

**Program**  
Cecilie Overgaard Rasmussen

# #PLANNING

Hacking communication lines  
towards an informed public



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## Thesis Program

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Urbanism and Societal Change

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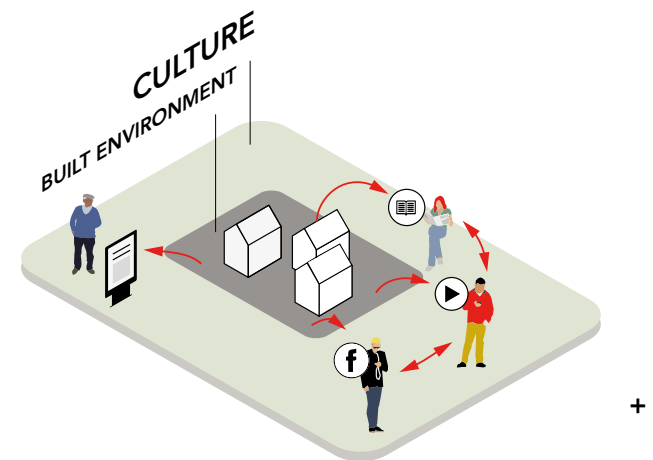
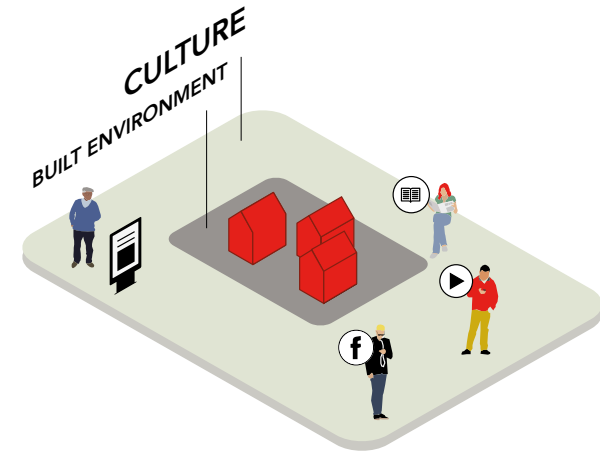
KADK School of Architecture  
Copenhagen



## PROJECT INTRODUCTION

This project will not be a planning project, but a suggestion for how complex urban planning can meet the world.

The product of this project will not be architectural objects, but an analysis followed by a media campaign aiming for greater public responsiveness to planning agendas.



## ABSTRACT

Urban planning regulations concern a lot more than just ensuring ideal cafe latte spots in the sun.

Does your aunt - who is a dentist - understand what urban qualities the planning regulations are actually ensuring?  
Or do you?

Myself? I hardly knew just two-three years ago. And I'm an architecture student.

Had I been uninformed? Of course.

But I would strongly argue that there is more to it...

### Quiet planning

The Danish planning debate is under a lot a pressure in the current political climate. It has however been like this for half a century. As a topic, urban planning is only vaguely represented and discussed in the mass-media. The word 'byplanlægning' is even being massively defeated by the word for dust, 'støv' when it comes to yearly occurrences in the Danish medias. In the 'Epitaph for Byplan', featured in the last edition of the trade journal for planners 'Byplan' in 2015', it was concluded that, even internally in the field, the planning debate is almost absent and only a shadow of its former self. It's apparently not an easy task, and maybe therefore Danish architects are in general very reluctant to engage with the mass media and debate with the public. To describe this condition for planning in the media, I'm lending the notion of 'quiet architecture' phrased by visual artist Philipp Schaerer to describe complex architectural work without iconographic qualities. The notion will be further explained on page 26.

### Can 'Quiet' Planning be hacked with the tools of Loud Architecture?

The current condition must signify that only few people are presented with the problems and solutions that planning deals with. Why is this, when certain types of architecture receive a considerable proportion



of media attention? According to statistics the word 'arkitektur' have from year to year appeared more and more in the daily press since the shift of the millennium. In the very opposite extreme, the architecture of e.g. Bjarke Ingels and BIG is on the lips of people also outside the architectural field - my accountant friend is even capable of imitating the diagrammatic representation of BIG's Vertical Village concept for the '2 World Trade Centre'. What makes that kind of architecture so much more newsworthy and approachable than typical planning projects?

For someone who believes in planning as a project, I ask myself as the main research question for my thesis, if some of these powerful communication methods that draw on popular culture, clear object forms and the possibilities of social media, can be opportunistically hacked for the benefit of bringing greater exposure for planning? I ask myself this question because I, in line with the heads of 'Byplan', find the lack of exposure problematic.

### **A problem arises if the advocates of urban planning remain quiet**

While I was doing an exchange semester studying journalistic mediation in 2016, the government, at the time, suggested radical changes to the Danish Planning Act. Spearheaded by the minister of business and growth, Troels Lund Poulsen, they pushed for a radical liberalisation of the Planning Act and managed to dominate the debate with a discourse of "creating larger degrees of freedom" being the essence of the topic. This simplifying spin was according to professor in urban planning at KADK, Jens Kvorning, not being challenged or questioned by the mass of journalists.

