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# **Alternative Spatial Visions: Urbanization in the Oslo Green Belt**

Alternative Romlige Visjoner: Byutvikling i  
Oslomarka

Peder Persen Fostvedt  
Master i By- og Regionalplanlegging



Da var 6 år med utdanning over. Det er rart hvor fort tiden flyr. Jeg vil gjerne takke Ås for å være et så flott studiested med et så bra studentmiljø. Jeg vil takke veilederen min Petter Næss. Han har vært som en kjøll for prosjektet og sikret fremdrift hele veien, fra startskudd til mål. Videre vil jeg takke min mor og far, både for mye støtte under hele studiet, og for at jeg fikk låne hytta i innspurten til å skrive ferdig oppgaven.

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# Alternative Spatial Visions: Urbanization in the Oslo Green Belt

PEDER PERSEN FOSTVEDT

**Abstract** *This thesis argues that there is a prevailing narrow focus in contemporary planning, dominated by the conception of the normative future, which can only be reached by making something “better” through spatial interventions. In this movement towards the future, there is a risk that certain spatial visions are being prematurely discarded and categorized as “evil” for not being in contribution to the normative ethical goals of planning. By closing down the process too soon, there is a risk of suppressing political identities that can reappear later to disrupt the planning process. This thesis will argue that the line between “better” and “worse” spatial strategies is ambiguous, and that presumably “evil” alternative spatial visions may reveal new and useful knowledge and perspectives when they are explored in the absence of any pretence of an actual spatial intervention. Following an introduction with a brief overview of relevant political-philosophical and planning theoretical literature, the thesis will develop a method to explore such alternative spatial visions. Then, it will apply this method to a scenario case study exploring the potential impacts of an urbanization of the Oslo Green Belt. Finally, it will discuss the wider policy implications and opportunities based on the findings from the case study for the field of planning.*

## Section 1 – Introduction

### Theoretical Background

In a recent essay on agonism, democratic politics and the dynamics of passion, Chantal Mouffe offers a critique of current political trends.

*“We have entered a new stage of modernity, where an inclusive consensus can be built around a ‘radical centre.’ All those who disagree with this consensus are dismissed as being archaic or condemned as ‘evil’ or ‘enemies of civilization.’” (Mouffe, 2016, p. 89)*

By turning politics into a question of morals, the role of the political is essentially displaced. In such a situation, alternative visions to the dominant hegemonic model are suppressed. Instead of being a question of direction, it is a question of right and wrong. This form of consensus is unsustainable, because it involves the suppression of political identities that will eventually surface in some form or another. A different way to approach envisaging democratic politics is offered by Carl Schmitt in his critique of liberal democracy in which he states that the political can only be understood “in the context of the ever-present possibility of friend and enemy groupings” (Mouffe, 2016, p. 91). This friend and enemy grouping is based on a demarcation of “us” which cannot exist without a “them.” This relation can exist in many degrees of intensity, but there is always a risk that it will change into a friend-enemy relation, particularly when “they” start to be seen as a threat to something that is inherent to “us.”

Planning is a field that is built upon actions and interventions into the real world. As a consequence of this, planning is a normative project that is necessarily tied to value-based moral judgements that categorize

our interventions as right or wrong (Winkler & Duminy, 2014). Planners aim to, in some way or another, make things “better” in accordance with a “theoretical conceptualisation” such as the “*Just, the Intercultural and the Ordinary city*” (Winkler & Duminy, 2014, p. 112). It is in accordance with these notions of the better than an entity such as a planner or a government body can be held accountable for their decisions (Campbell & Marshall, 2002). It is often assumed that planners automatically know what “better” means in such a context, but it is rarely questioned how exactly they know this. Winkler & Duminy ask “How do planners know whether their interpretation of an ethical value is better (or worse) than the interpretations made by others?” (p. 114)

Enacting an intervention necessitates the closing down of a possible field of action into a single strategy (Metzger, et al., 2015; Oosterlynck, et al. 2010). This closing down also involves the exclusion of some other part, which in turn can become a disruption to the spatial planning process by political action. As a form of response to this closing down, Metzger et al. state “The political potential of spatial planning is in its strategic dimensions of opening up, visioning and imagining different spatial alternatives” (2015, p. 13). They separate the spatial planning process into *spatial vision* and *spatial intervention*. While the intervention is an action that requires a closing down built on some form of normative ethics, in the visioning there is room to open up the process, and ethics can be sidestepped without the consequences that doing so in the intervention would involve.

The notion of a “political potential” requires further attention. In referring to the work of Jaques Rancière (2001), Swyngedouw (2009) distinguishes between ‘police-order’, the ‘political’ and ‘politics’. While the police-order refers to the order allocated to people and things, the political disrupts this order, claiming a place and demanding a say for those who have no part. Politics is the arena in which this dynamic is given a room to unfold and it «arises when, in the name of equality, those who are not equally included in the existing socio-political order, demand their ‘right to equality» (Swyngedouw, 2009, p. 606). In describing a «political potential» Metzger et al. are saying that in the strategic dimensions of planning there is a potential for those who are not equally included to demand inclusion. This inclusion in turn can not be given by the elites, it can only be conquered.

If such spatial visioning is closed down to an unnecessary degree, what sort of judgements lie behind it? Planners normatively seek to make something ‘better’ through their interventions, and by extension, interventions that do not make things better are regarded as ‘worse’. It is interventions that find themselves as going against the grain with hegemonic theoretical conceptualisations that are subject to suppression and negative moral judgement. In relation to Mouffe’s view of the political, this involves the creation of an ‘us’ and a ‘them’ that is demarcated by a moral judgement. If you are against normative planning ethics, you can be criticized on moral grounds. When you define your opponent not in “political, but in moral terms, he cannot be envisaged as an adversary but only as an enemy” (Mouffe, 2016, p. 97) Rather than being an adversary, the opponent is seen as an “evil” enemy that has pitted himself against a moral good. Such a relation is *antagonistic*, as it can only be resolved through violence or other form of final ground. In non-violent concepts of society, such final ground does not ultimately exist, and attempts at achieving it can only lead to suppression of political identities (Mouffe, 2009).

Is there a risk that some spatial visions are characterized as “evil” and therefore dismissed before they can give off any new perspectives? Imagine if one was to suggest that an oil refinery should be built in central Paris, next to the Louvre. There are several problems with this. It would involve the destruction of architectural heritage, it would produce pollution, it would be unsightly and noisy, it would have a wider negative climate impact, and it would probably damage Paris as both a tourist destination and business city. Alternatively, imagine if one tried to take the idea seriously, tried to shape it into a form that could be politically acceptable to Parisians, and then presented the plan to stakeholders and accepted feedback. The plan itself would probably never make it past the drawing board at the end of the process. However, perhaps

there would be positive sides to some parts? Perhaps previously elusive issues would be pointed out by stakeholders in the face of a threat. Perhaps there are weaknesses in the Parisian zoning system that can be exploited to make way for negative uses much less intrusive than a refinery. It is not impossible to think that a making Parisians respond to a threat that touches at the very heart of what they love would be a meaningful process, and it is possible to approach the topic without sidestepping one's own conviction of normative planning ethics. As the premise is so preposterous, the road to making something like it happen is not something that will ever be seriously looked at. However, doing so might shine a light on "something" which would otherwise lie hidden, completely out of sight of humankind marching towards desirable outcomes.

### Research questions

The main research question for this thesis is as follows:

*In relation to some theoretical conceptualization, can knowledge and new perspectives that are useful in the present be found by imagining spatial alternatives that deliberately shift the line between "better and worse", "us and them", and "friend and enemy"?*

The aim of this study is to find a practical way to see if the political potential that Metzger et al (2015) postulate is actually there.

Due to the strong normative ethical element of planning, this has been a neglected field of study. The intention is not to criticize normative planning, nor is it to suggest that this engagement with ideas should lead to some form of action or intervention. It is also not the intention to encourage some sort of agreement or consensus and to by extension diffuse or displace conflict. Engaging with ideas that would make things 'worse' does not presuppose a change of opinion unless one were to actually suggest that the idea was to be put into effect with a spatial intervention. For planners, it might be a good exercise to engage seriously with futures one would categorize as morally reprehensible were they to be applied in a spatial intervention. Building on Mouffe's theory of agonistic pluralism, there is always a chance that moral condemnation is really just a mask that is covering a political difference of opinion.

In order to answer the main question, the following partial questions need to be answered:

*RQ1: What would be a practical and coherent method to address the concerns raised in the introduction and the main research question?*

*RQ2: Could useful results be drawn from a specific case in which this method is applied?*

In addition, the thesis will posit the following question:

*RQ3: Would it be useful to apply this method in different context in the wider field of planning?*

These questions will be answered in the following way:

*RQ1: What would be a practical, compelling and coherent method to addresses the concerns raised in the introduction and the main research question?*

In the spirit of alternative visions, this thesis will find an alternative way to find such a practical, compelling and coherent method. Rather than only drawing on existing theory and method, it will attempt to find a new and novel basis for a new method tailored to the problem posited in the main research question. Spatial planning is a field that is peculiar as it centres on land, which is a commodity that is inelastic in supply.

Existing methods for exploring future-related issues, such as *scenario development*, have not been applied to planning to a great deal and as a result they might not take into account the particular intricacies of planning-related questions (Coucleis, 2005). If these methods are simply imported in without change or adaptation, something might be lost. However, that does not mean that there is not a substantial fundament of experience and knowledge to be found in existing methods and theory. The “how” of this thesis will build on such existing knowledge, but it will also seek to develop some new knowledge to create a novel method.

One building block of such a method might be found in Winkler & Duminy’s theoretical conceptualizations, which form the reference points in relation to which spatial interventions make things “better.” If one were to take one hegemonic theoretical conceptualization, introduce a few enemy elements, and mould the new elements so as to be compatible with the rest of the conceptualization, it would result in a new reference point, to which making things “better” would go against the grain with hegemonic planning discourse. This new theoretical conceptualization would be alternative, it would be new, and it would be controversial. Doing this as a fundament would be a way to guarantee that the specific example that is to be researched really is alternative. One might also know intuitively what is an alternative vision.

A further building block of the method could be to use the knowledge and experience available in the field of Futures and Scenario Development. Scenario development is used extensively in the world of business, and there is potential for its application in planning (Coucleis, 2005). In scenario development, there are frameworks and methods that can provide a solid basis for the exploration of an alternative spatial vision (Notten, et al., 2003). The fundament of the method in this thesis will be found in literature on scenario development, and various such methods will be applied in creating a scenario. However, existing scenario development methods are broad, and there are few methods tailored to specific fields such as planning.

In her 1998 collection of essays *Making the Invisible Visible: A Multicultural Planning History*, Leonie Sandercock espouses the value of using planning history as a way to imagine different futures of planning. Planning histories that clash with the official story can reveal the underlying workings of planning, with its “political-economic, social, psychological, and cultural” dynamics and “the power relations inherent therein” (Sandercock, 1998, p. 2). In answering this, she asks what exactly planning history is, and what the field of enquiry should be. While the book is comprised of essays by various authors centring on planning histories experienced by cultural minorities, the basic idea of using planning history to better understand the dynamics of planning today and tomorrow can have broader applications.

To develop a new method to address the concern in the research question, this thesis will draw on a few such planning histories. The aim of this is to uncover the types of underlying dynamics that Sandercock discusses. If a scenario can be structured so as to bring out and emulate such dynamics, it might yield more useful knowledge and perspectives. The way do that is not obvious. One point of entry might be to delineate and select examples based on some sort of focus. Mouffe (2008) postulates that in addition to the political being displaced by the moral, there is a tendency for it to be displaced by the juridical. An apt focus point might therefore be historical political struggles that concern the juridical. In planning, the juridical has historically been found in land use regulation.

In a different article, Sandercock (2003) describes how story and storytelling can be a powerful approach to social policy research. Quite often research that is critical and thorough is also weak in terms of story. The difficulty in turning research into policy lies in how knowledge alone does not determine action. As an alternative, she posits that storytelling can make findings more persuasive, and it can make it possible to “capture the imagination of a broader and more political audience” (Sandercock, 2003, p. 20). Often, when viewed in relation to analytical perspectives, storytelling is seen as something “soft”, feminine, inferior and lacking in rigour. In addition, social researchers often feel that if an article is entertaining, it will compromise the integrity of their work. While the aim of this thesis is not primarily to be “entertaining,” it does aim to

develop a method that can capture a broader and more political audience. In doing so, applying storytelling might be just the right thing to do.

*RQ2: Could useful results be drawn from a specific case in which this method is applied?*

To answer this question, such a specific example must be selected and constructed. Like with all case studies, the selection here is done because the researcher considers them to be apt and interesting examples to study. The themes have also been selected on the basis that they represent relevant current issues both in the Norwegian context and in a wider international context. Due to their relevance, they are well suited to address the main research question.

*Theoretical conceptualization: Sustainable city*

Winkler & Duminy (2014) mention two theoretical conceptualizations in relation to which things can be made better: A better *Just city* will mean a more equitable city; a better *Intercultural city* will mean “among other value based criteria, a more respectful and inclusive city” (p.113). A different theoretical conceptualization that has a hegemonic position in planning today is the *Sustainable city*. While the content of the term is framed in different ways depending on space and time context, it is increasingly becoming a driver for urban action and policy (Haarstad, 2016).

*Theme: Green belts, green hearts and other types of protected landscapes*

Green belts lie in the intersection between the urban and the rural. These types of landscapes are common in many European cities, as it has become a common practice of urban land use policy to reserve certain areas from development (Altes, 2017; Reimer, et al., 2014). The purpose of this can be multifold: To contain urban development, to protect natural habitats, to provide recreational opportunities for urban citizens or to protect landscapes of cultural value (Altes, 2017). However, in several European countries, pressure is mounting to redefine and redraw the borders of green belts. In England, there is an increasing pressure for development on the London greenbelt (LSE, 2016; Sawyer, 2016). In the Netherlands, the Green Heart is being reconsidered and contested as an important national landscape (Altes, 2017). This continuous green space in-between the cities of Amsterdam, The Hague, Rotterdam and Utrecht could be fragmented and opened up for development. In a potentially unfolding crisis for green belts around Europe, there is a need to consider what these alternative green belts might look like. If the political pressure for change is too great and the change cannot be resisted, one risks ending up with fragmented greenbelts, developed piecemeal without any greater vision.

*Location: Oslo, Norway*

Oslo is a city in which the concept of the sustainable city has a considerable policy influence. In the 2015 Oslo Municipal Master Plan, one third of the section on strategic vision is dedicated to climate change, the environment and sustainability (Oslo Kommune, 2015). In general, there is both a substantial pressure and popular support for urban governance reforms and initiatives that seek to meet the challenges of climate change (Børrud & Røsnes, 2016). One notable example of this is the election of the Green Party as a coalition member of the city council of Oslo, and their plan to ban cars from the Oslo city centre (Cathcart-Keays, 2015). While the proposal has not been without controversy, it is due to be implemented by 2019, with a partial implementation in 2017 (Stokkland, 2017).

It is also a city with a large greenbelt. This green belt, known as Marka covers roughly 2/3 of the municipality itself, stretching out into the surrounding region to cover a total area of 1700km<sup>2</sup> (Oslo Kommune, 2017). Recently, pressure has been mounting to redefine the city's green belt in the face of a housing crisis (Sættem, et al., 2015). In addition, the right-wing Progress Party have stated in their current

program for Oslo that they intend to consider whether or not there is a need for a green belt in Oslo (FrP, 2015). A case study exploring this topic in Oslo could open up for parallels to be drawn to other European contexts.

*Focus point: Legal instruments*

A particular focus will be placed on the role of legal instruments in governing the use of land in a green belt. The legal instruments that govern the green belt in Oslo are a combination of acts of parliament, zoning, ordinances and municipal master plans. Together they form a package of land use regulation that sets “fixed” limits on how land in the green belt can be used (Altes, 2017).

*RQ3: Would it be useful to apply this method in different context in the wider field of planning?*

This question will be answered in section (4) of the thesis after summing up the answers to the other two questions.

### Structure of the thesis

The following part of the thesis is divided into three sections: (2) *Theory and method*, (3) *case study* and (4) *analysis and discussion*. In section (2), the aim is to address the first partial question, and develop a method, which can be used to address the main research question. This will be done by first looking at existing theory, and then at literature on scenario development methods. Section (3) will be the application of this theory and method to the example described above in order to address the second partial question. In section (4), the findings will be analysed and discussed, and an answer will be given to the main research question along with the three partial questions.

