect, the first move was to include a demand in the plan regulations saying that a study of the benefits of putting the road under the ground has to be conducted in each individual zoning plan; as a specific response to the submissions (HM 2015a). This decision was adopted by the Plan and Environmental Committee and the Municipality Council Presidency, then reversed by the Municipality Council in the last meeting (Haugesund Municipality 2015b).

The second move to reduce the barrier effect is to increase the number of bridges over the road, especially in the northern parts. A total of five new bridges are added to the plan map, and three underpasses are converted to bridges (HM 2015a).

To improve the environment along the road, a series of new points are added (HM 2015b), including; demand that surface water handling shall not harm environment, buildings or constructions, a demand preserving trees and other vegetation to the degree it is possible. Where it is not possible, replacements must be planted. Barriers between road and bicycle/pedestrian lanes must be in the form of vegetation or stone.

### *The decision*

The partial municipal master plan was adopted by the Plan and Environmental Committee on February 10<sup>th</sup>, by the municipality Council Presidency on February 11<sup>th</sup> and the municipality Council on February 25<sup>th</sup> of 2015 (HM 2014a).

### **Summing up the partial master plan process**

This process is more characterized by an acceptance of the plan despite its flaws and a “salvage what you can” mentality. The municipality does not really seem to want the plan, but have to do it while the money is available. Four years into the planning work and seven years into the NTP period, there is no going back. The partial master plan is a clear result of the framework set up in the planning programme. Traffic flow is deemed central to city development. Because anything but underpasses and bridges is dangerous with this amount of traffic, the only way to separate the alternatives is to judge it by traffic flow. All other adverse or beneficial effects on environment, pollution or aesthetic outlook are the same, and far less tangible than the calculation of traffic flow models.

The hearing lasted two months, is announced once and comes two years after the planning programme hearing. This amounts to two one-time announcements, and a ~18 week window for participation during a 10 year (covered by this thesis) process. The Botsfor ideas were not set up to survive within the framework of the project. The planning programme, based on a closed decision, had no critical private submissions, and the official ones were largely disregarded. The critical private submissions entered in this phase are referred to the planning programme, and official submissions are docile. Had the exact same private submissions been entered during the planning programme hearing, they would most likely have been referred to the closed decision of the four lane road, or that the plan is too abstract to go into details. The critical private submissions provided leverage for a change in the plan, but the leverage was not enough.

All in all, despite the changes to the plan after the hearing, the planning process must be said to have been closed for participation since Botsfor. That is, participation in terms of collaborating on devising a plan. The submissions were largely agreeing on the same principles throughout the process, yet could not impact the process. The participation that happened was to comply with legal obligations, because the plan was never really up for discussion. Had there been more pressure during the planning programme hearing, the process could have looked different.

# Part 3



## **Chapter 5: Findings and discussion**

In this thesis the concept of participation has been laid out and explained. It is revealed how participation is seen in international literature in chapter 2. The chapter explained the history of participation, how participation manifests in individuals and the benefits of participation. The framework for further study is created as central problems identified and elaborated on in literature. In chapter 3, a similar framework is used, to examine the Norwegian institutionalization of participation, which is found in national literature and guidebooks. The ideal, the practice and critical studies of the practice are presented. These are then critically analyzed using the same framework as chapter 2. In chapter 4, a case study of a relatively large plan in a medium sized Norwegian city has been studied and presented.

In the following chapter, there will be a general discussion about the case study. Then, the case will be analyzed within the framework in order to find if there is a discrepancy between the theory and the practice. This will be used to assess the status of participatory planning in Norway. From there, the chapter will discuss the effectiveness of participation in the case, in order to clarify the research question: “To what degree can participation impact a planning process?”

### **General reflections around the case findings**

The purpose of this section is to allow for general reflections around the case, as a summary and to support the assessments and judgments made within this chapter.