The same lopsided tendency has been further elaborated on by Jørgen Møller, associate professor at Institute for Urban Planning at Aalborg University:

The debate on the Planning Act is characterized by the lack of precision, too many unsubstantiated claims and not least a massive polarization, in which you don't listen to arguments from people with other opinions - and certainly not to the experts.

The outcome of lopsided political debates like this, can have very concrete real life significance when talking about planning. A future



**Statistician and professor Hans Rosling fries today's journalists for not being critical and truthful enough in their laying out of the world.**

Deadline, DR2, 3rd of September 2015. Video source: Youtube.

continuation of this negative framing that emphasises the acts" "limiting character", can turn out to be destructive. Jens Kvorning has formulated the potential danger of the words like this:

With larger and larger degrees of freedom being left unquestioned as a quality in itself, the ultimate goal will end up being an total abolition of the Planning Act.

If you have no preceding knowledge of the regulations and all that the media is making you aware of, is how limiting to freedom it is - why not abolish it?

### Shallow waters in the common pool of urban planning knowledge

How much, or how little, understanding do the general public actually have of what kind of qualities that planning regulations provide? I quickly arrived at this question, when I started to scan the daily press for articles about urban planning, and I noticed how little journalistic space is dedicated for the background of the ongoing Planning Act-debate.

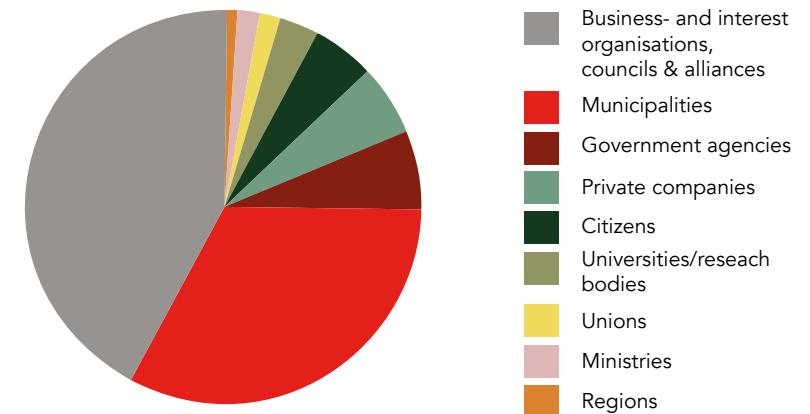
'Public involvement' is an integrated part of the Planning Act itself, but is mainly enacted more case specifically on the municipal level, when the framing national laws have already been made. Architecture and planning are also not put on the school timetable in Denmark, as they for example have in Norway and Sweden. This leaves out the possibility for a common basic understanding. It's always practically possible to get online access to new Planning Act suggestions\*, but it takes a well informed and engaged citizen to understand and constructively use the feedback system. When new legislation is being drafted there is always a period (typically 4 to 8 weeks) allocated for 'public hearing', but the paragraphs that is written in professional terminology and has no explanatory illustrations, makes it obvious that the government's communication is not targeted towards "normal people".

So at the end of the day, how should anyone be expected to know anything about urban planning? And especially planning regulations?

\* [www.hoeringsportalen.dk](http://www.hoeringsportalen.dk)

*"I have the principle that laws should must be clearly understandable. Everything else is a lack of respect for the citizens."*

Prime minister, Lars Løkke Rasmussens about the Planning Act at the opening of Folketinget on 6th of October 2015



Only six out of the 116 returned hearing statements came from private citizens, in the case with the new Planning Act suggestions, tabled by Troels Lund Poulsen in September 2016. Of these statements, half were only brief critiques of the hearing period being reduced from 8 to 4 weeks, as it "gave normal people no chance to respond".

### **Long term goods: No immediate bingo to proclaim for politicians?**

As a student of architecture and urbanism, the vital importance of the Planning Act debate became obvious when I started to connect knowledge-blocks about urban and societal qualities in Denmark with planning regulations. The planning system is a multilayered work originated in ideas of building up a welfare society and of leaving Denmark for our kids in, at least, as good a state as we have enjoyed ourselves. It also represents a cross-municipal planning effort which, in one shape or the other, will soon be absolutely necessary to prepare a sustainable response to the imminent threat of climate change. And yet integrated regional planning policies are still treated with a high degree of hesitance in certain liberal political climates. A country with 7000 kilometers of coast, can for example never become prepared for sea level rise if its strategy is to use an acupuncture of localised solutions. It is obvious, and

All this means taking care of the cities and countryside with a much longer perspective than the 4-year period that e.g. Frank Jensen will have the executive power as mayor in Copenhagen. And since we are talking about slowly developing, long term goods, any inherent 'fast wins' will not always be easily grabbed by a politician to present for their demanding audience.