## Section 2 – Theory and method

### Theory

*Theoretical conceptualization*

One starting point for such a practical method could potentially be found in Mouffe’s friend/enemy dichotomy. What is the friend/enemy matrix of planning? A comprehensive study exploring such a matrix would be outside the scope of this thesis. In addition to the two conceptualizations mentioned by Winkler & Duminy (2014), there is a different theoretical conceptualization that is commonly used in planning today: *The Sustainable city*.

A key driver of policy change in urban planning and land use regulation today is climate change. In terms of urban planning, the discourse is often centred on the contribution of land use to the emission of greenhouse gases (Kennedy, et al., 2009). Behind this discourse is the real threat of the uncontrollable and devastating effects that climate change will have on human society unless it is addressed (Lowe, et al., 2006). In Norway, the «*green shift*»<sup>1</sup> is becoming the rallying banner used by government and professionals alike to conceptualize this gestation towards a more sustainable type of city (Krohn-Pettersen, 2016). In general, the intention is to transform Norway into a low-emission society through a mixture of policy, regulation, restructuring, incentives and initiatives. The use of the word «*shift*» is illustrative of the fact that the intention is to cause a shift in all areas of wider society where the need for such a shift can be found. The field of urban planning has also been affected by this, and pressure for a shift to happen is coming from the government,

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<sup>1</sup> Transl: «*Grønt skifte*»

| “Sustainable city” friend-group  | “Sustainable city” enemy-group  | New “Sustainable city” friend-group  |
|--|---|--|
| «Live, work, and travel in a climate-friendly way.»                            | «Car-based society.»  | «Car-based society.»   |
| «Good outdoor areas, good living environments and pleasant city centres.»      | «Commercial developers still focus on cars when thinking about localization and accessibility.»                 | «Houses are built outside city.»   |
| «A balance between economic, social and environmental sustainability.»         | «Houses and offices are built outside city.»  | «Live, work, and travel in a climate-friendly way.»                            |
| «Attractive and diverse .»   | «New big box stores are established along the main highways.»   | «Good outdoor areas, good living environments and pleasant city centres.»      |
| «Live there without feeling the need to use a car in their day- to day lives.» | «Municipality has assumed a more passive role, and are leaving a large part of planning to private developers.» | «A balance between economic, social and environmental sustainability.»         |
| «Adapt to a changing climate.»   | «Homes schools, kindergartens, police stations and offices are built away from city centres.»                   | «Attractive and diverse .»   |
| «Have energy-efficient buildings.»   | «Sprawl that is not seen as very sustainable.»  | «Live there without feeling the need to use a car in their day- to day lives.» |
| «Energy from renewable sources.»   | «The amount of land used per person has been increasing dramatically since the end of the 1900’s.»              | «Adapt to a changing climate.»   |
| «Series of such independent places, connected primarily by public transit.»    | «Growing cities, private car ownership and high levels of energy use.»  | «Have energy-efficient buildings.»   |
| «Making cities more dense.»  | «Development is based on consuming space.»  | «Energy from renewable sources.»   |
| «Concentrated development along the rail- tram and metro network.»             | «Cars take up space.»   | «Series of such independent places, connected primarily by public transit.»    |
| «Land-use and transportation planning should be seen under a whole.»           |   | «Making cities more dense.»  |
|  |   | «Concentrated development along the rail- tram and metro network.»             |
|  |   | «Land-use and transportation planning should be seen under a whole.»           |

Table 1: Condensed quotes about sustainable and unsustainable cities based on a series of sources from government, practitioners and politicians. Full quotes with sources in Appendix 1.

professionals, academics, the general public, and to some degree the development sector itself. For the most part the pressure is visible in policy documents, local area plans, and public and professional discourse.

What does it mean to make a better sustainable city? The term “sustainable development” has been notoriously elusive to define, and there are several different competing discourses (Redclift, 2005). The original definition of the word ‘sustainable’ stems from German scientific forestry in the 18<sup>th</sup> century (Hölzl, 2010). Here, it was applied to describe a method of forestry, which involved a sort of crop-rotation principle that in theory would ensure that the resource would never be depleted. Later the term was used extensively in 1950’s Systems theory, where it is used to describe the temporal structure of a system (Jerkø, 2009). A system that is sustainable can persist, while a system that is unsustainable will eventually collapse. In relation to cities, an unsustainable city could potentially be one that could collapse, due to social, economic or environmental reasons (Fergus & Rowney, 2005). One common way to understand it is in relation to the Bruntland Comissions 1987 definition as one that contributes in some way to the global collapse that is inherent in the discourse on climate change (Deakin & Reid, 2014; Redclift, 2005).

Rather than defining it, one point of entry might be to look at how it is actually used. As the case study in this thesis will be set in a Norwegian context, one way to approach the notion of a sustainable city could be to look at some examples from Norwegian policy, academic and practitioner use. The first and second row of (Table 1) show a range of statements about sustainable and unsustainable cities that have been put forth by different sources in Norway in-between 2016 and 2017. By looking at the table, it is clear that certain elements present themselves as ways to plan if one intends to make a city “better” or “worse” in relation to the concept of the sustainable city. So, can the line between friend and enemy in such a conceptualization be shifted? One way to do so could be to move the different point’s in-between columns in order to produce new groupings. A drastic rearrangement could result in a wildly different and unlikely concept, whereas a slight rearrangement might be more plausible.

The third row shows a new arrangement of the friend-group, where two points have been brought over from the enemy-group. Immediately it seems as though the two new points are incompatible with the rest. Suburban sprawl as it exists in places such as the exurban outskirts of US cities can scarcely be compatible with the notion of a sustainable city. If this conceptualization is to be used as the basis of a plausible future, the challenge will lie in finding a way to reduce incompatibility. However, such incompatibility is inherent in a world of diverse cultural, economic, political and ethnic backgrounds, and what appears compatible to one might be incompatible to the next. One way to understand this further might be to look at a few historical and present-day cases concerning such incompatibility.

#### *Historical and present day cases*

##### *The fire-safe city in 19<sup>th</sup> century Chicago*

Catherine M. Rosen (1986) has written a book exploring the social and physical effects of the Chicago fire of 1871, which raged for 27 hours, killing hundreds, destroying 16,000 buildings and rendering nearly 100,000 people homeless (Rosen, 1986). The most contentious element of the post-fire debate that strung up tensions beyond what might otherwise have been the case was that of economic and social class. Many of Chicago’s working class at the time resided in owner-occupied homes on leased land, with nearly one fourth of wageworkers being holders of some real estate (Garb, 2003). These houses were invariably built out of wood, and could be moved in order to adapt to changes in land rent or lease. The possibility to construct a relatively cheap wooden house represented an opportunity that gave many of those on the lowest social rung of society the opportunity to invest in an owner-occupied home with a reasonable standard.

If a citywide ban on wood construction was introduced, this would inflate construction costs. In addition to differences in material costs, due to Chicago’s raised street network, construction costs for an all brick house was estimated to be double that of a wooden house. As such, a ban on wood could effectively exclude



many individuals in the working class from home ownership, pushing them into rented tenement accommodation, like in New York. One speaker decrying the fire zone declared: «instead of enjoying the blessings of independent homes, our labouring people would be crowded into those terrible tenement houses which are the curse of eastern cities» (Rosen, 1986, p. 101). This culminated in a citywide protest in which a crowd of members of the working class stormed the City Hall of Chicago and destroyed much of its inventory. This protest was the protest against the establishment of a ‘*police-order*’ that would have detrimental effects for the working class. Other means had not been successful and the turn of events ended in violent conflict. In the end, the protestors did win a substantial victory, and the fire zone eventually came to encompass only the central business district and a few central neighbourhoods where the law was only loosely enforced.

The conceptualization of the *Fire-safe city* was a driver of conflict in Chicago at the time. The conflict can be illustrated the following way:

| Working class        |                   | Upper & Middle class |       |
|----------------------|-------------------|----------------------|-------|
| Friend               | Enemy             | Friend               | Enemy |
| Wood                 | Brick and stone   | Brick and stone      | Fire  |
| Owner occupied homes | Fire              | Rental apartments    | Wood  |
|                      | Rental apartments | Owner occupied homes |       |

Table 2: Two different conceptualizations of the fire-safe city

For the upper and middle class, rental apartments did not represent a substantial complication. Either they would be in the position as landlords, or they would be able to afford decent accommodation. For the working class there was much more to lose, as to them owner-occupation represented a much more substantial jump in living standards. Given such a set of incompatible conditions, it is difficult to see how the conflict could be easily resolved. In the end, it was through location and *exit*<sup>2</sup> that the struggle was solved. Central locations were ultimately not so valuable to the working class, and by restricting the size of the fire zone, neighbourhoods of working class houses could spring up on its outskirts, still well within reach of services and places of work.

#### *Zoning and property rights in the United States*

One of the first instances of the use of *zoning*<sup>3</sup> took place in the US, where a ban on public laundries was instated in the city of Modesto, California in the 1880s. This ordinance established that no «business of

<sup>2</sup> Fischel (1994) discusses how it is possible to react when faced with a rule that is seen as illegitimate. In general, two courses of action can be taken: *Exit* and *voice*. *Exit* means a possibility to remove oneself and ones interests from being affected by a rule. The other course of action is to *voice* ones concerns politically and instead to influence the nature of the rule. This course of action can be taken when it is disproportionately difficult to exit from the area of influence of the rule. As land is inelastic in supply, the possibility of exit is often more difficult to come by than in other markets. In addition, an extra vulnerability in terms of land is that due to *spill over effects* across municipal borders, an individual cannot necessarily influence regulatory processes by which they are affected. In addition, a third course of action, which Alexander & Sherwin (1994) discuss is that of disobedience to a rule that is not understood to be serious. If the justifications for and details of a rule are not seen as legitimate and serious, it may not be followed at all.

<sup>3</sup> Zoning as is known today is essentially a regulatory tool that allows the use and form of buildings to be controlled (Ryan, 1999). Alternatively, it is the «attempt to suppress supposed market defects by legislatively prohibiting incompatible uses of land» (Block, 1980, p. 659). What separates zoning from strict building codes is that zoning is more place specific, and the both the scope and grain of zoning is a matter of discretion. There is really no hard and sharp divide between a zone and a building code, but in general, it is possible to say that a zone addresses a place-

public laundry or washhouse» could be established in eastern half of the city's railroad track (Whitnall, 1931, p. 9). While banning laundries might seem like an unusual law to put into effect, the motivations come into view when taking into account the fact that most laundries at the time in California were operated by Chinese immigrants, and that laundries were seen as almost synonymous with the Chinese. As Whitnall explains, it was clear to most people at the time that this law was really a move to establish and maintain racial segregation in the city of Modesto. It was not until the 1920s that a more formalized zoning system saw widespread adoption in the US (McMillen & McDonald, 1999).

In some US metropolitan areas, the rights and powers inherent in local government regardless of geographical size has acted as a driver of a small-scale secession movement, in which local communities that are often homogenous in terms of class and race seek to secede from larger cities (Boudreau & Keil, 2001). One motivation for this, in particular in Los Angeles, has been the avoidance of high property tax aimed at redistributive policies. Another is to exert control over property values by mitigating *externalities*.<sup>4</sup> In many states, this pressure towards small-scale local government has acted as a barrier against the merging of smaller jurisdictions into larger ones, essentially preserving older dispersed patterns of smaller municipalities while fragmenting larger ones. In this context, rather than being seen as the product of long term vision, or arbitrary decisions, zoning can be seen as a form of collective property right that is «the product of a political process» that «serves the interests of those who control that process» (Fischel, 2000, p. 404). Zoning in the US is carried out through a process in which a locally appointed zoning board acts as advisors to the local city council. While plans are drafted by professionals, they are subject to political approval and voting. In addition, a large share of local government revenue in the US is derived from property-related taxation, which acts as an incentive for development (Boudreau & Keil, 2001).

For the individuals living in these towns in Los Angeles, the existing police-order was dissatisfactory, and they sought to establish a different one. One way to do this was to wrestle control over the local neighbourhood through local municipal secession. The conceptualization of property rights as a sort of “right to control” can be visualized the following way:

| <b>Property rights "friend-group" (1)</b>   | <b>Property rights "friend-group" (2)</b>  |
|---|--|
| -The control of the powerful and the majority can have a negative effect on others.                 | -Certain government policies are seen as invasive, and the social makeup of a neighbourhood can be seen as an issue. |
| -There exists a limited right to exert control over your neighbourhood and your wider surroundings. | -There exists a right to exert control over your neighbourhood and your surroundings.                                |
| -The home and the neighbourhood are two clearly demarcated entities.                                | -The neighbourhood is an extension of the home   |
| -Property rights only extend outwards to the borders of a property.                                 | -Property rights extend beyond the borders of a property into the wider neighbourhood.                               |
| -Municipalities should be big.  | -Municipalities should be small.   |
| -The sphere of potential influence is large but the relative influence is small.                    | -The sphere of potential influence is small but the relative influence is high.                                      |

*Table 3: Two different conceptualization of the extent of property rights*

specific complication, whereas a building code addresses a universal complication. For literature on its effects see e.g. Talen (2012); Quian (2010).

<sup>4</sup> An externality is an *uncompensated interdependency*, in which one actor is subject to an economic benefit or detriment when another actor produces a fully public or partially non-excludable good (Cornes & Sandler, 1996). This transaction is not voluntary, and as a result, it is not compensated upon unless otherwise agreed. In terms of land markets, the result of this is that externalities can be felt in terms of changes in property value. This means for property owners, spillover effects do not just impair the enjoyment of a property, they can also imply a substantial threat or benefit to an investment.

*Regulation for permanence: Architectural preservation in New York*

In 1964, plans were followed through to tear down the beaux-arts Pennsylvania Railroad station in New York City (Bryant, 2015; Fischel, 1994). In response to the loss of the building, New York City enacted the *historic landmarks ordinance*, a piece of legislation that would eventually see adoption across the US (Arbuckle, 2015). However, the ordinance could not see adoption across the US until it had been tested by the US Supreme Court (Nivala, 1996). In 1966, the Grand Central railway terminal in New York was designated a landmark under the landmarks ordinance, and in response to a rejected application to replace the building with a skyscraper, the owners sued the city of New York (Plitt, 2015; Walker & Avitabile, 1994). The case dragged on until 1975 when it was voided by the trial court, and it seemed as though the demolition could happen (Cassidy, 2013). The decision sparked outrage and in a letter to the mayor of New York in late 1975, former first lady Jackie Kennedy wrote:

*“Dear Mayor Beame... is it not cruel to let our city die by degrees, stripped of all her proud moments, until there is nothing left of all her history and beauty to inspire our children? [...] Americans care about their past, but for short term gain they ignore it and tear down everything that matters...”* (Cassidy, 2013, p. 1).

The mayor subsequently appealed, sending the case to the Supreme Court. The court case came to be centred on whether or not the city of New York had undertaken a form expropriatory ‘taking’, when restricting the use of Penn Central’s property (Walker & Avitabile, 1994). While such takings are possible and legal in the United States, they cannot happen without compensation. As the city had not compensated Penn Central, nor agreed that it should, the question was whether or not the landmarks ordinance represented an unconstitutional transgression of private property rights. The court’s verdict was a unanimous agreement on the value of historical architecture for a public interest, and through the courts, a new police-order on the place of historical buildings was established. For the developers who owned Grand Central, such an order would have detrimental effects on their space of action, and for those who supported the preservation of landmarks it would make such preservation *time-consistent*<sup>5</sup>. The field of action of the developers had not been finalized, it had been held back.

*Regulation against permanence: The London Docklands*

In 1980, the London docklands, which only 20 years earlier had handled one third of Britain’s seaborne trade, lay derelict and abandoned (Edwards, 1992) For the city, the decaying port represented a blight, for the business community it was an unused resource, and for the residents it was a dilapidating home environment (Beswick, 2001; Short, 1989). At the same time, a rather different movement was also riding across Britain, that of Thatcherism and the neo-liberal right (Toulouse, 1991). Instead of mitigating deindustrialization, it was now being actively encouraged, and it was assumed that the planning system served as a barrier to redevelopment (Florio & Brownill, 2000). To solve this, the Conservative party sought to undercut local government while strengthening central government and deregulating the economy.