From the perspective of the executive power in this project, it seems to be that the only real evidence in the case is that the traffic capacity is exceeded. The remedy for this must be increased capacity, and this proposal achieves that in addition to getting new bicycle lanes. It is an example of the saying that if your only tool is a hammer, all your problems look like nails. Within this frame of thought, the only logical choice is to expand the road, allowing for increased capacity. It is the cheapest and easiest; and therefore obvious solution. This

perspective seems to disregard the less tangible fact that transport patterns are directly tied to transport management, and a four lane road is a monument to the superiority of the car regardless of lane assignment. Traffic management was a central theme of the initial plans, the Botsfor seminar and the hearings, but not the planning documents.

Even if there are nice, new bike lanes (along the most heavily trafficked road in the region), the car lanes are even better and people are already inclined to use their car. The issue raised by the opposition here is that this is an opportunity to try and shift the tendency. To turn the prognosis rather than catering to it. In that regard, the submissions are all irrelevant because they do not comment on the current plan draft as it stands, they request a different approach in its entirety. Which for the executive power means abandoning many years of hard work, creating two incompatible fronts where one is moving hastily towards a final decision.

So the issue, and source of conflict, in this case is largely that the scope of participation was too narrow to begin with. While the Botsfor seminar started as an open ended process, it quickly shut down without any noticeable public debate. By the time of the first public inspection, the work had been ongoing for two years and the decision to expand to a four lane road had been made. From a public perspective it seems like instead of trying to solve the city's traffic problems, participation began with informing on how they were increasing traffic capacity on Karmsundgata, which had exceeded its capacity. This is an issue that is (now) covered in the road administrations own literature, how the scope of the initial planning very much determines the range of ideas that are relevant. Early experiences and the factor of haste in getting an approved plan is probably important in why this happened. Avoiding to have this public debate about possible solutions before deciding hurts the political legitimacy of the plan as well as the government proposing it.

Implicit in the late process is that the partial municipal master plan is more of a formality in the process of securing the earmarked funds that rely on a master plan for the entire road. Circumstances did not allow for thorough consideration of a tunnel as an alternative initially, because it would blow the budget and complicate the planning work, and later because it would compromise the implied main objective of improving the southern section from E134 to Storasundgata. It could also represent an unwillingness to go back on a decision already made, as one can see on the remarks made towards the choice of alternatives by all directly involved parties to no avail.

A central thing to draw from the study is that planning is an activity carried out by human beings. Institutions and agencies may have their stated goals and purposes, but at the end of the day everything is run by people with loyalty, egos, ambitions, personal relationships, different opinions and interests which may change over time as new information and other things come to light. This is shown by the fact that the road administration is very critical of the planning programme; a programme to a plan which they later devise and defend from the very same criticism. The municipality are also protesting and voting against decisions that were previously made by themselves as an entity. The response from the county to the municipality, is that this is what the municipality said they want. County officials are also to some degree criticizing the choices that are being made, when the County is the official plan owner.

These are factors that cannot be generalized beyond the fact that as a social phenomenon, planning is unpredictable. It shows that what is possible, within the framework of government, funding, factual documentation and accountability, and what is wanted does not always align, and, it is in this case evident when the process is studied in detail. As the project progress, grows and develops, so do the people involved and this study show that there is an inflexibility in the system that do not reflect this fact.

There should be a practice of submitting support for the proposed plans. By ordinary logic, silence means consent and the opposing views are up against a very large majority. Even those ignorant of the entire process can be included as supportive by virtue of not protesting. After the contemporary practice, negative response is by and large the only response. In a case such as this, where less than 35 private citizens give a negative response, they make up 0.001 % of the population and are up against the rest which are supportive by default. This is bad statistical data to assess the public support for the project. It is a weakness of participation as a means to assess the democratic legitimacy of the project. If there is a normative practice of submitting your support for a project, then an overwhelming negative response would have a bigger effect.

### **The central problems**

The purpose of this section is to assess the practical case within the framework generated in chapter 2. The issues are traced through the case, to examine if and how they occur in a real

planning process. This is in order to detect if there is a discrepancy between participation as it is presented, and how it is done.