### **Quiet, slow planning in a loud, fast world**

This issue of lacking newsworthiness also needs to be compensated for on the visual side. An 'essential idea' of a complex planning project is not always easily boiled down to simple understandable images. In the fast surfing of news and images that's an everyday routine for many of us, there's a requirement for the news to be condensed into clear one-liners, that can be consumed in a few seconds. It's concise and sometimes simplistic messages.

In the everyday meeting with architecture on Facebook, Archdaily or in articles illustrated with spectacular 'photorealistic' renderings, the everyday understanding of architecture is often reduced to a question of taste. The fast flipping-mode can quickly turn into a simple like/don't like dual mode.

The concise and immediately recognisable pictogram, is accordingly to architect and image designer Philipp Schaerer what 'broadly successful' architectural imagery often leans on.

### **An envelope of simplicity can be pragmatic in the public debate**

Concise messages feed immediate understanding by a broad audience. This quality could form the premise for opening up the architectural world for a general public. And maybe for creating a more democratic debate on planning.

Does the planning and architecture itself then have to be more simplistic to enable this democratic debate? Not necessarily, is the opinion of researcher in urban theory at RUC, John Pløger, as he expresses it in an article from 2006. But if you truly want a public debate, that can lead to new realisations, he argues that the dialog with the public itself needs to be developed. And here there is no way of getting around the despised 'taste', because: "Taste is here to stay - and this will always be brought into play, when the architecture meets the public." Pløger's perception of the notion is as something more than just 'the simple judgement of the architecturally uneducated audience', which he finds to be the normal attitude within the field. He sees this 'immediate response' as something we should engage more with, because, instead of despising 'taste', Pløger sees it as something that can and should be discussed and challenged, because "(...) taste is merely a reflection of values, opinions, beliefs, experiences and discursive and visual skills." (Pløger, 2006, p. 237)

Even though the immediate and fast response to planning and architecture is not necessarily bound to something particularly logical from a professional perspective, working more consciously with messages that can be understood immediately, has a pragmatic breeding ground when it comes to the public dialog. The beliefs of the individual, that are premises of the judgement, can potentially also be challenged with very concise messages from a "specialist point of view". For this thesis I want to explore the opportunistic potential of this angle. A wide range of social and economic sciences have entered the field of planning, but only the artistic fields have the tools to visualize concepts.

## **Constructive input for the practising of discourses on planning**

The advantages of planning and thinking in 'bigger entirety' are neither easily conveyed in the one-liners and clear powerful statements that dominate the media scene, nor especially welcome in the current political climate.

For the research of this thesis, I'm interested in what happens to the architectural representation of planning if we start to think about and define the subjectivity of a general public to be a necessary architectural field of work. Maybe the level of journalistic mediation of this topic, from a "specialist" point of view is not sufficient, in the post-factual context of today, for a more balanced, democratic debate to be enabled?

New opportunistic methods of communication that actively and strategically use the seduction qualities, that we as architects are trained to create, for these complex and 'quiet' planning projects, should be an architectural field of research, and this span can be unfolded with more approachable representational means than it is today. Potentially this could contribute constructively to the practising of discourses and agenda setting on urban planning. Hereby the method could potentially work as a parallel aspect to participatory planning processes, by being an instrument, that maybe bears the potential to create a different kind of dialog and responsiveness about the future of planning as a project.

I wish to link this research to a specific critical case; the noticeable information gap between the general public and the urban development that goes on at a governmental level with the Planning Act. I'm interested in whether media engagement with popular culture references could potentially bridge this gap. Obviously, it is not on my desk to decide what the "best" regulations might be, but I argue that it might be up to a planning architect to create a communicative design that can better respond to the undeniable post-factual framing of the debate in today's media.

I entered my exchange semester with journalistic-urbanistic aspirations and then concluded that I potentially had a lot of urban planning introductions to get started on. Having only located a few Danish references of popular communication of planning, I found a nearly empty playground to take off from.



# UN'S SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS

The vision of this thesis is to fight for planning as a project by investigating how to communicate its potentials to the public. I do this because the Planning Act, and urban planning in general, is under a lot of political pressure, and its qualities is unknown to most people outside the field. This is a threat to the long term urban qualities that the act is ensuring.

I believe that the ambitions of the Planning Act are closely connected with several of the goals that UN is putting forward with their 17 goals for Sustainable Development. A degree of coherent societal planning is necessary to fight the challenges that the world is facing.



I see the goal of my thesis as clearly linked to paragraph 11a. This covers UN's ambition to support positive environmental relations between town and country by strengthening a national and regional planning effort.



In line with this, goal 13 frames how there is a time pressure on taking this collective action. It says: "Act quickly to combat climate change and its consequences"



The lopsided planning debate kickstarted my ambition for this project. This has to do with the dynamics that play out between our public institutions that deal with planning - affected in goal 18 - and the public debate. Goal 16 states that we should 'develop transparent institutions' (16.6) and 'ensure inclusive and participatory decision-making on all levels'.