The innovation brought out to revitalize the Docklands was the London Docklands Urban Development Corporation (LDDC), which could be formed under the 1980 Planning and Land Act for “the purposes of regenerating an urban development area” (s.135 (1)). The LDDC could undertake land acquisition,

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<sup>5</sup> An article by Kydland & Prescott (1977) explores the difference between *time-consistent* rules and *time-inconsistent* discretion. By this they mean that rules will have a more predictable impact over time, while discretionary policy approaches can be altered substantially. In making decisions, actors will be influenced not just by the currently existing regulatory framework, but also by how they assume a future regulatory framework will take form. To illustrate this, Kydland & Prescott use the example of construction on a flood plain. If potential house builders knew that it was not government policy to build dams, levies or other measures that protect against floods, they might be strongly discouraged from building homes in floodplains. This is generally not the case, and in the US, which they use as an example, government will act after the fact to protect lives and property.

construction and service provision in addition to having substantial planning powers, with the legal means to draft plans that would be approved directly by the national government (Planning and Land Act 1980 s.148 (1)). A second tool brought into play was the creation of designated Enterprise Zones (EZs), which were areas where the “red tape” of planning and tax burdens would be lifted from enterprise in order to promote private-sector investment” (Brownill & O'Hara, 2015, p. 549; Potter & Moore, 2000).

However, some questioned the use of UDCs and EZs to mitigate the form of complication that was present in the Docklands. While the initiative had led to economic development, the benefits did not extend to local residents, who felt that they had been excluded from the process (Brownill & O'Hara, 2015). One such competing view could be seen in *The People's Plan for the Royal Docks*, which was a community led bottom-up alternative to the plans created by the LDDC (Brownill & O'Hara, 2015). In contrast with the LDDC initiatives, the people's plan sought to reserve an area known as the Royal Docks for small-scale affordable houses with gardens while retaining of some lighter less intrusive port functions. Despite the local government support, the plan could not be given any weight as local democracy had been undercut by the business-centred approach of the national government.

In this, it is clear that there were two visions for the new Docklands city, which were mutually incompatible:

| Docklands City "Friend-Group" (1) | Docklands City "Friend-Group" (2) |
|-----------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| Skyscrapers                       | Affordable housing                |
| Deregulation                      | Retain port functions             |
| Weak local authority              | Strong local authority            |
| Offices                           | Community gardens                 |

Table 4: Two different conceptualizations of the Docklands City

While certain additional attempts at community-led planning was made over the course of the 1990's, the development of the Docklands ran its course, turning the area into the central business district it is today.

#### *Narrative discourse*

One way to understand the process that has been explained so far further is to use tools such as discourse analysis. Fløttum & Espeland (2014) have explored how narrative discourse analysis based on the work of Jean-Michel Adams (1985) can be useful in analysing policy. This form of narrative analysis is based on research that has identified five main components that are often present in a narrative structure. These five components are 1) initial situation, 2) complication, 3) reaction, 4) solution and 5) final outcome. Of these five elements, 2), 3) and 4) are the most crucial.

One way to illustrate how this works can be to use the recent Syrian refugee crisis in Europe as the basis for an example. While the intricacies of the crisis is far beyond the scope of this dissertation, much of the discussion centred around the notion of legitimate reasons for crossing and illegitimate reasons for crossing the border into Europe (Holmes & Castañeda, 2016). This was conceptualized in the notion of the refugee and the economic migrant, where the first was a victim deserving of help who could be excused for breaking rules, and the other was a selfish opportunist who breaks rules out of ignorance and disregard for others. This dichotomy is also reflected in the UN High Commissioner for Refugees 2016 report on the journalistic coverage of the crisis, which routinely uses the phrase «*refugees and migrants*» when referring to the individuals moving across the border (Berry, et al., 2016).

It is possible to identify two competing narratives that each give the ban on unauthorized border crossings different levels of seriousness and legitimacy, which are illustrated in (Table 5). As this is only an illustrative example, it does not quite represent the complex patchwork of views and opinions that the refugee crisis generated in Europe. In this case, there is not really any disagreement as to the initial situation. The main point of contention is centred on the complication, and the absence of clear evidence on the status of each individual crossing the border. Due to the lack of effective processing measures, knowledge on the number

of refugees compared to the number of migrants was uncertain at best (Albahari, 2015). Differing understandings or manufactured *framings* of the complication are connected with differing ideas of what sort of reaction and solution it should be met with, and the result is two highly divergent final outcomes. The interesting part about the two narratives is just how different the reactions and solutions are. It is in the question of what to *do* that the political element of the story comes into view. The crisis can be safely ignored until *something* must be done.

| Narrative structure  | Strong-border  | Open-border   |
|----------------------|--|---|
| 1) Initial situation | There is a war in Syria causing a movement of refugees. In addition, there is widespread poverty in the region.  | There is a war in Syria causing a movement of refugees. In addition, there is widespread poverty in the region.   |
| 2) Complication      | Large numbers of people are crossing the Turkey-Greece border & the Mediterranean by boat. <b>While some are legitimate refugees, a high percentage are opportunists seeking to immigrate.</b> | Large numbers of people are crossing the Turkey-Greece border & the Mediterranean by boat. <b>While some are opportunist seeking to immigrate, most are legitimate refugees</b> |
| 3) Reaction          | European national governments must take collective action  | European national governments, and the civil society must take collective action  |
| 4) Solution          | Military action, fence building, and other measures must be taken to uphold security on the European borders   | Refugee camps must be set up, and measures must be taken up to ease the safe passage of people across Europe  |
| 5) Final outcome     | There is only a limited influx of people   | There is a high influx of people  |

*Table 5: Responses to the Refugee crisis illustrated through two competing narratives*

## Method

### *Scenario Development*

The central benefit of scenario development is that it makes it possible to study unforeseen but plausible future events that are out the immediate control of an individual or an organization. As a field, scenario development is broad and diverse with multiple schools of thought (see, e.g. Börjeson, et al., 2006; Coates, 2000; Coucleis, 2005; Godet, 2000). While land use models of the past, in the form of systems approaches and rational comprehensive planning have proven to be insufficient for decision support, scenario development is increasingly being regarded as a way to deal with the future in planning (Coucleis, 2005). In contrast to other sciences and fields, any planning effort is in essence a “unique, non-repeatable experiment in place, time, and context,” and as a result, the consequences of an effort can be difficult to uncover. Coucleis explains:

*“Even very simple, apparently strictly localized urban management measures such as street sweeping can lead to spillover effects in this case, both improvements of water quality and waste-disposal problems well beyond the spatial extent of the municipality itself”* (Coucleis, 2005, p. 1358)

The cumulative and combined effects of different acts of land-use intervention grow exponentially in complexity over time, making accurate measurements and predictions difficult, if not impossible. In this context, scenario development can be an aid in uncovering futures that are plausible and meaningful in supporting decisions.

### *Categories*

The field of scenario development is broad, containing a number of different schools of thought and approaches towards typology. In building on a range of approaches, Börjeson, et al. (2006) identify three primary scenrio categories; *Predictive, normative and explorative*. *Predictive* scenarios attempt to offer certainty as to what will happen in the event of a likely or optional event. Primarily they are used as a means in adapting to and planning for fairly certain futures. An example of a predictive scenario could be a population forecast that extrapolates current trends.

*Normative* scenarios are used to illustrate how a desirable goal or future final outcome can be reached. This can either be how to efficiently reach an achievable goal, or to explore paths which might allow a goal that seems unachievable to be reached. An example of a normative scenario would be to illustrate how all the gasoline-driven cars within a region could potentially be replaced with electric veichles.

The last category is *explorative* scenarios. These scenarios deal primarily with *what can happen*, and are generally used for strategic purposes. Generally they take a starting point some time in the future and take into account both possible future actions, and possible development of external factors. By looking at a longer time-frame, explorative scenarios can be used to illustrate potentially profound changes within a system, the workings of which are highly known. Often the actual end product of an explorative scenario isn't that important, and rather it's the process that is regarded as most useful (Notten, et al., 2003). Due to the complexity of planning matters, predictive scenarios have a limited usefulness in terms of wider time-frames. While normative scenarios have a use in terms of figuring out how to achieve goals which are widely accepted as good, there is a risk involved that a focus on things as they *should be* might serve to conceal things as they *could be*.

### *Typology*

In order to give the scenarios some form of structure they will be categorized using a form of scenario typology. Notten et al. (2003) have developed a framework that can be used to classify scenarios beyond the

three aforementioned broad categories. The benefit of this is that it makes it easier to apply a uniform structure when working with several scenarios, and it can help make scenarios that are more robust by making them easier to compare with others. While the method allows a comprehensive categorization of different elements of a scenario, it's worth noting that there will necessarily be degrees of overlap between the categories. The typology is shown in (fig. 1):

| Overarching themes |                                 | Scenario Characteristics                                  |
|--------------------|---------------------------------|---|
| A -                | Project goal:                   | Inclusion of norms? : descriptive vs normative            |
|                    | Exploration vs decision support | Vantage point: forecasting vs backcasting                 |
|                    |                                 | Subject: issue-based, area-based, institution-based       |
|                    |                                 | Time scale: long term vs short term                       |
|                    |                                 | Spatial scale: global/supranational vs national/local     |
| B -                | Process design:                 | Data: qualitative vs quantitative                         |
|                    | Intuitive vs formal             | Method of data collection: participatory vs desk research |
|                    |                                 | Resources: extensive vs limited                           |
|                    |                                 | Institutional conditions: open vs constrained             |
| C -                | Scenario content:               | Temporal nature: claim vs snapshot                        |
|                    | Complex vs simple               | Variables: heterogeneous vs homogenous                    |
|                    |                                 | Dynamics: peripheral vs trend                             |
|                    |                                 | Level of deviation: alternative vs conventional           |
|                    |                                 | Level of integration: high vs low                         |

Figure 1: Scenario topology. Source: Notten et al. (2003)

This structure allows a scenario to be categorized under three overarching themes; (A) *Project goal*, (B) *process design* and (C) *scenario content*.

Category A deals with the goal of the scenario, which means identifying the purpose behind it, what sort of location it is to be based in, the time frame, and the vantage point. It is divided into exploration and decision-support. While these can be combined, a decision-support scenario will be more honed in to certain issues, whereas exploration might be a way to discover new issues which could require future decision-support. In the characteristics they separate between *forecasting* and *backcasting* scenarios. While forecasting is a way to extrapolate from an existing situation, backcasting is a way to extrapolate backwards from a possible future situation, identifying the way leading to it. It is also possible to combine these, backcasting from a future point, and then forecasting onwards from that future point.

Category B is concerned with the data which is to form the basis of the scenario. This is primarily divided into *intuitive* and *formal* approaches. In essence, the intuitive approach builds on qualitative data and insights to build scenarios typically in the form of narratives and storylines. Types of qualitative data which are frequently used include group interviews, literature and historical sources. This approach is often appropriate in «the analysis of complex situations with high levels of uncertainty and when relevant information cannot be entirely quantified» (Notten, et al., 2003, p. 431). The formal approach on the other hand deals primarily with quantitative data, simulation and computer models. While they are often combined, this approach is generally appropriate in less complex situations where a large amount of data is available for processing. Open or constrained institutional conditions are the degree to which certain bits of data are sensitive and might require some form of protection or concealment.

The last category deals with the actual content of the scenario. It is primarily divided into complex and simple scenarios. In a complex scenario, the amount of variables and interaction between them is higher than in a simple scenario. When the scenario is dealing with societal conditions the variables will generally come in three forms: *actors* such as individuals or organizations, *factors* such as societal themes like environmental degradation and *sectors* such as the transportation industry. In terms of temporal nature they delienate between claims and snapshots. Whereas a claim describes a future situation, a snapshot illustrates a successive causal pathway. Dynamics describe to which extent the scenario extrapolates from current trends, or alternatively introduces unexpected turns. The level of integration is concerned with to which degree several compatible scenarios within the same structure interact.

#### *Morphological analysis*

In order to eliminate factors which are incompatible with each other in the genesis of each scenario, the thesis will employ a form of morphological analysis illustrated by Álvarez & Ritchey (2015). Morphological analysis is essentially a way to quantify individual elements of an interrelated field as either compatible or incompatible. By applying this method to a wide range of elements, it is possible to identify complex interrelations which are mutually compatible. This approach has seen a fairly substantial use in scenario development. The benefit of it is due how it can be used to navigate the «many non-quantified social, political and ideological variables that need to be taken into account, and the inherent uncertainties involved» when producing scenarios (Álvarez & Ritchey, 2015, p. 12). For example, Godet (2000) discusses the application of morphological analysis along with workshops and smic-prob probability analysis in formulating strategic scenarios for the French insurance company AXA.

The analysis itself is undertaken first of all by setting up a *morphological field* (fig. 2).



| Parameter A  | Parameter B  | Parameter C  | Parameter D  | Parameter E  | Parameter F  |
|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|
| Condition A1 | Condition B1 | Condition C1 | Condition D1 | Condition E1 | Condition F1 |
| Condition A2 | Condition B2 | Condition C2 | Condition D2 | Condition E2 | Condition F2 |
| Condition A3 | Condition B3 | Condition C3 |              | Condition E3 | Condition F3 |
| Condition A4 | Condition B4 | Condition C4 |              | Condition E4 | Condition F4 |
| Condition A5 |              | Condition C5 |              | Condition E5 |              |
|              |              |              |              | Condition E6 |              |

Figure 2: A morphological field, showing six cross-compatible conditions. Source: (Alvarez & Ritchey, 2015)

| Retail                                      | Outdoor   | Height   | Externalities   | Travel                                |
|---|---|--|---|---------------------------------------|
| All buildings must have ground floor shops  | All units must have private outdoor areas         | No height limit  | All units must have sunlight                            | PT must be accessible from all unist  |
| Some buildings must have ground floor shops | All buildings must have common outdoor areas      | Single story limit                                     | All units must be shielded from noise                   | PT must be accessible from some units |
| No gound floor shops                        | All neighbourhoods must have a larger common park | Heights are determined by closeness to central streets | Every unit has to be within walking distance of a store | Cars are banned                       |
|   |   |  | Recreation must be easily accessible                    | Some units must be accessible by car  |
|   |   |  | Lively streets must be easily accessible                |                                       |
|   |   |  | Public transit must be easily accessible                |                                       |

Table 6: An illustrative example of a morphological field describing a suburban neighbourhood. Green: Two starting conditions. White: Compatible conditions. Red: Incompatible conditions.

Each condition is examined individually in relation to all other conditions, and they are linked as either compatible or incompatible. Once this is set up, one or more preferable conditions can be selected, and it is possible to calculate which other conditions will be incompatible with the preferable conditions. This is done by comparing all conditions to all other conditions.

This method is comprehensive, and allows a researcher to work with a high degree of complexity. By applying morphological analysis to scenario development, it is possible to generate a broad range of possible scenarios which can be used as the basis for further research. However, the drawback is that the method is substantially time consuming. Rather than using the method to generate scenarios, this thesis will use it in order to verify that the elements within pre-determined scenario starting points are cross-compatible with each other, in order to make them more rigorous and plausible.

An example can be seen in (Table 6), which illustrates a set of compatible urban qualities, in this case representing a traditional car-based suburban neighbourhood. The conditions in green have been selected as starting conditions. Conditions in blue are compatible, whereas conditions in red are incompatible. By subsequently choosing and deciding on compatible blue conditions and eliminating incompatible red conditions, it's possible to arrive at a cross-compatible situation. There is nothing that's inherently deterministic about the listed qualities, and the goal isn't so much to make an objective and neutral snapshot, but rather a plausible one. The end result will be normative in some way, but by doing this, it's possible to rule out incompatible conditions, and perhaps to discover some new, previously hidden compatible connections. The way this method is applied to draft the premise of the scenario is detailed in Appendix 3.

### *Interviews*

In scenario development, some form of participatory approach is often applied. One justification for this is that a scenario that has been developed with the aid of external participation will be more legitimate, and therefore better served as a meaningful tool in the real world (Larsen & Gunnarsson-Östling, 2009). It can also be a way to generate «new and surprising insights» from a wider variety of perspectives than what can be offered by a researcher or a team of researchers (Volkery, et al., 2008, p. 460) . Participants might hold some practical knowledge and experience that can be elusive from an outside perspective.