- Social problems
  - Lack of public interest
  - Lack of trust between officials and citizens
  - Citizens have egocentric concerns
- Institutional problems
  - Hearings and public meetings do not impact decisions
  - Citizens lack institutional status
  - Unclear role of the data collected

The following sections are a discussion of these issues as they relate to the literature or policy, and the case, with the aim of detecting discrepancies between what is said and what is done with participation.

## **Social issues**

### *Public interest*

There were 9 recorded submissions to the planning programme; 3 of which were public, and 11 recorded submissions to the plan draft; 8 of which were public. 3 of the public submissions to the plan draft contained a total of 31 signatures. The public meeting held during the public inspection of the planning programme had a low turnout. The quantity of participation in this case is very low, in relation to the large scale and importance for the physical layout of the city. Without evidence for saying so, there must be more than 35 people in the city of Haugesund or region of Haugalandet with an opinion on the matter. Whether the cause of the low quantity of submissions is ignorance of the plan, ignorance of the ability to comment, lack of interest or bad advertising does not show in the case. Maybe 99.999 % of the population was supportive of the plan, and did not feel the need to comment. If that is the case, this would have been valuable statistical data which would have made the process easier.

The case documentation available in this study does not reveal any reason as to why participation was so low. Literature claim that announcing plan startup and hearings is not a sufficient invitation to participate, and a large majority of municipalities say they do not have the resources to reach out in a more active way. Available time to participate and necessary

knowledge has also been mentioned as reasons. Whatever the cause in this case was, it supports the claim that there is a lack of public interest in planning. A lack of public interest cannot be called a discrepancy because it is never claimed that public interest is high. There is however a discrepancy between the expressed wish for active participation, and the means to participate that are offered.

### *Mutual trust*

Road administration handbooks state that participation is primarily with people directly tied to the case either through relevant competence or financial interests, not public. A very low share of politicians see public input as important to the decision. It represents a view of the public as unable to see the whole picture and primarily self-serving, which is to some degree made true by actively keeping them in that position by being on the sidelines, looking in. The lack of public debate around the principle solution before making the decision also show a lack of trust in including the public in official decision making. There is no evidence of public distrust of officials in the documentation, but there is a strong sense of disagreement or disappointment that can be said to harm public trust towards planning and the effect of participating. A lack of mutual trust represents a discrepancy between the expressed wish for a politically active and outspoken population and the will to follow through to make it happen.

### *Citizens have egocentric concerns*

In this case, submissions were well thought through, objective, well formulated and focused on what is best for the city, so it does not support the claim of an egocentric or ignorant public when a lack of information is accounted for. They were not privy to internal discussions and decisions, making it hard to see the whole picture. The concerns raised were rather on the discrepancy between initial rhetoric and the outcome, the direction the road would take the city and how the process was led. Where the line between egocentric and collective concerns is can of course be discussed, as the incentive to participate must stem from some personal interest. The case findings reject the claim that public concerns are mainly egocentric.

## **Institutional problems**

### *Ineffective hearings and public meetings*

Hearings and public meetings were in this case inefficient on the points that mattered.

The one public meeting that was held during the planning programme hearing was not intended to influence any decisions, but rather to inform of those that had been made. The follow up public meeting was not conducted, neither was the suggested mini Botsfor seminar.

During the planning programme hearing, the first official occasion to participate, the opposition mostly disagreed on the choice relating to alternatives in the plan. It was requested, in accordance with the law, that other alternatives should be assessed, to provide a better basis for comparison. It had already then been decided that the four lane road was the only viable option and any other assessments would be a waste of time. The advice to change the plan came from competent sources, with the road administration being the most critical. The important discussions and consequent decision were made between Botsfor and the planning programme, when it comes to choice of solution. After the decision is made, it is made public. The submissions commenting on this is referred to the decision that has been made. The hearing resulted in differentiating the one alternative.