At the moment the voiced argumentation in the Planning Act debate is impure and the journalists fail to uncover this. This is absolutely not supporting transparent institutions nor a decision making process, where normal people have the chance to follow along.

## POSITION OF THE AUTHOR

Architecture is the servant of power and thus it will be aligned with political beliefs. So Elia Zenghelis, the co-founder of OMA, said in a lecture powerfully titled "Architecture is propaganda", held at the Berlage Institute in 2009.

Zenghelis argues that ideological principles have very consciously driven architectural movements from beginning of the 20th century and onwards. Not least, this has been very visible in urban planning. In other words ideals about the "best solution" at certain times have been socially constructed according to values and dominating discourses in the context. And exactly so is the situation today. I see status quo as open to questioning.

### **The discipline of architecture is socially constructed**

I neither can or pursue to write myself entirely out of the context that I'm investigating. I'll constantly have to make choices and selections, that will be based on my own personal experiences and best professional belief.

While I'll methodically attempt to be objective and descriptive about two analytical case studies and depiction of shifts in the Danish planning scenes relation to the public, the project of doing a campaign is, in the nature or the format, value-laden, and will generally have a normative trait. In the cases that become politically laden I'll attempt to be explicit about it.

As a author within the field with a relative overview of the planning situation, I'll insist to state that I aim to convey a version of the reality that is a lot closer to "the truth" than what a journalist, with a limited field insight, can write during an afternoon.

At the same time my target is to create a campaign that can stand strategically as an equal opponent against the current strong discourse of 'larger degrees of freedom'. This will mean leaving out some complexity for the sake of a powerful message. To accomplish this goal, the competencies of communicating concepts through imagery, that I have gained studying architecture, will to a high degree be the ones being put into play.

### **Urban quality is challenged by politics**

Why is this a task of an architect? We are going to practice in a very complex market situation where spatial standards and architectural framework are constructed in power structures and societal organizations that is almost impossible to grasp. Non the less these structures are still to some degree governing the spaces of everyday life - and to an even higher degree - making the framework for the cities we'll have in the future. Conditions that we as architects, per definition, are supposed to be responsible for...

It's a main statement of architect and professor at Yale University, Keller Easterling, to urge architects to speculate in these structures to qualify the urban development. It will be part of this thesis project, that I chose to speculate in the role that media engagement can play for a qualification of the public planning debate. It will also be an unavoidable part of this project, that the developed messages can potentially fall in the "wrong hands" that could cause them to backfire.

Non the less I do, in today's context, see a situation where the spatial and urban consequences of certain politics are not even being debated, and where an attempt to break this tendency is therefore necessary and relevant.

## PROBLEMATIC 1 OF 2

### A lopsided public debate

A lacking critical stand of the journalists covering the Planning Act debate in 2016 made the post-truth notion interesting in relation to exactly the Planning Act negotiations in 2016,

The political 'truth' and decision in the end played out to be partly shared with the 'truth' of Arkitektforeningen, but the example clearly shows a fragility in the framework around urban planning because of its dependency on the leading discourse. This is natural and how it should be in a democracy. But if you look into the debate, which professor in urban planning, Jens Kvorning have done, all sides of the debate were far from being equally covered - this is also mandatory for a democratic building culture.

A liberal discourse of "ensuring larger degrees of freedom to the municipalities" [større frihedsgrader] to a high degree dominated the public debate on the Planning Act, spearheaded by Troels Lund Poulsen (V), the then minister of business and growth. According to Kvorning the problematic part is caused by the fact that the journalists covering the negotiations in the mass media would never question this 'positive notion of freedom' by asking what it actually means, what it should be used for and what the negative consequences of its 'loosening' might be. "With 'larger and larger degrees of freedom' being left unquestioned as a quality in itself, the ultimate goal would end up being an total abolition of the Planning Act," Kvorning says.

The unconstructive features of the debate has been elaborated on by Jørgen Møller, associate professor at Institute for Urban Planning at Aalborg University:

*The debate on the Planning Act is characterized by the lack of precision, too many unsubstantiated claims and not least a massive polarization, in which you don't listen to arguments from people with other opinions - and certainly not to the experts. (Møller, 2015)*

Møller and Kvorning are pointing at highly undemocratic features about the debate: Its impure argumentation and the journalists' failure in uncovering this.