For planners, this can be a familiar approach. Planning as a practice in terms of producing plans can be seen as a form of scenario development. As Larsen & Gunnarson write, plans are «normative preserving scenarios since they are future-oriented and try to fulfil certain goals, but most often without changing societal structures» (p. 261). In this context, there is a wide body of literature on *collaborative planning*, which is a process oriented approach centred on the inclusion of stakeholders in the creation and application of plans. Originating in the works of Jurgen Habermas (1970), the field has over time been developed by academics such as Forester (1988) and Healey (1996). While the normative form and scope of stakeholder engagement is often debated, the core principles behind it are widely agreed upon and it is used in most Western European planning systems in some form or another (Reimer, et al., 2014).

Participation can take many forms and there is no agreed-upon formula. One way to categorize participation is to divide it into plan generation and plan evaluation (Drazkiewicz, et al., 2015). While the two need not be mutually exclusive and can overlap, the first approach involves crafting the basis of a plan internally, while the other involves responding to an externally created plan. This can also be extended to participation in scenario development where one can divide between response to an externally created scenario, and an active role in generating scenarios. One example of a formalized responsive participation approach is explored by Drazkiewicz et al. in a case from Germany. In 2002, a competition was held to improve the environmental and aesthetic qualities of a redirected canalized urban river in Munich. The runner up to the first place selected by the jury was preferred by the public, and as a result, the choice was highly controversial. This resulted in a mediation process in which key stakeholders were brought in to assess

the two proposals against various criteria. The participants came out in unanimous support of the second-place proposal, and this led the city to decide on a compromise between the two proposals.

In the selection of participants, a distinction can be drawn between partisan forums and non-partisan forums (Hendriks, et al., 2007). Partisan forums are comprised of groups or organizations that have a direct stake in the matter that is to be discussed, whereas non-partisan forums are set up through the selection of random citizens who only have a general interest in the issue at hand. While these are distinct opposite points, there could necessarily be some overlap. One benefit of partisan forums is that precisely because they have much at stake, they will invest more energy and resources into the process. The downside of this, particularly in deliberative planning, is that different partisan groups might be resistant to co-operating and finding common ground. The main benefit of non-partisan forums is that co-operation might be more readily achieved.

#### *Selection and conduction*

The individuals who were interviewed for this thesis were selected according to their membership to a partisan group with a stakeholder interest in the subject matter of the study. Partisan groups with three unique types of interest were approached and asked if they wanted to participate: Developers (economic), special interest groups (activists) and homeowners associations (local residents). The reason for choosing partisan groups was based on Hendriks et al. (2007) indication that they might have more energy and resources invested into the matter. For a study with limited resources, interviewing individuals who are already engaged in the topic could be a way to get more out of less time, money and labour power. The drawback to this could be a risk of over-generalization on the basis of a small group selection.

The interviews themselves were conducted on a face-to-face basis at public and office locations in Oslo, and were recorded using a microphone and a laptop. First, the interviewee was given a document that outlined the key elements of the scenario premise. The structure of each interview was centred on a framework of three main questions that were asked to all three interviewees and supplemented with extra questions tailored to the particular knowledge and experience of each individual. The intention was to get them to talk as freely as possible about their responses to the scenario premise, and only a little prompting was done on the part of the interviewer to guide responses to the questions.

In order to protect the anonymity of the three interviewees their real names are not revealed in this study. Instead, they have been given pseudonyms and the names of the organizations they represent have been changed. The information presented in this thesis does not represent the official opinions, positions and motivations of these organizations, and the statements of the subjects interviewed in this thesis might be out of line with their respective official organizational policies. Any text or image in the scenario case study of this thesis that is clearly marked as *fictional* is not to be taken as fact or official statement.

## **Section 3 – Case Study**

### **Background**

#### *Oslo and the Green belt*

Green belts are a form of urban land use regulation that is commonly applied in many countries. One of the most notable green belts is that of London, as it was the first to be introduced, spurring widespread adoption in the latter half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century (Ward, 2004). While green belts had been seriously discussed since the 1930's, the London greenbelt was not introduced until 1947. The intentions behind it were two-fold. On the one hand, it was intended as a way to protect the much beloved countryside from an ever-

encroaching city. On the other hand, the unmanaged growth of cities into increasingly unwieldy and complex agglomerations was seen as unsustainable. Oslo has a green belt that was developed gradually from 1934 and onwards. In the 1934 Greater Oslo Master Plan<sup>6</sup>, the line that makes up today's green belt was drawn at the height past which it would be unfeasible to pump water with natural water pressure (Alsvik, 1998). As the city was growing, too much construction past this point would provide an excessive strain on the system. Due to the city's geography, located at the inner part of a fjord surrounded by forest covered hills rapidly rising up to 3-400 metres and stretching inland on a plateau, this was a way of ensuring that some of the costs of urban sprawl would not be borne by the majority. While advances in technology soon made the question of water delivery less pressing, over the course of the Second World War the surrounding woodlands had manifested themselves as important not just for recreation, but also as a form of identity. In 1946, only a year after the liberation of Norway plans to construct a new power line through the forest was met with a protest of 30,000 people.

*Marka*, as the forests surrounding the city are commonly known as, was protected by a mix of local laws and precedent for the latter half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. In 1986, the 19 municipalities who share parts of *Marka* were instructed to include the border into their municipal master plans and to adopt common policies for conservation and management. This instruction was based on a policy document crafted by what was then known as the Ministry of Environment<sup>7</sup> (Miljøverndepartementet, 1986). Later in 2009, the entire system of woodlands covering an area of 1700km<sup>2</sup> was protected by law with the *Marka Act*<sup>8</sup>. Effectively this has consolidated several individual green belts into a single larger green belt for the entire Oslo metropolitan region known as *Markagrensen*, or the *Marka border* (fig. 3). For the city of Oslo itself, the area covered by the *Marka Act* is 300 km<sup>2</sup>, out of a total municipality size of 454 km<sup>2</sup> (Oslo Kommune, 2017). Geographically the protected areas are mostly comprised of a series of pine-covered plateaus at elevations over 300 metres, divided by river valleys and lowlands with arable land where water was accessible. It was in the lowlands that settlements could historically be formed on a bigger scale, and this was one of the reasons why *Marka* remained free of development throughout the years. The only major industry that the area saw was logging, which did not require the construction of any substantial infrastructure save some gravel roads for transporting timber.

#### *Complication/Reaction/Solution*

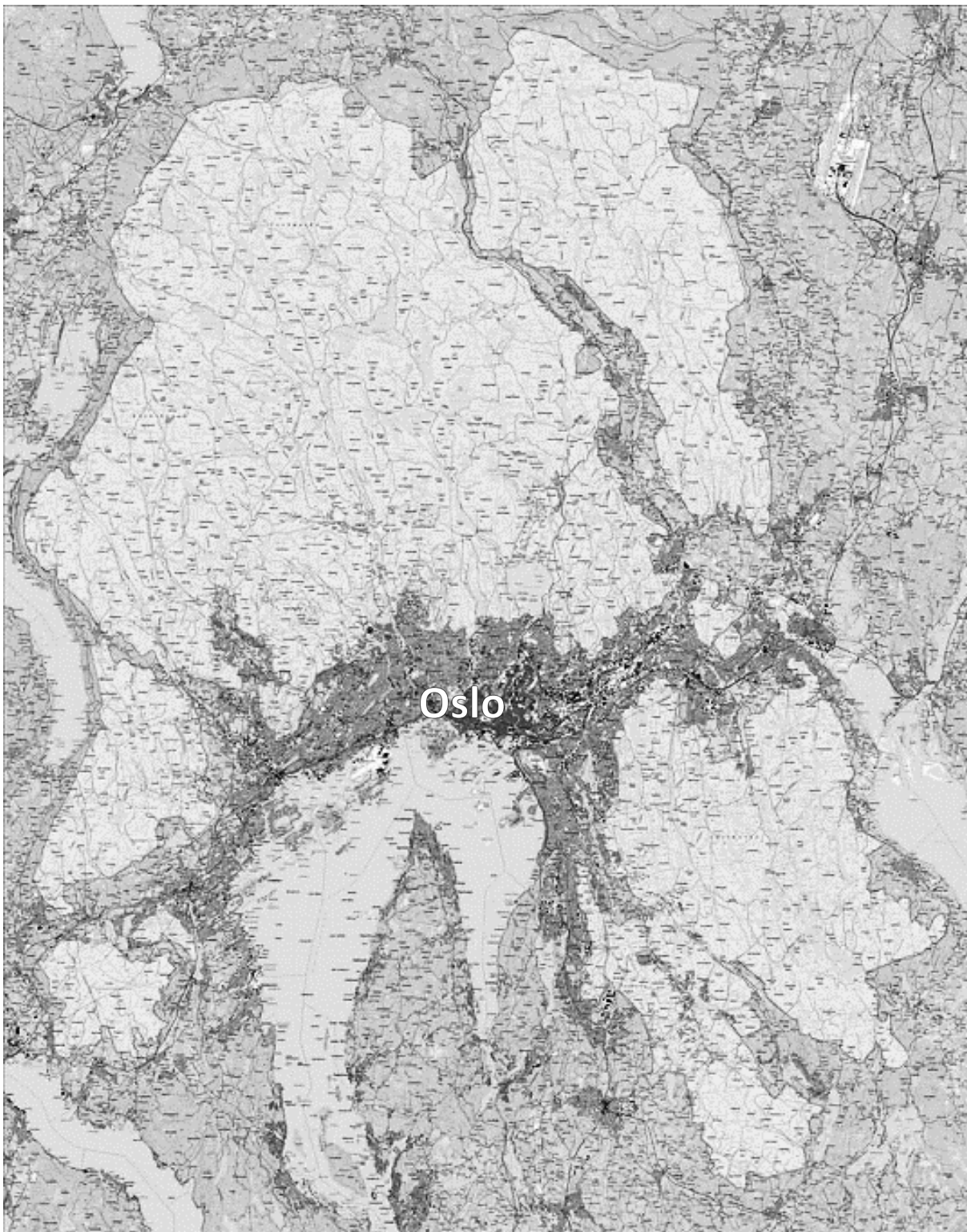
In recent years, pressure has been mounting to open up parts of the green belt for development. The housing market in Oslo has been growing steadily for the past 30 years, to the point where it is now becoming prohibitively expensive for first time buyers to find decent housing in central areas (Meier, 2016). One commonly held explanation for this is that for various reasons, supply cannot meet demand (Lie, 2016). According to the development sector itself, the reasons for this include high construction and land costs, a slow planning system, and a lack of attractive properties that can be developed in a profitable way. Other voices, such as the Norwegian Competition Authority, largely blame the situation on the fact that the housing market in the city is in effect an oligopoly controlled by four major players who maintain land banks that together control 79% of land eligible for housing development (Fostvedt, 2016). The high prices can also be attributed to liberal lending practices from banks and tax breaks that favour property ownership (Wig, 2017). Regardless of the real reasons underpinning the growth in the housing market, a partial opening up of *Marka* for development has been heralded as one possible solution (Lie, 2016). It is thought that by increasing the supply of land, the prices will correct themselves to a level closer to what would be the

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<sup>6</sup> Transl: *Generalplan for Stor-Oslo*

<sup>7</sup> Transl: *Miljøverndepartementet*

<sup>8</sup> Transl: *Markaloven*



*Figure 3: Oslo, Norway and its environs. Urbanized area in grey, current green belt area in white. Source: Statsministerens Kontor*

case in a freely operating market. The House Builders Association<sup>9</sup>, which represents 2/3rds of all developers in the country, has supported this as a way to lower land costs, which make up a substantial share of the total construction costs (Sættem, et al., 2015). Several political parties are also in support. The Centre Party<sup>10</sup> has argued that opening up forested green belt land for development can be a way to spare less regulated arable land from development, whereas the far-right Progress Party<sup>11</sup> has advocated that the green belt should be abolished altogether (Sættem, 2015).

The Marka Act openly allows for smaller readjustments of the border, and the Oslo City Council has several times voted in favour of such changes (Markaloven, 2009). However, the question of larger adjustments is a legally contested area (Mellingsæter, 2014). In terms of popular opinion, a recent public survey conducted by Norstat showed that only 49% of the population of Oslo favour a strict preservation of the current Marka border. 35% are in favour of readjustments, and 9% think that development within the green belt should be allowed (Sættem, et al., 2015). Larger adjustments could potentially come into conflict with national policy, but trends in Norwegian governance are pointing towards more local democratic autonomy and less national top-down control through the Country Governor<sup>12</sup> (Sandberg, 2016).

### *Legal basis for change*

In terms of a more wide-reaching opening up of the Marka border and a greater degree of development, what are the limits set by the law? While the Marka Act was enacted to hinder urban development within Marka, it also leaves room for discretion and interpretation. In section §1 on the purpose of the act, the law opens up for alternative sustainable uses within the green belt.<sup>13</sup> In addition, according to §15 dispensation can be given from bans on more urban uses so long as the intent of the law isn't substantially disregarded, and the benefits of giving dispensation are greater than the downsides (Markaloven, 2009). The main determinant as to whether or not development that is more substantial can be done without changing existing laws is how the term "alternative sustainable use" is to be interpreted. Depending on the interpretation, dispensation for more urban uses will not necessarily be legally problematic.

The term is used in a number of different Acts, primarily those that deal with ecological systems in some form or another. One prominent place in which it is used extensively is in the Nature Diversity Act (Naturmangfoldloven, 2009). Interpretations of use of the term in this law have been diverse, and there is as of yet no concrete widely agreed upon definition (Eriksen, 2016). In one interpretation of the term, it is understood as saying something about the quality of interventions that affect the workings of a system (Jerkø, 2009). A different interpretation holds that while the term primarily refers to the sustainability of ecological systems, it can also be seen in relation to social and economic systems (Eriksen, 2016). The more general interpretation of "sustainability" points towards such a view. While it is commonly used towards the first sense, a sustainable system could be any system, and by extension, a sustainable act is one that does not contribute to the collapse of a system (Jerkø, 2009). The leader of the Green Party, Rasmus Hansson, has stated that the term is used precisely because it is vague so that the law will not act as a constraint on the political field of action (Grønn Ungdom, 2017).

Put into context, it can be reasonably assumed that the use of the term "sustainable use" in the Marka Act points to a considerable degree towards the sustainability of ecological systems, or more specifically the sustainability of Marka as an ecological system. The crux of the matter then becomes how exactly the physical

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<sup>9</sup> Transl: *Boligprodusentenes Forening*

<sup>10</sup> Transl: *Senterpartiet*

<sup>11</sup> Transl: *Fremskrittspartiet*

<sup>12</sup> Transl: *Fylkesmann*

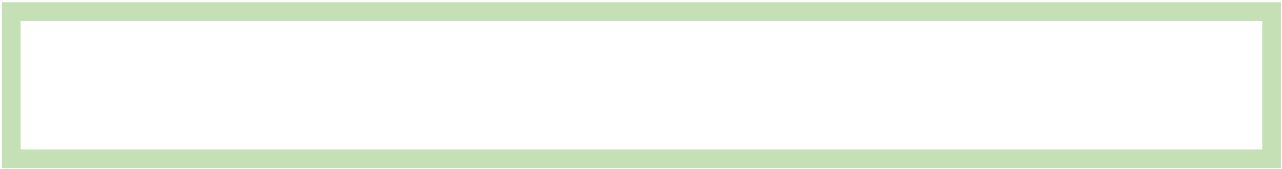
<sup>13</sup> Transl: «Alternativ bærekraftig bruk»

side of “alternative sustainable uses” can be understood. What sort of alternative sustainable uses can be imagined which do not threaten the sustainability of the area in the end? In the current kommunedelplan for Oslo’s part of Marka from 1990, new housing developments can be allowed in certain areas, so long as they conform to a specific form that is modelled on historic farmstead settlements (Oslo Kommune, 1990). Under the new Marka Act from 2009, this sort of settlement is still being allowed (Mellinsæter, 2014). By extension, some forms of housing developments can be seen as examples of “alternative sustainable use” as precedent has established.

It is in this context that the scenario that is to be explored in this thesis will take place. With this as a basis, a substantial rezoning of Marka cannot necessarily be successfully challenged in court, so long as it is centred on sustainable use and the other considerations in the Marka Act. There is a real chance that the narrative that so far has been described could be used to open up green belt in and around Oslo for development, in a way that is legitimate enough to assemble the political and popular support needed.