The planning programme goals are were guiding, there is no weighing of them and they must be contradicting because of the large project. The goals are therefore no indicator because they lead in every direction. This means that the work is unfocused, and gives nothing to comment on because it is in theory so abstract and nothing is decided yet. It is however clear where the plan is heading, but it is implicit because the goals can in theory lead anywhere.

In the hearings, planning authorities object to the goals set by their own entities. This suggests narrow participation within the different actively involved partners. The municipality rejects ownership to the plan despite being active in the advisory group and hearings. Participation as described in the PBA purpose statement as a right to partake in and impact decision processes, must therefore be said to be limited.

There is nothing wrong with making a decision on how to proceed; the issue is when it is made without heeding the principle of openness. It is a decision that can be made after public and internal scrutiny. The municipality's objections to the plan is related to their own initial decision to only allow four lanes to be planned for. Attempts were made to go back on the decision, but because the project had an explicit element of haste it could not be done. The plan was admittedly not ideal but they are forced to adopt it to keep the grant money that gave the process life to begin with.

The case study is in accordance with the literature claiming that hearings have a limited effect. That they offer too little in terms of collaborating on the plan, and that they come too late in the process. Too much had been decided by the first hearing. A political will to have a public discussion around principle solutions when these decisions were made was weak. This is a direct discrepancy to the official stance on participation, expressing a clear wish for effective and active participation in planning.

The quality of the participation is despite everything good overall. Not according to the ideal but given the circumstances. There is respect for the written submission to the degree one can expect it, given that the critique is already covered in the planning documents being scrutinized. The effect of the submissions can also be said to be good, considering the force and momentum driving the process forward towards a decision. The unanimous voice that was fronted in the public inspection submissions formed a base of political legitimacy, or leverage, for the municipality administration to attempt to force in changes to the plan before it was adopted.

#### *Weak institutional status for citizens*

In the hearing of the plan draft, submissions from 31 citizens were processed as three submissions with signatures. The umbrella organization for the entire central area is also presented as a single submission. Attempts to change the plan in accordance with professional opinion, and with public support was also overruled. Newspaper announcement was the only documented public outreach, which is claimed to be insufficient. This supports a claim for weak institutional status for citizens. This is a discrepancy to the democratic notion of government for and by the people. The plan does however attempt to satisfy public interest within the frames of a four lane road through the city by adding more bridges to alleviate the barrier effect, showing slight institutional status.

#### *Unclear role of participation data*

The role of data collected does not match the literature. The hearings, public inspections and the public meeting does not show intentions of local anchoring, in terms of attempting to base the plan in local visions because the main decisions were made before they occurred. The ideas from the Botsfor seminar were not forwarded in the planning programme or the plan draft because they were regarded as unrealistic. At the same time the plan claimed to rely heavily on this seminar. The goals for the plan were in essence a continuation of the goals for the seminar. There was also a simplification of the submissions to the plan draft. This

supports the claim that it is unclear how to process the data, what should be used for and how to weigh the data in the actual decision making. This is a discrepancy to the supposed major importance of participation in the PBA and official Norwegian stance.

*Comments:*

It should be noticed that the institutional problems, especially on the efficiency of hearings and public meetings are the most substantial. This is because the research question revolves around the question of efficiency, and other issues could be said to be reasons for (institutional) or symptoms of (social) inefficient participation. It is also a much discussed point in the Norwegian literature, and central to the case as the only participation beyond a closed off seminar.

### **The discrepancy of participation in theory, policy and in practice**

The purpose of this section is to conclude on a discrepancy between theory, policy and practice, as well as examine what could have caused it in this particular case.

A discrepancy between the participation ideal and practice has been identified in theory, and examined within the framework of the central problems. When tested within the same framework, Norwegian policy and theory showed evidence of mostly the same discrepancies. The issues have further been traced through the case study, and the same problems has been confirmed within the case. In doing this, discrepancies are shown by presenting the ideal and the policy, and holding it up against critical literature and a practical case study. In all three cases, gaps between the ideal and the real has been found.