09. JUN. 2016 KL. 08.25

## Ny planlov på plads: Flere frihedsgrader til kommunerne

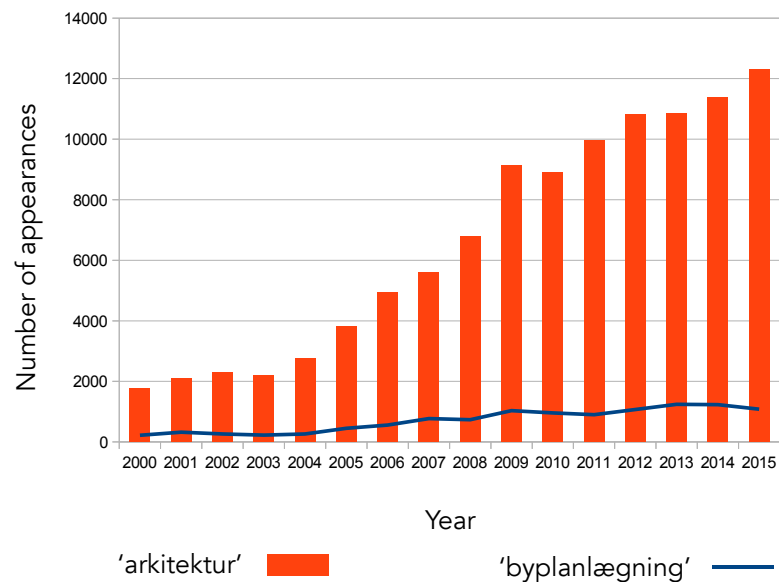
Liberal Alliance forlod i sidste øjeblik forhandlingerne om en ny planlov, som er aftalt mellem regeringen, S, DF og K.



DR Nyheder, 9th of June 2016

## A case symptomatic of a larger problem

The Planning Act debate can be said to be part of a larger problematic: urban planning is apparently not very newsworthy. If you simply look at the word 'byplanlægning's annual occurrences in the Danish media\* it has hardly experienced an increase since the shift of the millenium. In comparison 'arkitektur', is reaching a larger and larger audience per year, and did in 2016 occur 11 times as often as 'byplanlægning'.



Yearly occurrences of the words 'arkitektur' and 'byplanlægning' in Danish media\* 2000-2015. Source: Infomedia.

\*'Danish media' is limited to the ones that Infomedia monitor. This counts 653 Danish print medias and 2.500 Danish websites. Infomedia do not monitor social medias (Facebook, Twitter etc). Articles with the same headline are only counted once. Analysis conducted by Cecilie Overgaard Rasmussen, January 2017.

## Status quo on planning debates in DK

Dark times for 'planning as a project', are being depicted in the article "Edifying epitaph for Byplan" by Arne Post in 2015. Byplan being Dansk Byplanlaboratorium's trade journal, (\*an independent foundation researching planning matters). It is being mourned how planning is, and for decades have been, under a lot of political pressure - and how debates on planning have become almost absent in this climate. Editor of Byplan at the time, planner Dennis Lund, is quoted in 2010 to have cursed how "the majority of the field have become advanced HK employees," while board president of Byplanlaboratoriet, Maj Green and director, Ellen Højgaard Jensen, both cand.scients, reacted by stating that 'planning is not dead but just needs a lift'. To make this 'lift' Green and Højgaard Jensen emphasise that it is important 'not to stand so firm on your professional principles that it break you down'. They strike a blow for planners to make it a habit to express "(...)the irreplaceable strengths and competencies that our profession contributes with - instead of mourning, that other [professions] have entered our field". (Post, 2015, p. 67)

**Conclusion:** The arguments pro-planning needs a stronger voice, and if the broad planning debate has to be revived, the approach to communication needs to be rethought.



Depicted already back in 1967 was 'a starting resignation among the most keen employees within urban planning' caused by a lacking support from the Danish population'.

Article by P.-H. Kühl, Byplan (5-6) 1967, illustrator: Unknown

## PROBLEMATIC 2 OF 2

### Greyness of planning fails in the media

Inherent in urban planning's complexity lies a 'fuzziness' in the understanding that it can often neither be weighed or measured nor "objectified" in a name or event, which makes the concept harder to legitimize. Especially when you consider what is favored by the media. Elegant and strong images - visually as in written form - are known to work well in the hectic fight for media airtime.

The second main problematic of this thesis concerns two sides of this lack of immediate sense making - or fuzziness - that I argue is getting in the way for planning agendas to become stories in the mass media.

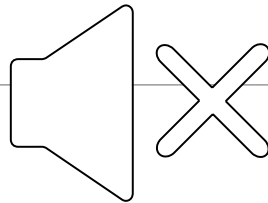
The first is the representational, visual fuzziness that I've found the notion of 'quiet architecture' formulated by visual artist and architect, Phillip Schaefer, helpful to describe and characterize.

The second is the fuzziness as regard to content, that I define as some planning projects' troublesome links with the classic criteria for newsworthiness



## The visual fuzziness

Philipp Schaerer's notion of 'quiet architecture' will be used as a metaphor for my detected field of research for the related 'quiet planning.'