### Scenario

The following section will contain the scenario. The drafting of the details of the scenario is further detailed in Appendix 3. Text and visual elements of the scenario that are *fictional* will be placed within an orange bounding box in the following way:





## Scenario - Urban Development in “Marka,” the Oslo Green Belt

### *Premise*

The year is 2022. The Progress Party and the Conservatives<sup>14</sup> have formed a coalition government in the Oslo City Council after the 2019 election, and after being prompted by the development sector they have decided to look into a new policy towards Marka. The mayor of Oslo, Mazyar Keshavari (FRP), has pointed out that the city is facing a housing crisis with soaring prices and an increasing lack of areas for infill and redevelopment. “If we are to have any more infill, it won’t happen in large unused gardens or on derelict industrial land, but in the private gardens of private homes in already crowded neighbourhoods.”<sup>15</sup> As a solution to this, he suggests that the city can grow outwards.

The Green Party opposes this strongly and states that car based suburbanization in Marka will be devastating not just for biodiversity, but also for wider climate related national goals such as a reduction of the emission of greenhouse gases. Local resident groups and environmental organizations such as join in the protest, stating that the value of the green belt both for recreation and as a natural habitat lies in its character as a complete unfragmented continuous area. In addition, the Marka Act sets limits on how such a development could happen.

The idea is discussed by the regional municipalities in which Marka is located, and the engineering consultancy firm Sweco is tasked with investigating how, if at all Marka could be developed in a way that is legal, sustainable and politically acceptable. They conclude that there is a possibility of opening up Marka to sustainable development modelled after projects such as Hurdal Eco Village<sup>16</sup> without sidestepping the stipulations of the Marka Act. Similar ideas have been put forth in the past (Mellinsæter, 2014) They suggest that the green belt border should be reimagined as a “sustainability border” and that the areas within Marka can serve as an incubator for innovations in sustainable construction and architecture. As a result of this, an architecture competition is held to explore what such a plan could look like and to develop a basis for a future regional development framework.

In the winning entry to the competition, “Green Fingers,” it is suggested that Marka could be developed according to a finger plan, based on Copenhagen’s famous metropolitan development plan from 1947. Essentially Marka will be subdivided into sustainable development zones and a system of green “wedges” that form a continuous green belt. The development zones radiate out from the centre of Oslo and the centres of surrounding towns and villages. With such a design, it would be possible to maintain larger continuous sections of wilderness while also making room for new development.

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<sup>14</sup> Transl: *Høyre*

<sup>15</sup> At the moment, many inner suburban neighbourhoods in Oslo, comprised primarily of old detached wooden homes are being rezoned as development areas. In addition, a trend has been going on for years in which large gardens are being subdivided for development. The result is that the population density in inner suburban Oslo has gone up considerably, and in particular, to recent trends there has been considerable controversy. For more see (Stenbro, et al., 2016).

<sup>16</sup> Hurdal Eco Village is a community-led housing development in Hurdal, Norway. The project is based around a holistic approach to sustainable development, with positive energy homes, agricultural cooperatives and shared community spaces (Hurdal Økolandsby, 2017).



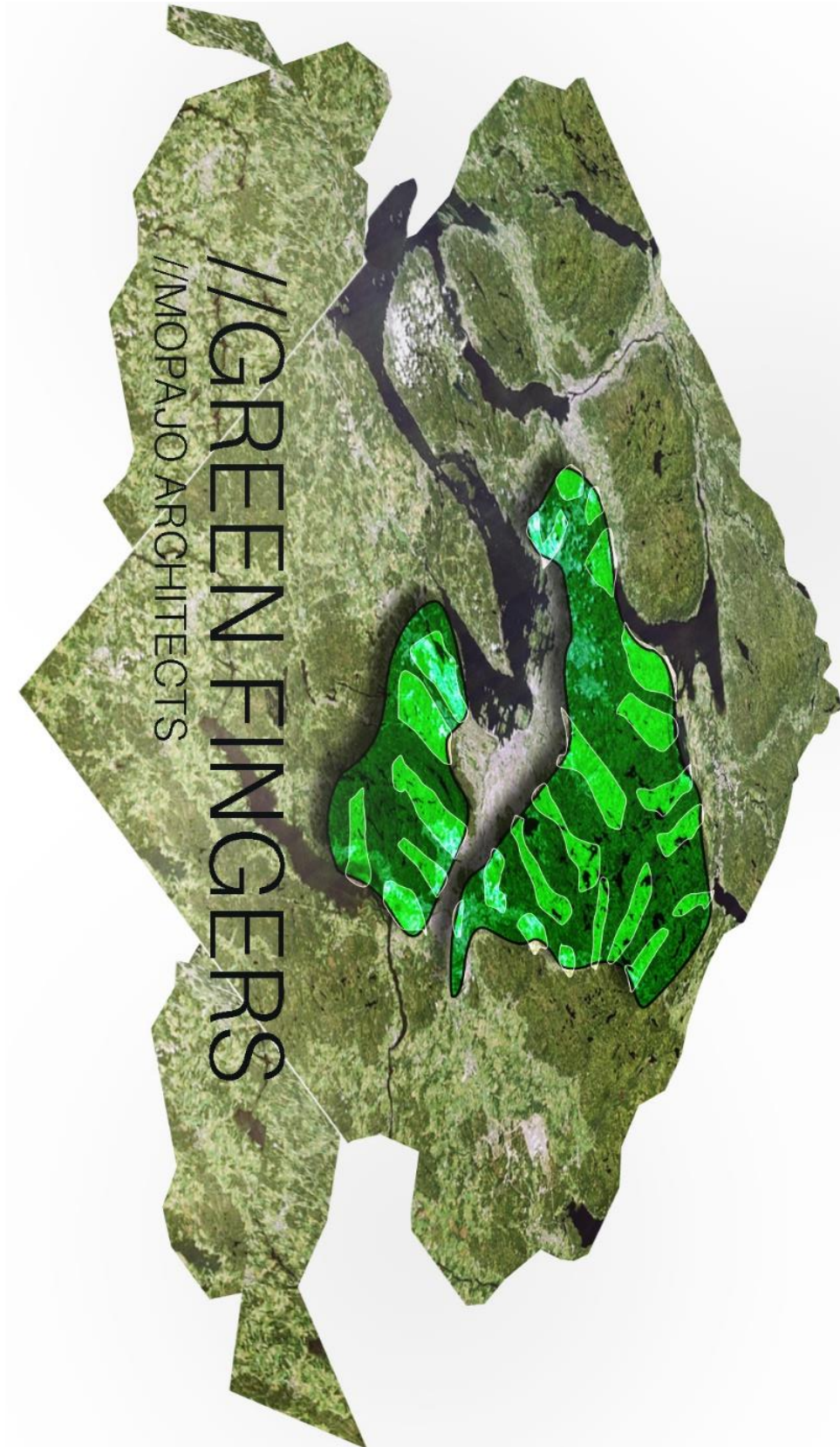


Figure 4: The proposed regional development strategy superimposed on the Oslo region. Dark green: Protected landscapes. Light green: Sustainable development zones

*Kommunedelplan for Oslo's part of Marka (2024)*

## Excerpt from the introduction to the plan

**Purpose**

The City of Oslo is growing and new solutions need to be found in order to make room for students, immigrants, families, and others who intend to make the city their home. In recent years, we have seen a trend where more and more families are choosing to live further out along the intercity railway triangle. The stated reasons for this are for the most part related to the high housing prices in the city along with the ease of commuting. At the same time, infill in the inner suburbs and the old industrial areas of Groruddalen has happened with such a pace that there is barely any space left. In response to this, there have been calls to look outside familiar borders for new land for housing. Marka is sacred to most residents of Oslo and it will continue to be so in the future. However, nature and recreation will increasingly need to be balanced with new urban-ecological ways of living.

**The purpose of this plan is:**

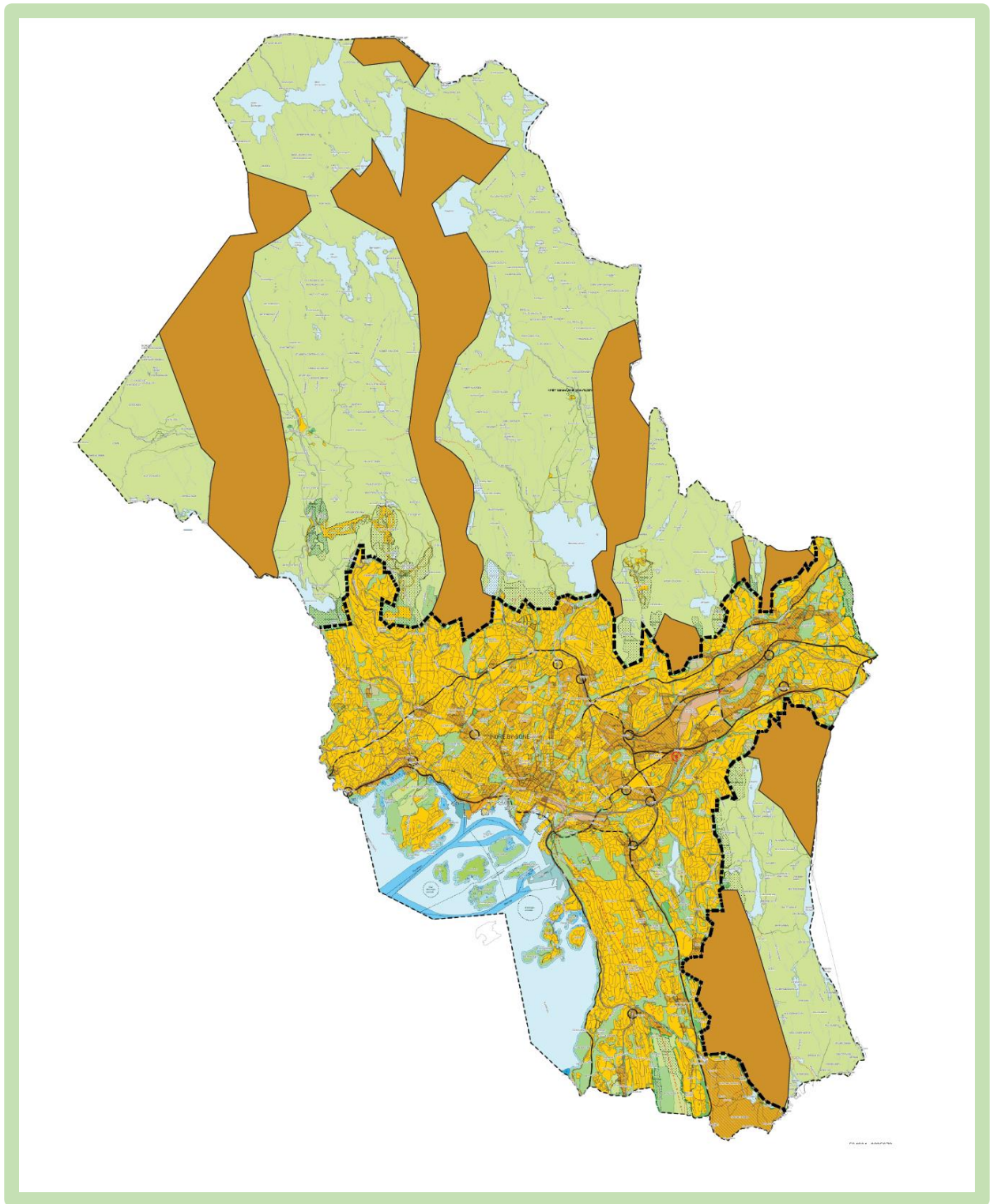
- To set up a framework that will secure a balance between alternative sustainable use and environmental protection
- To secure a framework that will ensure a holistic approach towards recreation and environmental protection in the face of change
- To secure good living environments
- To provide a set of coherent common guidelines for more detailed planning procedure
- To promote innovative environmentally sustainable architecture, construction techniques and urban planning



Figure 5: Hurdal Eco Village reference project. Photo: Hurdal Eco Village



*Zoning proposal*



*Figure 6: Map showing the proposed zoning. Dashed line: Marka Border. Green: LNF-zones. Orange: Sustainable development zones. Base map source: Oslo Kommune*

## Sustainable Development Zones

### New patterns of land use

In order to uphold the purpose of this plan, certain areas of Marka will be set aside as sustainable development zones. The general structure of these areas has been planned in accordance with the regional “Green Fingers”-plan, on which the regional governing bodies have reached an agreement.

### LNF

LNF-zones will retain the same functions as today. These areas will be set aside for nature reserves, recreation, agriculture, logging, and general environmental protection. All current agricultural land and all existing nature reserves will be retained as LNF-zones.

### Sustainable development zones

The sustainable development zones will be located away from valuable habitats and arable land. In these zones, development will be allowed in accordance with a series of ordinances aimed at upholding environmental concerns. These ordinances revolve around energy accounting, material use, function, consideration to surroundings, landscape, sustainable transport and other relevant concerns. They will set limits development that is not climate neutral and designed with considerable care towards the wider landscape and immediate surroundings.

## Ordinances<sup>17</sup>

### General Ordinances

#### §1 Developer Agreements (pbl §11-9 nr. 2)

1. In places where investigation shows that it is reasonable and socio-economically beneficial to construct new rail-based transit, planning of transit and development must be co-ordinated in order to increase potential planning gain to be put towards the financing of infrastructure.

#### §2 Transportation (pbl §11-9 nr. 3)

1. Road tolls will be set up around Marka with fares aimed at discouraging transport by diesel and petrol vehicles within the area.

2. The viability of new rail-based transit must be investigated for all areas of the plan.

#### §3 Pre-development Criteria (pbl §11-9 nr. 4)

1. Water infrastructure must be in place before development can take place

2. A primary road network must be in place before development can take place

3. A report on the viability of new rail-based transit must be procured before development can take place.

4. No construction can take place within 1km of a new railway line until a plan to construct it has been approved by the City Council

#### §4 Heights, building volume and parking (pbl §11-9 nr. 5)

<sup>17</sup> Transl: *Bestemmelser*

1. Building heights must be set in relation to the landscape with the aim of reducing visual impact

2. All parking spaces within the area must have charging points for electric vehicles.

#### **§5 Environment and Landscape (pbl §11-9 nr. 6)**

1. Each individual development that is granted planning permission must be climate neutral upon completion as a minimum

2. Developments of more than 1000m<sup>2</sup> UFA must produce energy from a non-emission source

3. The woodland character of Marka must be maintained

4. In drafting development proposals, special consideration should be taken to the landscape and the surroundings in terms of form, placement and materials.

#### **§6 Supervision of climate-related criteria (pbl §11-9 nr. 8)**

1. Use directly related to buildings and units after completion that results in a climate-negative account will be regarded as a transgression of the ordinances in this plan.

#### **Zoning Ordinances**

#### **Bebyggelse og anlegg**

#### **Criteria for physical form (pbl §11-10 nr. 2)**

1. All load-bearing structures and facades must primarily be comprised of wood from environmentally sustainable logging, or processed products, which are at a minimum 90% plant-based material from environmentally sustainable sources.

### **Stakeholder interviews**

In order to gauge responses to the plan, interviews were set up with three partisan groups that have a direct interest and stake in the issues at hand. It is common practice in Norwegian stakeholder engagement that organizations will comment on plans. The aim of the selection process was to form a representation of three interest: Local residents, special interest organizations and developers. In each interview, the subject was presented with a document containing information from the premise of the scenario, the plan and a text on the legal basis of the plan. Due to the heterogeneous nature of the participants and their organizations, the questions varied to some degree between interviews.

Representatives from the three following organizations were interviewed:

#### *“West Neighbourhood Association (WNA)” (Local Residents)*

WNA is a homeowners association for a neighbourhood in a central part of the city of Oslo’s western suburbs. This area, which is wedged between the dense inner city and the Marka border, is primarily comprised of expensive detached homes, interspersed with some low-rise apartment buildings. For the residents who live here, Marka is the closest available green space of any size, and it is popularly used for recreation.

#### *“Campaign to Save our Nature (CSN)” (Special Interest)*

CSN is a Norwegian environmental organization. The organization works towards conserving nature and promoting environmental sustainability in cases where human society and nature interact. The local chapter for Oslo and its surroundings has a long history of working towards preserving Marka through political leverage, the legal system, public opinion and other means.

*“Couris” (Developer)*

“Couris” is a commercial developer of sustainable communities. They describe this as a comprehensive lifestyle-package that is centred on social, environmental and economic sustainability. Their projects include active-housing units that produce sustainable energy, often laid out in a mixed use setting with co-operative farming and community spaces. They are currently producing around 100 units of housing under this concept each year, and they have plans to increase this into the thousands with planned and prospective sites all over the Oslo metropolitan region.