The reason for the discrepancy can to some degree explained, although not proved, within the case study. The project is documented to be active for at least six years before the Botsfor seminar in 2010, and eight years before the first hearing in 2012. At this point, several deals must have been made in order to get this far. The law governing participation also changed within this time frame, and most of the literature is released after the project was initiated. There are also financial frames set up, and time frames for the parent plans and when and how the funds will be distributed. There had already been significant conflict surrounding the project before planning begun, and extensive participation could jeopardize the political and financial frames that had been set before the actual planning started. If 27 000 signatures in a city with just over 35 000 inhabitants cannot stop the toll ring, it is hard to imagine what could impact one of the major intentions behind it.



Considering this, public acceptance and active participation might be wanted but is not put above the actual realization of the project. This conclusion supports a discrepancy between policy and reality.

## **Conclusion**

### **The status of participatory planning in Norway and research question: “To which degree can participation impact a planning process?”**

The purpose of this section is to discuss what this thesis says about the status of participatory planning, and to which degree participation can effectively impact a planning process.

The status of participatory planning in Norway is according to this study, mixed. People have the possibility to comment on and protest to plans as they are being conceived. On paper and in theory there is a well-documented right to participate and this framework outlines satisfactory grounds for involvement. In the case, the involved participants did impact the progression of the case, within the frames of what was already decided. Attempts to alter the framework did however not come to fruition. The fact that attempts were made shows that participation is not token and has an effect. As there will always be initial resistance to change in a balance of power, participation needs time to grow and develop as a source of power in planning. It needs public understanding and official acceptance.

It becomes clear from the study that the mandatory participation activities come at a time that puts participation in a role opposing the political and professional work. Opposition can be classified as participation, but it is not as constructive as collaboration. But collaboration require more effort. The case study supports the literature on the point that for participation to really be effective, and to infuse planning with the benefits it is believed to contribute with, participation activities must come earlier in the process.

The practice has yet to catch up to the theory, which crash with several political, technical and financial factors that limit the impact participating within the framework can have, causing a discrepancy. It is natural for theory to seek ways to improve current conditions, implying a necessary discrepancy.

Despite the circumstances of this case, it is shown that participation has the potential to influence a planning process within the given frames as well as to challenge the given frames.

The effect must be said to be limited, and with potential for improvement, but is far from insignificant.

### **Closing reflections**

Doing this study has been challenging. I wanted the study to be wide, and open ended investigation into participation in Norway. The study was therefore set up in a way that has been uncertain. I have set it up in a way so as not to be chasing a specific predetermined answer, but rather to investigate a case and see what it shows. This has been challenging at times because it can be hard to know if such a study will yield results. Writing in a foreign language also turned out to be more challenging than I anticipated. And most of all, keeping it structured and tight knit to fit the format of a master's thesis has been challenging.

It has also been very rewarding. The study allowed me to study participation on the most general level, not focusing on a single issue; but to try and include every aspect to participation in the case, which there was evidence for. This means that initially, nothing is irrelevant which let me go through loads of information that is not included within the thesis, but still shape my understanding of the whole case. Although it was a lot of work, I am pleased with the outcome. The study has given me insight not only into participation, but to planning processes as a whole because it allowed me to include elements beyond, but relevant to, participation.

Finally, I would like to thank my guidance counselor for this thesis – Timothy Richardson. Thank you for your patience and your work on reading and commenting on the drafts, they were a big help.

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Fig. 4:	Google Maps screenshot of Haugesund
Fig. 5:	Google Maps screenshot of Haugesund
Fig. 6:	Google Maps screenshot of Haugesund
Fig. 7:	Google Maps screenshot of Haugesund
Fig. 8:	Made with Word “SmartArt” function
Fig. 9:	Made with Word “SmartArt” function
Fig. 10:	Made with Word “SmartArt” function
Fig. 11:	Made with Word “SmartArt” function
Fig. 12:	Made with Word “SmartArt” function
Fig. 13:	Made with Word “SmartArt” function
Fig. 14:	Made with Word “SmartArt” function