"Quiet architecture [ /planning ]"

The kind of architecture that emerges from complex social and spatial contexts and is less formally articulated. The quiet architecture is not easily communicated in a simple concise picture. From a marketing point of view, this becomes a weakness. (Schaerer, 2016)

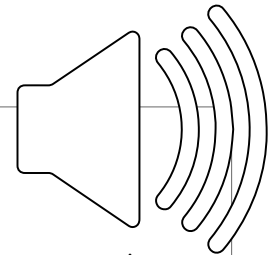


The Planning Act, a municipal development plan for Fredericia C, 2013-2025 and a masterplan for Vinge by SLA, 2013

The attention-related problem of this quietness today, he have expressed like this:

*"It is a difficult time for quiet architecture (...) In a global dance for attention, it is often left behind."*

There are however much more powerful media actors present within the architectural field. In the opposite end of the spectre is the 'loud architecture'. This notion is defined by the words of Philipp Schaerer, but with the title made up by myself:



ANTONYM: "Loud architecture"

Architecture with e.g. iconographic qualities. Pictograms trigger the recognition mechanism, and is one of the most recognised and powerful of images. (Schaerer, 2016)



Urban planning projects quickly fall into the category of 'quiet architecture'. With a visual representation that is often 2D, have several layers of information, associated legends, maybe additional text and definitely no iconic qualities, such is troublesome to represent as a simple concise image.



## Content fuzziness

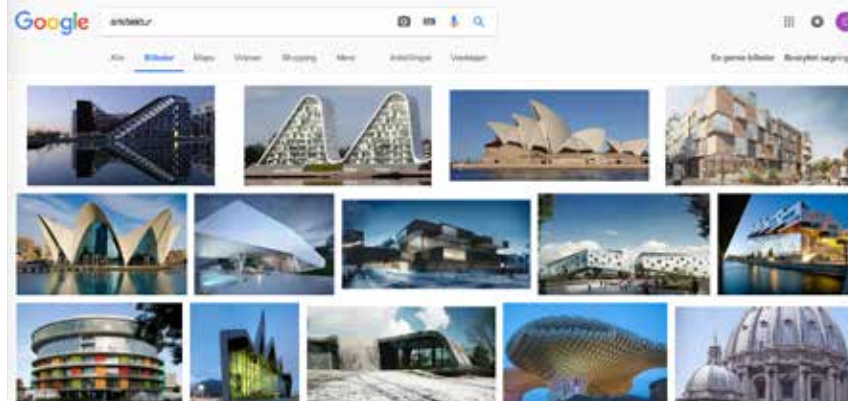
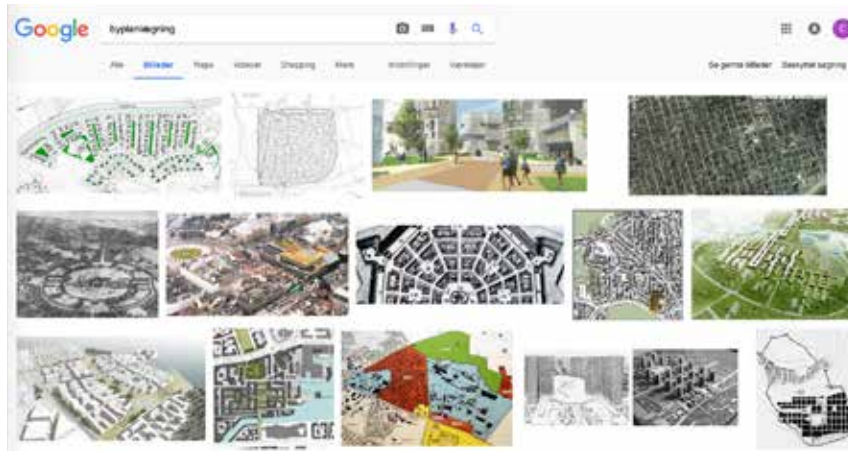
The characteristics that make a lot of urban planning hard to boil down into simple images, are also not helpful on the linguistic side when trying to create engaging media stories.

The news press is a source of power that have for long been known as "the fourth branch of government" - the independant, controlling body . However, the case is that the media do not only strive to convey information of 'significance', what is objective and enlightening, for the general public. In a time where the old mass medias - but especially the new medias - are subject to a commercial condition: the news have to be salable. (Hjarvard, 1998, p. 13-14) Preferable treatment is given to stories that also manage to capture the four other classic news criteria: identification, sensation, timeliness and conflict.

Objectively seen, a lot of planning projects do not naturally breed the catchy one-liners and clear-cut statements, that is easy for e.g. decision makers to convey the value of.

As an example, we could take the early stages of the restructuring of Fredericia C and treat it like a story for locals. It will be a central new neighborhood at the former industrial harbor area. We will look coarsely at the initiative as a whole, without looking into the actual laying out of the actual project. The lens is the five classic criteria for newsworthiness in Denmark by Østlyngen and Øvrebø (1998):

- |                   |   |
|-------------------|---|
| 1. Significance   | ✓ |
| 2. Identification | — |
| 3. Sensation      | — |
| 4. Timeliness     | — |
| 5. Conflict       | — |



That "architecture's entry into culture" has to do with iconic value appears clear when doing a google search.

The biggest plus for the newsworthiness-factor is the significance, whereas the next four criteria are more challenging, and so to say: Need to be invented.