**Interview with “West Neighbourhood Association”**

*Interviewee: “Anna Stensrud”, WNA*

In addition to the information in 6.31 and 6.32, the interviewee was given an additional map, detailing the impact of the proposed development zones on the local area (fig 1).

*Q: What is your immediate impression of the scenario and the proposed plan?*

- “It would affect a part of the local woodland that’s used a lot for recreation by local residents. The affected area immediately adjacent to the Marka border is relatively flat, which makes it more accessible to children and the elderly. Development here would involve the destruction of several popular paths and trails.”
- “The current road network is at capacity, and utilizing this would lead to dangerous and excessive congestion”
- “A new road network in the woods could easily come to dominate the landscape, if it is to be built at a sufficient capacity”
- “It’s hard to see how new rail based transit would be planned, at least if it were to involve an extension of the Holmenkollen line.”

*Q: What, if anything do you see as the complication in this scenario?*

- “Why should this particular area be set aside for development when other places might be equally suitable? “
- “It seems like it would lead to a long construction process that would have detrimental effects on the quality of life in the neighbourhood for many years.”
- “Fundamentally, it would ruin much of the character of the neighbourhood, and it would destroy many of the reasons why people chose to move here in the first place.”

*Q: What sort of reaction would WNA take in the face of this?*



*Figure 7: Local context. Brown: Development zone. Green: LNF-zone. Green dashed line: Marka border*



- “The first step would be to organize ourselves based on the ways in which special interest organizations work.”
- “We would try to gain some sort of political influence by organizing meetings with politicians”
- “We would also use social media”
- “The message we would try to send is that any politician or party that votes for a suggestion like this would most likely not be re-elected”
- “We would also put pressure on our urban district council<sup>18</sup> to gain support. Even with a left-leaning city council, our district council is still primarily conservative”
- “In the next municipal election, we’d vote based on local issues to try and get politicians that support us into the city council”
- “Alternatively, we’d try our best to convince those who support it that it’s not a good idea.”

*Q: What sort of solution would this lead to?*

- “The best case scenario would be to stop the plan altogether”
- “Failing that, it would be better if the development zone closest to the Marka border was shifted towards Songns vann, and arranged so that important recreational areas would be unaffected.”

*Q: In a scenario where Oslo’s current garden-infill trends<sup>19</sup> continue and happen, in tandem with a scenario like the one that is presented here, do you see the residents of neighbourhoods such as yours taking on some more radical actions?*

- “I don’t want to speculate too much, but one thing that could be done is to start a single-issue political party to promote our interests.”

### **Interview with “Campaign to Save our Nature”**

*Interviewee: “Alf Kristoffersen”, CSN*

*Q: What is your immediate impression of the scenario and the proposed plan?*

- “As far as the legal basis goes, our interpretation is that the term ‘alternative sustainable use’ points towards the stated purpose of the law.”
- “It will have an effect on the qualities which the Marka Act intends to uphold, such as recreation and the natural environment”
- “The way it is laid out here, it looks like it is in conflict with current national and regional policy on urban development, which calls for a transit-oriented development approach in planning.”
- “The zones could touch in on areas which are not currently protected by law, but which could still contain valuable and biodiverse habitats”
- “It will increase the flow of traffic down towards the city. Even with electric vehicles this traffic will cause congestion and take up space.”
- “There is a challenge with regards to visibility in the landscape. It’s difficult to ‘hide’ development completely, and from some, if not many angles it will be visible.”

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<sup>18</sup> Transl: *Bydelsutvalg*

<sup>19</sup> Transl: *Eplehagefortetting, og omregulering av villaområder til utviklingsområder.*

- “This is particularly a challenge with regards to the hilly topography of Marka, if development is to be located on hillsides and peaks.”
- “New roads will at best lead to some impact on the landscape, and the movement of cars will lead to a sort of visual noise. “
- “It could lead to new housing developments being reserved almost exclusively for the wealthy, who can afford to pass the toll ring”
- “Demand could potentially be low. Other designated development areas close to the border, such as Gjerdsrud Stensrud have sat undeveloped for years due to low margins.”
- “It will use up a limited resource. The term ‘limited resource’ is a technical term that can have several definitions. In one definition, arable land can be seen as a limited resource. Woodlands are also in fact a limited resource. It’s here that environmental problems manifest themselves, and it’s here that we find the highest amount of endangered species.”

*Q: What, if anything do you see as the complication in this scenario?*

- “It will bring the urban further into Marka and lead to a destruction of important qualities. “
- “Marka is what ties Oslo with its multitude of diverse identities together. A spoiling would have negative social effects as well as environmental effects. “

*Q: What sort of reaction would CSN take in the face of this?*

- “We would more or less fight until houses are being built in order to stop the plan”
- “Ideally, it would be stopped before even leaving the drawing board.”
- “Failing that, the first step would be to lobby the Ministry of Local Government and Modernisation<sup>20</sup> in order to ensure that they don’t give permission to start the planning process, which they must decide on in accordance with the Marka Act”
- “If that doesn’t work we would try to have our voice heard in the hearing process. This can be challenging, as when a case reaches hearing, the details are often 95% decided on”
- “If the case gets to the point where it’s a question of a political vote in the city council, we’d try to exert pressure on politicians”
- “The goal here would be to ‘punish’ those politicians that don’t agree with our side by discrediting both them and their parties through established ways in the media and other channels. “
- “If the proposal is accepted, we will sue the city of Oslo on the grounds that the proposal is in conflict with the stipulations in the Marka Act allowing only for ‘alternative sustainable use’”
- “In such a case we hope it would reach the supreme court, as we have wanted to test relevant laws in relation the management of Marka. “

*Q: What solution would this lead to?*

- “In the best case scenario the plan would be stopped.”
- “Alternatively, it would be better to concentrate the development zones into smaller, denser transit-oriented villages. “

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<sup>20</sup> Transl: *Kommunal- og Moderniseringsdepartementet*



## Interview with “Couris”

*Interviewee: “Anders Torp”, Couris*

*Q: What is your general impression of the plan?*

- “It would be possible to conform to the same general principle while having more shallow development zones that don’t reach so far into Marka.”
- “It’s important to be careful and selective in choosing areas for development, taking into account the quality of Marka as a large open area of natural beauty.”
- “A plan like this needs to be very clear, both in concept and zoning, or there is a risk that commercial developers might seek to divert the rules and guidelines. These sorts of concerns can be used to pry open areas for development, only to result in developers building more of the same.”
- “It could be possible to look at closed circuit resource cycles on a community level, and to take this into consideration when shaping the extent of the development zones.”
- “While some of the suggested areas are sensible, others infringe on recreational areas in too high a degree”

*Q: What, if anything do you see as a complication for Couris in this scenario?*

- “The development zones include a lot of pine woodlands and not a lot of arable land. In relation to our concept, we generally look for areas that include some form of arable land, in order to set up closed circuit cycles.”
- “Developer agreements would need to be spread out fairly over several developments so that costs are not unfairly borne by some. “
- “Already existing transport solutions make it easier to achieve profit and good margins.”
- “A plan like this is very set. It would be useful to be presented with a wider array of alternatives that could be analysed in order to choose the best. “
- “In general it’s difficult for us to find suitable sites for development in competition with other, bigger firms.”

*Q: What sort of reaction would Couris take in the face of this?*

- “We would try to get to a position wherein we’re a part of the process, and get to develop our own premises for such a plan”
- “We would also do our own analysis of the area, consequences, benefits and so on.”
- “Ideally we’d want the project to be so solid that it can serve as an influence in more urbanized parts of Oslo, and that it can serve as an example in the field both nationally and internationally.”
- “To do this, we would do what we’ve already started doing, use our contacts on the levels where we have contacts, and work our way up in terms of being in dialogue with the political. We’d promote ideas for what we think is right, and help politicians to understand the complexity of issues like these. Often they don’t have this kind of knowledge.
- “Beyond that we would try to establish some preliminary projects, set up a plan, get experience, try things out. “
- “We would seek to work together with the city council and the planning and building department in finding suitable areas, formulating projects together, and being in a position to be a part of the process.”

*Q: How do you think current laws and regulations are suited to zoning for sustainable development?*

- “As of now, the current building codes in the form of the TEK document sets limitations on what sort of prerequisites for sustainability can be set through ordinances.<sup>21</sup> While a lot can be said in the description and intention of the plan, there are limits in terms of legal boundaries and requirements.”
- “Inspired by the use of Ecological zones in Denmark, in Hurdal we worked with the local planning department to have our development zoned as a ‘Special ecological area,’<sup>22</sup> which included guidelines for what we wanted to achieve.”
- “In relation to agriculture and other nature-oriented uses, current zoning use classes are very function specific. In seeking to integrate farming with housing, this is an obstacle we often face.”

*Q: How could this be solved?*

- “There could be a more open and holistic approach to energy efficiency in the building codes. As of now it’s somewhat single-minded in relation to energy efficiency.”
- “Building codes could be more function oriented. For instance, some form of benefit could be given for building smaller units. “
- “One thing which could be included as a premise for sustainable development zones such as the ones in this scenario could be an opening up of dispensating from regulations and building codes. This would make it possible to make use of recent and future technological innovations, to which the regulatory framework has not yet caught up. “

### ***Extrapolation***

The year is 2023, and it is election year for the Oslo City council. In June, the proposal for the Kommunedelplan for Marka was been made public, and after 6 weeks it will be voted on by the Oslo City council. The Conservatives and the Progress Party hope that the plan can be voted through before the election, which will be held on September 11<sup>th</sup>, 2023<sup>23</sup>. If the vote is pushed forward past the election, they could be in a minority in the council, which could sink the plan.

Having been dismissed in every part of the process so far, the CSN is running out of options. While the concerns they raised in the early hearing process were acknowledged to some degree, they only resulted in minor readjustments to the plan, before the final draft was formed. Seeing that a radical development of Marka is imminent, they start up a social media campaign under the slogan of “Save the *Whole* Climate.” The campaign holds that the natural environment in Marka is too important to be sacrificed to a greenwashed development, regardless of how climate neutral it may be. The labour party has openly given support to the plan, as they think it could help ease the housing problems in the city. In a debate held in early 2023, the CSN criticized Frode Jacobsen, the leader of the Oslo Labour party for wanting to sacrifice some parts of the environment to marginally save others: “All the nature we have in Norway is equally valuable, especially near the city where it is a severely limited resource, and the benefits of this plan are far outweighed by the destruction of habitats it will bring.”

<sup>21</sup> The Norwegian system for building codes is explained further in Appendix 2

<sup>22</sup> The possibility for this type of zoning has in later years been removed from the Planning- and Building Act, to be replaced with different types of «consideration zones,» which to a greater degree serve as discretionary guidelines.

<sup>23</sup> Municipal and parliament elections in Norway are held either on September 10th or 11th.

The WNA has managed to amass considerable support from other neighbourhoods around Oslo. As more and more middle- and upper class inner suburban neighbourhoods were set aside for infill and development, some stayed and resisted bitterly, while others left with their pockets full of millions of kroners from eager developers. When the plans for Marka were revealed, this was just the spark that was needed to ignite a wider mobilization. The WNA organize a social media campaign against the proposed *kommunedelplan*. To their surprise, much of the support comes from homeowners across western Oslo and Nordstrand to the south, who feel that their views are being routinely ignored by a wide spectre of political parties in the city. Attempts to work through established channels towards sitting politicians has not worked, and the urban district councils have too little power to uphold the interests of residents.

In early 2023, there is a gathering at the old administration building in Trondheimsveien 5 that used to be the centre of municipal government when the suburbs of Oslo were an independent district. This municipality, known as Aker, was incorporated into Oslo in 1948. Attending the meeting are Vel-members and homeowners from all around suburban Oslo. One homeowner from the suburb of Montebello shares his view: “We have come to the conclusion that what happens in our neighbourhoods is our matter alone, and if current politicians do not listen to us, we must make our own politicians.” The meeting leads to the formation of *Det Demokratiske Småhuspartiet*, or the Suburban Democratic Party, modelled after other single-issue Norwegian parties<sup>24</sup>. With this party, they intend to uphold the interests of suburban homeowners primarily in Oslo, and potentially across the country.

Couris undertook an analysis of Marka in 2022 as the regional plan was being formed in order to locate attractive sites for development. Having found some potential sites suitable for their concept in Maridalen, Songns vann and Sørkedalen, they contact the Vice Mayor for Urban Development in Oslo and state their intentions. Together they agree that a clear vision must be set for the new development zones, and the idea is raised to form a publicly funded subsidiary organization of the Planning and Building Authority tasked with creating a coherent vision and engaging with the public. This organization, “Markabyen,” or “The Marka Village” is founded, and the board is populated with a small handful of planners, architects and developers. Couris gains several seats on the board, along with developers such as Aspelin Ramm and Selvaag.

In August 2023, the *Kommunedelplan* for Marka is sent to the City Council to undergo a political vote. Outside the city hall, activists from the Green Party, the CSN, and a number of other environmental organizations are holding a protest. The Suburban Democratic Party have allied themselves with the movement, and several members of the party are present in the crowds. Inside the city hall, the vote is cast, and the plan is approved without changes by a small margin.

The following day, Alf Kristoffersen of the CSN in Oslo and the Viken Region, writes an opinion piece in the *Aftenposten* newspaper. In the text, he decries the vote as an irresponsible act of political governance. “Not only are you permitting the destruction of the natural environment but also the social fabric that is holding this city diverse together.” He further states that the CSN will fight until the first house is being built. Rather than being over, he claims that the fight has only just started; pointing out that the possibility of a rematch is one of the defining qualities of Norwegian bureaucracy and political process. The CSN subsequently sues the City of Oslo on the grounds that the city has misinterpreted the term “Alternative sustainable use” in section §1 of the Marka Act.

Couris has identified several areas, which could be suitable for preliminary projects, and now that the plan has been approved, they move ahead. One area that serves their concept well is a parcel of land near Lake Songns vann on the outskirts of the northwestern suburbs of Oslo. It is close to existing rail-based infrastructure, and it also has a substantial amount of arable land, which can be used for community farming.

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<sup>24</sup> Norway already has several other single issue parties, such as the Coastal Party and the Pensioners Party.

Intending to see if it can be used for development, they create a draft plan, enter into preliminary talks<sup>25</sup> with the Planning and Building Authority and open a dialogue with Statsbygg, the owner of the parcel. It also happens to that the proposed site covers the lion's share of the recreational backwoods of the local neighbourhood, Ris.

Upon learning this, local residents of the Western Neighbourhood contact the Suburban Democratic Party to express their disapproval of the proposed development. Eager to find a contentious case to drum up support for the party in order to get seats in the election, which is only a few weeks away, the leader of the party sides with the residents in a tweet: "This is only the first step in a long destructive process! Sad! Protect your neighbourhood, save Marka! Vote #SuburbanDemocrat" The tweet gets a like and a retweet by CSNs account.

On a cold day in September 2023, Anders Torp from Couris is out inspecting the site in the woods between Western Neighbourhood and Songns vann. As he's standing by himself in the woods along a gravel path enveloped in mist, two individuals come down the path from each side. From one side, Anna Stensrud is walking her dog as she usually does on Sundays. From the other comes Alf Kristoffersen who's been on a Sunday trip through Marka, and decided to end the trip here, where the first shovel will hit the ground, marking end of the Marka border as it has existed since 1934. They don't know each other, but for a brief moment as they pass, the three adversaries see eye to eye.

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<sup>25</sup> Transl: *Oppstartsmøte*

## Section 4 – Analysis and Discussion

### Partial question one – Alternative Vision Scenario (AVS)

*Q1: What would be a practical, compelling and coherent method to address the concerns raised in the introduction and the main research question?*

The method that has been developed in this thesis to address the concerns raised in the introduction and the main research question can be summed up the following way:

#### Alternative Vision Scenario (AVS)

- (1) Create a basic proposal/plan/rule/law etc. based on a shifting of the line between friend and enemy in a theoretical concept
- (2) Place it 5-10 years into the future
- (3) Backcast a plausible route while moulding the details of the proposal until the whole scenario is politically, technically and legally compatible
- (4) Present the plan to a panel of stakeholders
- (5) Ask for general impressions, issue-specific impressions, what they see as a complication, how they would react, and to what sort of solution this would lead.
- (6) Use their stated reactions to forecast into the future from the point in which the proposal was placed.

This method draws on the different pieces of existing methods and theory that were described in the introduction. The work of Mouffe (2008) and Winkler & Duminy (2014) has been used in point (1). Here, Mouffe's concept of the friend/enemy in the political is merged with Winkler & Duminy's theoretical conceptualizations to form a foundation for the method. Further, the insights of Sandercock (2003; 1998) are applied in points (3) and (6) by using history, storytelling and narratives as a basis for creating a persuasive scenario that will reach a wider political audience and inspire action in order to investigate if the political potential of spatial visions that Metzger, et al., (2015) postulate is there. As a way to methodize such an approach, which by nature is somewhat vague and elusive, the method involves using the narrative framework of Adams (1985) and Fløttum & Espeland (2014) as an active working component in point (5) of the method. In addition, existing method on scenario development is used in all the components to some degree. Morphological analysis is used in point (3) to create a politically, legally and technically cross-compatible scenario. One key contribution of scenario-method is how it prescribes the involvement of focus groups, interviews and panels, which was formative for point (4).

The impression of the researcher is that by creating a "threat" in the form of a controversial plan, the scenario was able to trigger the same sorts of dynamics that were present in the historical examples. In these histories, there are heroes and villains, winners and losers. Rather than being a prophetic march of reason, the examples reveal a history of antagonistic and political process. The reason for this, of course, is that planning matters. Spatial interventions have real consequences, which are felt by real people. Yet, by purposefully trying to provoke this dynamic in a setting where the consequences are removed, series of useful, case-specific knowledge was uncovered. In critiquing the proposed plan, the interviewees revealed exactly what they felt was important about Marka, what to them would constitute a good plan. This naturally varied according to the interests of the stakeholders, and "CSN" placed an extra value on conservation, while "Couris" placed an extra value on economically reasonable and fair plans. In sharing

how they would react to it, they revealed not just what sort of field of political field of action was available to them in this scenario, but in any scenario.

While this method might not be the only or the best way to address the concerns raised in the introduction and the main research question, it is one way, and it has yielded a substantial set of results. In conducting the interviews, each of the three stakeholders made a point to say just how interesting they felt it was to engage with something like that and in all three cases, they talked freely for 40-50 minutes being prompted only by a few method-directed questions. There was a sense not only that they appreciated being listened to and taken seriously, but that through this form of discussion, meaningful issues could be raised. This points towards the potential for a wider use.

### Partial question two – Findings about Marka

*RQ2: Could useful results be drawn from a specific case in which this method is applied?*

As the first question of each interview, each stakeholder was asked to give an immediate general impression of the proposed plan and premise. In response to this, they revealed a number of insights about Marka, along with facts attained through practical knowledge. The various responses to this question, which are shown in table (Table 7), touch in on a variety of themes that can broadly be categorized as *Socio-economic, Transport, Recreation, Environment and Landscape, Social and Planning*. While these responses are on the surface addressed towards the specific plan used in the interview, they also say something fundamental about Marka, and the nature of developing in and around Marka. Given the broad and partially insensitive nature of the plan, there are few of the responses that could not potentially be said towards *any* sizeable development plan for Marka.

Is this knowledge and this set of perspectives useful in the present? There is a real chance that sizeable developments in Marka will happen, and when they do, many of the concerns that are shown in table 4 will be raised again. How would it be useful to already know more or less know what will make key stakeholders react negatively? That depends on for *whom* it is useful and for *what* it is useful.

For developers, heated debates, lawsuits, and politics can represent hurdles on the route from idea to a completed building. While some might come to the conclusion that ignoring concerns of the type raised in table 4 can lead to profit, others might see that using the concerns as input, is a way to make the operation run as smoothly as possible, avoiding expensive delays. If you know that an unnecessary part of your project will make people upset, changing this as early as possible can be translated into money.

For planners, stakeholder input and engaging with the public is widely recognized as good practice (United Nations, 2017). However, it is also a time- and resource consuming practice. Gathering broad stakeholder feedback pertaining to a wider generalizable area such as a neighbourhood, an industrial area or indeed a green belt and using this as a basis for early strategic plans, can be a way to streamline the planning process further down the line. If the most widely held potential concerns are taken into account by default early on, resources can be honed in to dig out voices which are more marginalized and less vocal, such as those of ethnic minorities, the young, the elderly and the working class. That is not to say that some concerns should be administratively hand-waved aside so as to depoliticize them, but if they are taken seriously and addressed early on, there might be no need for those concerns to re-emerge later.

For architects and landscape architects, rather than seeing something like this as a constraint, it can be seen as an opportunity. If one were designing for a neighbourhood for which a study like the one in this thesis had already been conducted, the raised concerns could be the key to a project that is sensitive towards local people, culture, structures and landscapes. Rather than replacing an analysis of the local context, it could be a supplement.

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|---|--|---|
| <p><b>Socio-Economic</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “Demand could potentially be low. Other designated development areas close to the border, such as Gjerstrud Stenstrud have sat undeveloped for years due to low margins.”</li> <li>• “It could lead to new housing developments being reserved almost exclusively for the wealthy, who can afford to pass the toll ring”</li> </ul>   | <p>involve the destruction of several popular paths and trails.”</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “While some of the suggested areas are sensible, others infringe on recreational areas in too high a degree”</li> </ul>  | <p><b>Social</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “Why should this particular area be set aside for development when other places might be equally suitable?”</li> <li>• “It seems like it would lead to a long construction process that would have detrimental effects on the quality of life in the neighbourhood for many years.”</li> <li>• “Marka is what ties Oslo with its multitude of diverse identities together. A spoiling would have negative social effects as well as environmental effects.”</li> <li>• “Fundamentally, it would ruin much of the character of the neighbourhood, and it would destroy many of the reasons why people chose to move here in the first place.”</li> </ul>   |
| <p><b>Transport</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “It’s hard to see how new rail based transit would be planned, at least if it were to involve an extension of the Holmenkollen line.”</li> <li>• “The current road network [Around Røi] is at capacity, and utilizing this would lead to dangerous and excessive congestion”</li> <li>• “New roads will at best lead to some impact on the landscape, and the movement of cars will lead to a sort of visual noise.”</li> <li>• “It will increase the flow of traffic down towards the city. Even with electric vehicles this traffic will cause congestion and take up space.”</li> <li>• “A new road network in the woods could easily come to dominate the landscape, if it is to be built at a sufficient capacity”</li> </ul> | <p><b>Environment and landscape</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “There is a challenge with regards to visibility in the landscape. It’s difficult to ‘hide’ development completely, and from some, if not many angles it will be visible.”</li> <li>• “This is particularly a challenge with regards to the hilly topography of Marka, if development is to be located on hillsides and peaks.”</li> <li>• “It will use up a limited resource. The term ‘limited resource’ is a technical term that can have several definitions. In one definition, arable land can be seen as a limited resource. Woodlands are also in fact a limited resource. It’s here that environmental problems manifest themselves, and it’s here that we find the highest amount of endangered species.”</li> <li>• “It will bring the urban further into Marka and lead to a destruction of important qualities.”</li> <li>• “It’s important to be careful and selective in choosing areas for development, taking into account the quality of Marka as a large open area of natural beauty.”</li> <li>• “The zones could touch in on areas which are not currently protected by law, but which could still contain valuable and biodiverse habitats”</li> <li>• “It will have an effect on the qualities which the Marka Act intends to uphold, such as recreation and the natural environment”</li> </ul> | <p><b>Planning</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “It would be possible to conform to the same general principle while having more shallow development zones that don’t reach so far into Marka.”</li> <li>• “A plan like this needs to be very clear, both in concept and zoning, or there is a risk that commercial developers might seek to divert the rules and guidelines. These sorts of concerns can be used to pry open areas for development, only to result in developers building more of the same.”</li> <li>• “It could be possible to look at closed circuit resource cycles on a community level, and to take this into consideration when shaping the extent of the development zones.”</li> <li>• “The way it is laid out here, it looks like it is in conflict with current national and regional policy on urban development, which calls for a transit-oriented development approach in planning.”</li> </ul> |
| <p><b>Recreation</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “It would affect a part of the local woodland [The woods between Røi and Songsvann] that’s used a lot for recreation by local residents. The affected area immediately adjacent to the Marka border is relatively flat, which makes it more accessible to children and the elderly. Development here would</li> </ul>   |  |   |

Table 7: General impression interview responses arranged thematically

In terms of policy implications towards Marka, the findings indicate that if a political choice is made at some point down the line to open up for development, there are a number of concerns which could be taken into account. Two key challenges that present themselves are the flow of traffic down into the city, and the problems associated with transit-oriented development. The former can cause spill over effects in the form of congestion through existing roads and neighbourhoods in the city, while the latter is expensive, which is a driver for density, which in turn is visible and detrimental to the landscape. Visibility is listed as a concern, particularly because of the hilly topography in Marka. Preserving the natural character of the area while also making room for development in the form of infrastructure and buildings can prove to be difficult. Those who live along the border have a closer relationship with Marka, and as a result, any changes here might be perceived as unnecessarily invasive and arbitrary. In addition, relying on existing data alone is not sufficient in avoiding the destruction of valuable habitats. A substantial mapping and consequence study would be needed.

### *Sustainable Development Zoning*

Currently there are few ways in the Norwegian planning system to plan and zone in a way that ensures sustainable development. In developing the plan for the case study in this thesis, the easiest way to set aside some selected areas of a municipality for development with sustainable qualities was to apply the *kommunedelplan*, or the partial master plan. This seems like a roundabout and inflexible way to secure sustainable qualities, which in the context of climate change are as important as use, location, size and aesthetics. This view was also reflected in the interview with “Couris”. In their experience, the best way to secure sustainable development was to engage a developer that actively tries to include it in projects. Unfortunately, it might be unrealistic to expect such passion from most developers. Instead, it might be possible to reform the rules and regulations to make it possible to set demands that are more elaborate for sustainable qualities. The interviewee from “Couris” suggested that to reform building codes, and to make zoning less use-segregated might be one way forward. Other professionals also think that the current rules are lacking, making it difficult to achieve sustainable development on a local level (Alsén, 2016).

It is the opinion of this thesis that a starting point might be to introduce into the Planning and Building Act a “sustainability concern zone” or in Norwegian a “*hensynssone for bærekraft*.”<sup>26</sup> An argument could be made that place-specific sustainability zoning is not necessarily a bad idea, as it might be easier to set high demands in certain locations and for certain uses. In some areas such as a green belts, the value of the land can make it easier for a municipality to set demands, while for certain uses such as heavy industry, it might be unrealistic to set stringent sustainability demands. Having only a few of these zones might be a way both to drive the technology and to set the example that it is possible to develop profitably in an environmentally sustainable way.

### *Political Potential*

Part of the aim of this thesis was to explore the political potential of alternative spatial visions. The way this was done was two-fold. Firstly, the premise and plan in the scenario was deliberately set up in an exaggerated and insensitive way to as to incite in the interviewees what Mouffe (2008) labels *political passions*. Second, the interview was structured after the two main components of narrative structure: situation/problem and reaction/solution (Adams, 1985; Fløttum & Espeland, 2014). By asking what their *reactions* would be, it might be possible to get an answer as to what sort of avenues of political action were open to them. To highlight the nature of these reactions, they were placed into a storytelling narrative at the end of the case study

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<sup>26</sup> A «*hensynssone*» is a discretionary zone in which certain concerns must be addressed. In addition, legally binding ordinances that pertain to the issue can be attached to the zone.



Based on their answers, four key avenues of action, in order of severity and intensity were identified: *Public opinion*, *political pressure*, *legal action* and *civil disobedience*. *Public Opinion* involves organizing as a special interest groups, using social and traditional media and other tools in order to influence public, and by extension political opinion. *Political pressure* was mentioned as a way to direct your message at individual politicians either to convince them of your view, or to find ways to “punish” them if they disagree. *Legal action* involves taking use of the legal system in order to get your view heard. The crux of this is that some law must actually have been broken for it to apply. The last, *civil disobedience* was only mentioned as a last resort if all other avenues had failed. This involved using peaceful protests and obstructions to prevent physically something from happening.

A fourth question was asked to the representative from “West Neighbourhood Association”: Whether she could see some more radical action that could be taken in a situation where the case study-scenario happened in tandem with a more intense version of the current garden-infill and densification trend that is going on in Oslo. The reaction she suggested was that the local residents could start a political party to promote their own interests. This would be a political party forged out of a homeowner’s association.

If suburban homeowners feel as though they are branded as an enemy, a “they,” outside of the good urban “us,” they have the ability to organize themselves politically. Given the high level of owner-occupation in Norway, along with a high share of people who live in rural or suburban areas<sup>27</sup>, if individuals such as these feel threatened, it is not impossible that they will form a separate political identity. The growth potential of such a political movement in Norway is substantial, and discourse promoting things such as density, bicycle use and other urban phenomenon as morally good, while painting car ownership, suburban homes, and other suburban phenomena as morally wrong will only serve to fuel such a political movement. Already, there are tendencies in the west that certain such “morally wrong” qualities are being associated with the political right, while the “morally good” urban qualities are being associated with the political left (Maesschalck, 2011). Turning something like this into a question of right and wrong, and painting the opposite side as an evil enemy, will boost the rhetoric of such a party.

A different approach might be to do what Mouffe (2008) suggest and see these individuals as adversaries. That means accepting that under the discourse and conceptualization of sustainability, there are several legitimate political directions, and any alternative solution that accepts climate change as a basic condition is not morally wrong or reactionary, just different. By extension, it should be argued against based on being different, not evil. Suppressing it will not make it go away, and it might reappear, for example as a surprising new political party.

#### *Rooms for improvement*

This method as it has been applied here has been limited by the time and resources available in the scope of a thesis. The detail of the scenario could potentially have been much greater, the panels of stakeholders could have been broader, and the process of feedback could have been continued over several cycles of interview/extrapolation. Such feedback would give a more far-reaching, detailed scenario a rigorousness that was unachievable in this study.

The selected stakeholders in this study were members of resourceful organizations in terms of both knowledge and money. As a result, the scope of the findings is limited to the knowledge inherent in such organizations and with such individuals. It would have been interesting to include more marginalized stakeholders, in particular immigrants and ethnic minorities. Many neighbourhoods and districts in Eastern Oslo on the border of Marka have immigrant majority populations. Involving such a group in the study

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<sup>27</sup> Norway is in the highest percentile of European statistics for the share of people living in detached homes, which is at 61.2%. The rate of owner occupancy is high for western Europe at 61.9%. For more see (Eurostat, 2017).

might have uncovered some hitherto unknown perspectives. Some ideas on how this could be done in a different setting will be given in the following section.

A greater attention given to the question of money and economic power could have given this thesis an additional theoretical leg to stand on. The topic of neoliberalism is one which has been given much attention in planning (see e.g. Haughton, et al., 2013; Purcell, 2009), and for Metzger et al (2015), the notion of the political potential of spatial visioning is seen in the context of a normative problematization of neoliberalism as a phenomenon. While such a problematization is both necessary and germane, one aim of this thesis was to look at the wider implications of alternative spatial visioning, beyond the normative project of securing democracy in the face of neoliberalism. While it should not be necessary to justify alternative perspectives, the focus that lies at the heart of this thesis is to explore the potential advantages that can come from sketching out what *could* be, rather than only what *should* be. There are still democratic benefits to be had from the method employed in this thesis, but those benefits are acquired indirectly and might not be obvious at the start.

### Partial question three – Further applications

*Q3: Would it be useful to apply this method in different contexts in the wider field of planning?*

#### *Protected landscapes*

In the introduction, the theme of green belts was chosen, as there is a trend in some European countries towards a reconsidering and contestation of the usage and extent of green belts and other protected landscapes on the urban fringe (Altes, 2017; Sawer, 2016). From the study of the green belt of Oslo, several issues have been uncovered: Important qualities which development will threaten, how actors can act politically in relation to the plan, how there are weaknesses in the laws designed to protect the green belt, and how development might be shaped so as to be more politically acceptable. In relation to the London Green Belt and the Groene Hart of Randstad, if their status as protected landscapes are to be changed eventually, it is important to formulate a clear alternative vision for their respective futures. If the battle for the normative goal of a pristine protected landscape is lost, or it turns out that it is not the “better” way to plan, it would be beneficial if there is a wide public recognition of what not to do. The worst fate for the London Green Belt and the Groene Hart of Randstad would be a visionless piecemeal degredational urbanization in which environmental and cultural qualities are gradually lost.