Obviously a large restructuring of a new central neighborhood can have Significance for many locals. A lot of people will potentially experience new urban possibilities in a walking distance to their home. Possibilities with near access to the water. Since no one lives in the area yet, the criteria of Identification, both culturally and socially, is troublesome. A similar already built project from elsewhere would need to be used.

The Timeliness-criteria can hardly ever come in play with the slow pace that is inherent in planning processes. To quote Rem Koolhaas, he has stated that the amount of time spent realizing "the least architectural effort" is five or six years, which is "really too slow for the revolutions that are taking place".\*

To make a 'normal person' realize that something 'surprising' regarding a planning project has happened, it puts high requirements on the author to give a certain level of introduction to the norms within the planning systems. Does the story become too technical, it is quickly drained for mass media appeal.

The same field introduction problem goes for the communication of Conflicts. The conflict criteria works best, if the reader gets the chance

to create an opinion about the conflict. An often seen 'conflict-angle' to architectural matters in the media, that would be beneficial for the planning debate to move beyond, is the: "Delayed project - who is to blame?".

This analysis is naturally of superficial character and does not apply to all planning projects.

### **Conclusion:**

Without being able to put a finger on what exactly 'byplanlægning's low yearly number of appearances in the Danish media is caused by, it must be fair to deduct, that its fuzzy characteristics are not making media attention easier. They can tend to be technical and unsexy.

Considering the status quo of the planning debate in Denmark, planning could need new ways and means for the topic to get a spin, that could make it to the public media sphere. Since this lift is necessary, there could be something to learn from the "loud architecture" within the field, that draw on popular references.

For an immediate message to reach a broad audience, it will in that case be a demand that the level of complexity is dealt with and the message severely curated.

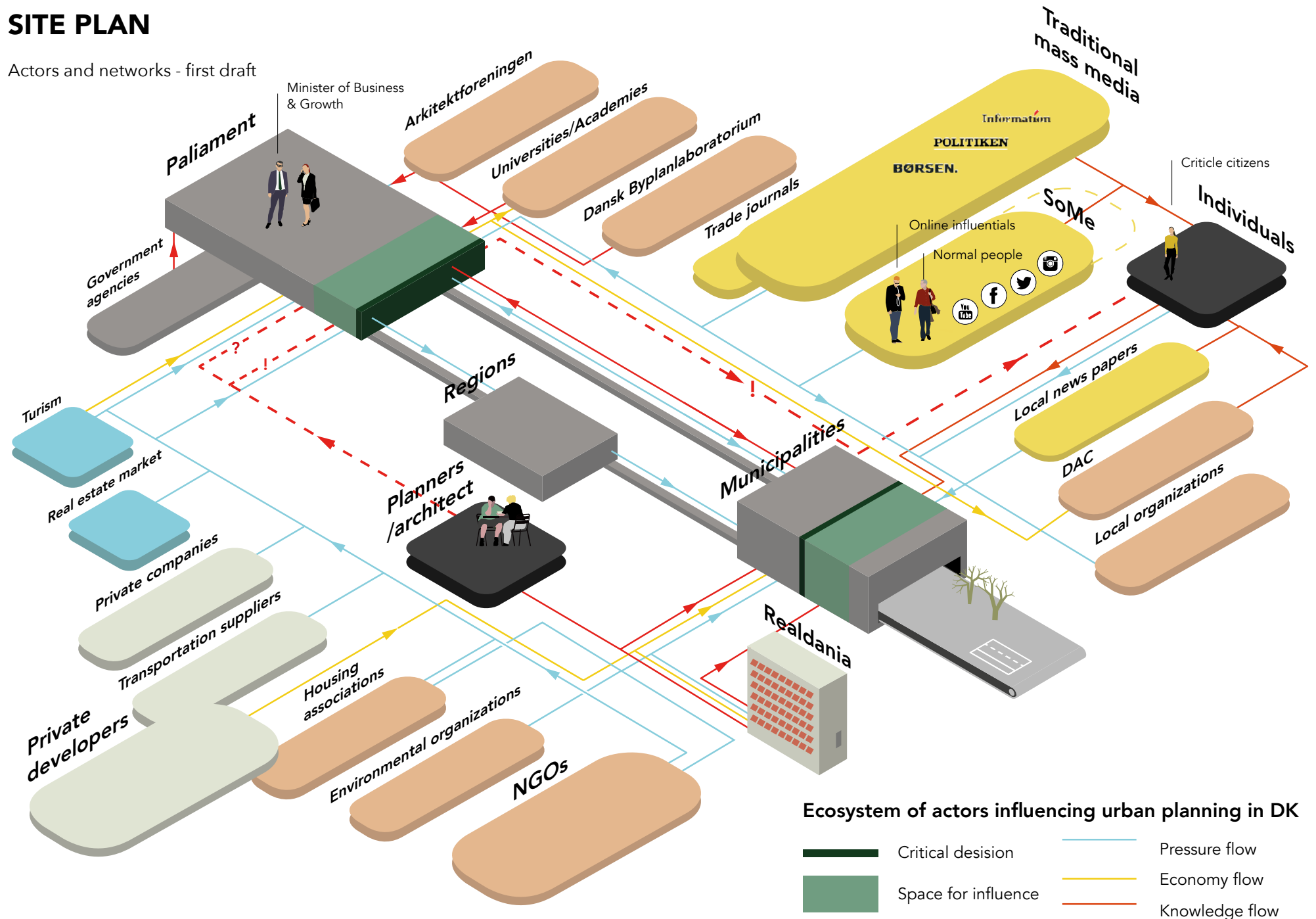
\* Stated at Koolhaas' keynote speech at the American Institute of Architects' annual convention, 2016. Architecture has a serious problem with communication, 26th of May 2016, Quote from:  
<https://www.dezeen.com/2016/05/24/rem-koolhaas-architecture-serious-problem-communication-oma-american-institute-architects-aia-convention/>