#### *Marginalized stakeholders and other groups*

For some groups, the ways of action that are available in a planning process might not be so obvious. While the stakeholders that were interviewed in this thesis were resourceful individuals from resourceful organizations, other groups might not have the same kind of money, contacts and knowledge. These are the “low voices” of planning, and might include groups such as immigrant communities, the working class, indigenous groups and other cultural and ethnic minorities. Sandercock (2003) mentions a case in Northwestern Canada, where planners were trying to involve the Haida Gwaii, a local indigenous group, in a “cross-cultural economic development project” (Sandercock, 2003, p. 19). The challenge was that the representative from the Haida was reluctant to say anything. When the white people held a pre-meeting discussion on the merits of a sculpture that had been erected on a rock offshore, Gitsga, the indigenous representative broke his silence to inform that the rock was sacred to the Haida Gwaii. This infringement on something the group held as sacred had prompted the representative to speak.

Creating controversial plans and then sharing them with marginalized communities within the safe space of a scenario discussion might be a way to incite engagement and empowerment within such groups. This might help bring to light things that they value, while also creating a framework within which to explore

what sort of political action they can take to defend those things of value. If they feel apathetic towards planning and are reluctant to consider themselves as empowered individuals that have the right to stand up for their own interests, this might be a way to create awareness of alternatives. Such a process might serve to bolster them in the face of an actual threat, and to make it clear to the world what exactly they would see as a threat.

Over the last year or so, a protest has been going on in Dakota in the US against the construction of an oil pipeline that will cross a number of areas that are sacred to the Standing Rock Sioux American indigenous group (BBC, 2016). A coalition of members of Standing Rock, other indigenous groups and environmentalists have been fighting the line, which will desecrate sacred places and pollute fresh water sources. Recently, with the election of Donald Trump, construction of the line has been given the go-ahead to proceed, and already there has been an oil spill (Northcott, 2017; McAusland, 2017). While the damage is beyond done and the battle is lost, it is not likely that this will be the last battle of such a nature. There are other marginalized groups not just in the US, but also in the whole world who might be subject to similar unwanted developments in the future. For these groups, having information about what is valuable to the community mapped out and readily available means that it can be made a factor early on. Having a sense about what sort of political action can be taken if the status of those values are not appreciated by others means that such action can be taken at an earlier point and with greater confidence. Knowledge about this already exists in the hearts and minds of the individuals of such groups, but the presence of a threat can help bring it to light.

### Research question - Conclusion

*In relation to some theoretical conceptualization, can knowledge and new perspectives that are useful in the present be found by imagining spatial alternatives that deliberately shift the line between “better and worse”, “us and them”, and “friend and enemy”?*

In short, as this thesis has shown, yes. Rather than manufacturing consent for morally ambiguous spatial interventions, this method can be a way to empower all sorts of groups and to find new knowledge and perspectives. Support for different variations of a theoretical conceptualization such as the Sustainable city should not be categorized as morally right or morally wrong, at least not in the early visioning phase. In contrary, accepting such different visions as equally valid before interventions are made can lead to better interventions being made. Opening up the concept of the sustainable city in this thesis did not lead to a discourse of environmental destruction. All it led to was an alternative vision that saw both support and opposition among stakeholders, with a substantial amount of useful knowledge and perspectives being uncovered along the way. In fact, by challenging and deconstructing the term, it was possible to approach the question of why and whether the concept should be seen the way is. Creating sustainable cities necessitates the choosing of some interventions over others and how we define the concept determines what makes some interventions ‘better’ than other ones. However, through the opening up the process and the concept the choice can be a true choice, and as this thesis has shown that choice is to a high degree one of politics. To frame the concept of the sustainable city in terms of morals is to depoliticize it and to strip it of all its actually existing political dimensions. This can lead to the suppression of political identities that can reappear at a later point and disrupt the process of spatial planning. The results that have been uncovered in this thesis should make it clear that anyone who thinks that visioning “evil” things is the same as actually doing those things will be wilfully overlooking a broad field of useful perspectives. In the face of potential approaching perils such as climate change, global migration, global resource depletion and automation technology the future should not be feared, it should be embraced.

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## Appendices

### Appendix 1 – Sustainable city quotes

| <b>«Sustainable city» friend-group</b>   |  | <b>«Sustainable city» enemy-group</b>  |                       |
|--|--|--|-----------------------|
| “Cities where individuals can live, work, and travel in a climate-friendly way”  | (Kommunal- og Moderniseringsdepartementet, 2017) | «We are still living in a car-based society and many commercial developers still focus on cars when thinking about localization and accessibility.»                                      | Waage, 2016).         |
| “Good outdoor areas, good living environments and pleasant city centres”   | (Kommunal- og Moderniseringsdepartementet, 2017) | «Houses and offices are built outside city centres and new big box stores are established along the main highways.»  | Waage, 2016).         |
| «Sustainable urban development is only achieved once there is a balance between economic, social and environmental sustainability.»  | (Bylivsenteret, 2017)                            | «In recent years, the municipality has assumed a more passive role, and are leaving a large part of planning to private developers»  | Waage, 2016).         |
| «The city of the future should be attractive and diverse enough that people can comfortable live there without feeling the need to use a car in their day- to day lives.»  | ( Bylivsenteret, 2016)                           | «Because of this, homes schools, kindergartens, police stations and offices are built away from city centres»  | (Bylivsenteret, 2016) |
| «It has to adapt to a changing climate, have energy-efficient buildings, and energy from renewable sources. A sustainable region must be comprised of a series of such independent places, connected primarily by public transit to allow a shared labour market, business, retail and cultural sector.» | (Alsén, 2016)                                    | «Unfortunate sprawl that is not seen as very sustainable. The amount of land used per person, any by extension sprawl, has been increasing dramatically since the end of the 1900’s.»    | (Alsén, 2016)         |
| «Cities and towns need to be compact, the need for transport has to be reduced and climate- and environmentally friendly forms of transport must be accommodated.»   | (Alsén, 2016)                                    | «While there is disagreement as to the consequences of growing cities, private car ownership and high levels of energy use, there is agreement that this development should be opposed.» | (Alsén, 2016)         |
| «Making cities more dense is to a greater degree being regarded as the way to achieve sustainable cities.  | (Alsén, 2016)                                    |  |                       |



|  |                      |
|--|----------------------|
| More apartments in the city centre.»   | (Alsén, 2016)        |
| «Sustainable development in the outer reaches of the city should be concentrated along the rail- tram and metro network to ensure the availability of sustainable transit. With regards to investments, central location should assume primacy.» | (Oslo Kommune, 2015) |
| «Land-use and transportation planning should be seen under a whole, and with regards to regional development strategies.»  | (Oslo Kommune, 2015) |
| «Development in and around transit nodes is considered a particularly sustainable form of development because trips can happen via public transit.»  | (Oslo Kommune, 2015) |

*Table 8: Uncondensed Sustainable city quotes*

## Appendix 2 - Building codes

The Norwegian planning system has a substantial set of rules and regulations that constitute the basis of development control. These regulations govern standards through prescriptions for size, amenities, materials, and other building elements. In terms of quantitative elements of a dimensional character, such as ceiling height, these standards will usually encode a minimum, while, as other prohibitions are more absolute, such as regulation aimed at avoiding risks like fire or flooding.

The main body for developing these rules is the Norwegian Building Authority<sup>28</sup>, a subsidiary to the Housing and Building department<sup>29</sup> that is a part of the Ministry of Local Government and Modernization<sup>30</sup>. This puts the authority under the umbrella of the political system, and like much of Norwegian state administration, it acts both as an advisor upwards to politicians, and as an implementer downwards of government policy. The two main pieces of legislation they are responsible for crafting are TEK and SAK. TEK contains the regulations for technical requirements for structures, and SAK is the set of rules governing the requirements for and contents of planning applications. The Norwegian Building Authority is only responsible for crafting the rules, and the actual enforcing is carried out by each individual municipality.

TEK 10 is the name of the currently valid piece of legislation with technical requirements. It is due to be replaced by a revision in July 2017, TEK17, which is undergoing public consultation at the time of writing. The legislation is divided into three sections: requirements for outside areas, requirements relating to structures and general provisions. Most of the regulation is concerned with protecting the safety and wellbeing of those using the building and ensuring that the building does not pose a similar risk to others. This can be a direct risk in the form of fire hazards, or a more indirect risk in the form of environmental impact. These hazards are then the peripheral effects of development that the legislation is seeking to avoid in order to protect an idea of the public interest.

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<sup>28</sup> Transl: *Direktoratet for Byggkvalitet*

<sup>29</sup> Transl: *Bolig- og Bygningsavdelingen*

<sup>30</sup> Transl: *Kommunal- og Moderniseringsdepartementet*

## Appendix 3 – Shaping the scenario

### Scenario Typology and Structure

| Overarching themes |  | Scenario Characteristics   |
|--------------------|--|--|
| A -                | Project goal:<br>Exploration vs decision support | Inclusion of norms? : descriptive<br>Vantage point: Backcasting and forecasting from backcasted point<br>Subject: Area-based<br>Time scale: Short term, near future<br>Spatial scale: Regional and local |
| B -                | Process design:<br>Intuitive                     | Data: Qualitative<br>Method of data collection: Participatory and desk research<br>Resources: Limited<br>Institutional conditions: constrained   |
| C -                | Scenario content:<br>Complex vs simple           | Temporal nature: snapshots<br>Variables: heterogeneous<br>Dynamics: peripheral<br>Level of deviation: alternative<br>Level of integration: N/A   |

Table 9: Scenario Typology of the Marka Urban Development Scenario

#### Project Goal

The vantage point for discussion and further extrapolation will be a future situation in which Marka is only a political vote away from being opened up for development. From this future, the scenario will try to backcast a path that is both legally and politically possible. The point of this will be to create a sketch of a master plan in the form of a *Kommunedelplan*<sup>31</sup> that could reasonably have been put forth in real life given the variables that the scenario is based on. Drafting a *kommunedelplan* is a long process, and it builds on the creation of a plan program, which undergoes a hearing process and a political vote. To ensure that the final draft plan is coherent, its elements will be checked for cross-compatibility by using a morphological analysis matrix. A description of the plan will be drafted to be used in this thesis and as a basis for stakeholder interviews. This document will contain the backstory of the scenario that has been back casted, along with a description of its themes and the set of regulatory legal measures that are available in a *kommunedelplan*. These measures are land use zoning, ordinances for the entire master plan, and ordinances for specific zones. The legal basis of these instruments is found in section §11 of the *Planning and Building Act*<sup>32</sup>, which is the law that governs the Norwegian planning system (Plan- og Bygningsloven, 2008). As far as the time scale goes, it will be based in the near future, in the period between 2017 and 2025. The reasons for this is partly to keep the scenario realistic by reducing variables, and partly to ensure

<sup>31</sup> A *Kommunedelplan* is a sort of partial master plan for a certain part of a municipality. The UK equivalent would be an Action Plan or a Parish plan, although the *kommunedelplan* is more geared in towards binding legal by-laws and zoning than general discretionary policy.

<sup>32</sup> Transl: *Plan- og Bygningsloven*

that it has a real and immediate relevance in relation to stakeholders. The spatial scales will primarily be regional and local, and to some degree national.

#### *Process Design*

##### *Formal vs. Intuitive*

The process in this study will primarily be intuitive, with qualitative data as a basis. As it will deal with reactions to controversial issues as a main theme, there is not really much of a need for formal quantitative data, or for attempts at making certain predictions of the future. The formal input to the process will come in the form of laws and regulations, which will act as a more solid reference point around which to structure the discussion.

##### *Theory*

The way in which this study will attempt to uncover new issues is by emulating the process through which land-use regulations historically have been formed. Presumably, by doing the same thing in a future-oriented context and deliberately pointing it towards a controversial final situation, something meaningful can be discovered. The issues explored in the theory chapters serve as qualitative data in the sense that it is reasonable to suggest that the process of developing new ways to regulate land-use will happen in a similar way to how it has happened for centuries, and that historical examples along with theoretical interpretations can provide a functional structural basis.

#### *Data collection*

##### *Stakeholder Interviews*

Key stakeholders will be interviewed to respond to the master plan that will be presented in the scenario. The interviews will be divided into two sections. The first part will take the form of a normal type of stakeholder engagement where they are asked to share their reaction to the plan, and how they might want to change it. In the second part, they will be asked to place their reaction to the plan into the narrative structure of Adams (1985). Here the aim is to explore which elements in the plan if any they see as a complication and what sort of measures might be taken in reacting to the plan to solve the complications they see.

##### *Scenario Content*

The scenario content will be somewhere in-between complex and simple. In terms of variables, the selection will be heterogeneous. The actors will be the three interviewed stakeholders, the city council, the kommunedelplan and the planning department. The factors will be the themes of urban development, ecological conservation and sustainability, while the sectors will be the public sector, the development sector and voluntary interest organizations. Temporally it will be a series of snapshots to form a longer continuous narrative. In terms of dynamics and deviation, the scenario will primarily be peripheral and alternative. Rather than extrapolate in the most probable way from current trends, it will attempt to bring the scenario in an alternative but plausible peripheral direction.

#### **Morphological field analysis**

To ensure a scenario approach that was coherent and in line with relevant law, different hypothetical elements of the kommunedelplan in the following scenario were set up in a morphological field. The primary intention was to ensure that all elements of the plan would conform to the legal basis of the Marka Act and the Planning and Building Act, but also to ensure that each individual element was cross compatible with all others. Desired elements that were incompatible with one or more of the other elements were discarded and the cross compatible matrix in **Table 3** was the result.

| Legal  | Extent of zones  | Structural criteria for buildings   | Landscape  | Transportation  | Criteria for the relation of a building to its surroundings  | Use classes (pbl §11-7)   | Developer agreements  | Pre-development criteria  |
|--|--|---|--|---|--|---|---|---|
| Alternative sustainable use (Marka Act §1)   | Bigger, continuous LNF-zones   | Individual buildings must be climate neutral upon completion as a minimum (pbl §11-9-6)                       | The woodland character of Marka must be maintained (pbl §11-9-6)                                   | The area will be placed under a road toll zone with free entry for non-emission vehicles and high prices for diesel/petrol vehicles (pbl §11-9-3) | Proper consideration to surroundings must be taken in terms of placement, form and materials (pbl §11-10-3, §11-9-6) | Housing - Detached, duplex, terraced, apartments  | Agreements for technical infrastructure (pbl §11-9-2)   | Water infrastructure and an upgraded primary road network must be in place before construction can take place (pbl §11-9-4) |
| Considerations in the purpose of the Act must not be substantially disregarded (Marka Act §15) | Interchangeable "fingers" of sustainable development zones and LNF radiating from city   | Developments of more than 1000m <sup>2</sup> UFA must produce energy from a non-emission source (pbl §11-9-6) | Longer walks must be possible through landscapes that are free of human intervention (pbl §11-9-6) | In areas where it is sensible, possibility of new rail-based transit must be explored (pbl §11-9-3)   | Trees should not be cut down unless they serve as a considerable barrier to sensible use (pbl §11-9-6)               | Small-scale retail & food and drink outlets   | Agreements for social infrastructure (pbl §11-9-2)  | A report on the possibility of new rail based transit must be procured before any construction can start (pbl §11-9-4)      |
| Benefits of dispensation must be greater than disadvantages. (Marka Act, §15)                  | All LNF-areas are tied together in the centre to form a wide-spanning continuous zone  | The primary construction material should be wood from an environmentally sustainable source (pbl §11-10-3)    | The road network must conform to the terrain without deep cuts in the landscape (pbl §11-9-6)      | Building heights should be kept low as a rule in order to minimize visual impact (pbl §11-9-5)  | Small-scale business and services, public functions  | Planning gain from new rail based transit shall be used to fund said infrastructure (pbl §11-9-2) | No construction within 1km of a new railway line until a plan to construct it has been approved by the City Council (pbl §11-9-4) |   |
| Legal criteria in compliance with the Planning and Building Act (pbl)                          | All existing nature reserves and protected landscapes preserved under the Nature Diversity Act will be maintained as LNF-zones |   |  |   |  |   |   |   |

LNF

Table 10: Morphological field with the elements of the Kommuneplan for Oslo's part of Marka. Green: Starting conditions.

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Norges miljø- og biovitenskapelig universitet  
Noregs miljø- og biovitenskapelige universitet  
Norwegian University of Life Sciences

Postboks 5003  
NO-1432 Ås  
Norway