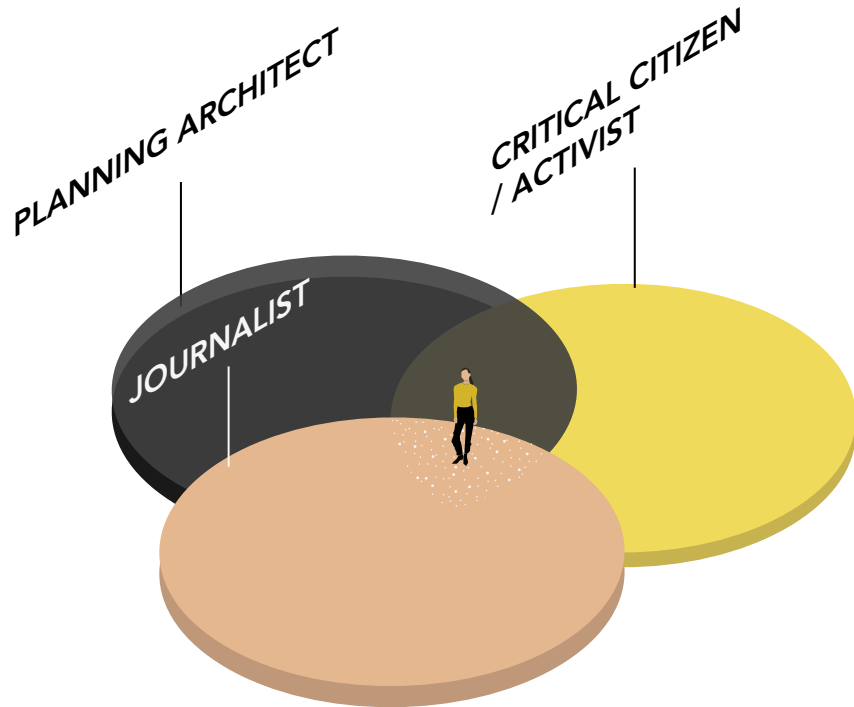


# SITE PLAN

Actors and networks - first draft



# ROLE



Hybrid role, that I will act within

*It's difficult to explain to people what kind of plans you are sitting with before you have an actual proposal. You need the image material before most people can start to imagine.*

Marc J. Jørgensen (KADK, 2017),  
Planner in the Department for Urban Development,  
the Mayor's Office, Copenhagen Municipality.

## APPROACH INSPIRATION

Three main sources are in different ways inspiring and guiding me in the work with my thesis.

A short introduction to each source will now follow, along with an explanation of how I'm intending to use them.

## APPROACH INSPIRATION 1 OF 3

### **Design of "active form"** - Finding a way to design an agenda's meeting with the world

The approach of this thesis is loosely adapted from the idea of 'designing active form' as formulated by professor at Yale University, Keller Easterling. The premise of her theory is that architects generally fail to articulate and speculate on the relationships between the 'object forms' we produce - the architecture and planning itself - and the dominating forces in the society: Discourses, political forces, market forces and so on. A design consciously integrating these speculations would according to her theory be: 'Active form'. (Easterling, 2014)

At a the lecture at KADK in November 2016, Easterling asked a triggering question in relation to the topic of dominating media discourses:

*"Can we also design how an idea enters culture?"*  
(Easterling, 2016)

It is from this consideration that I position my research about practising of planning discourses. Maybe we, as planning architects, need to get better at making sure that we both design the spatial idea and the "spin" that will give it traction in the present mediascape? Hereby we could make the idea more viable for mass media attention and potentially positively influence the discourse on planning agendas?

For long, the power of the media have been known as "the fourth branch of government". This also goes for planning. An underlying basis for this paper's approach is that, since strategic media use and

## Super-zoom

communication related jokers like 'branding-value', have come in play, when talking of decision-making in planning, maybe we should engage more directly in this aspect of the field.

While 'communication' is a traditional, integrated part of the architecture education, the more strategic business communication and journalistic communication is not.

The complexity of planning easily makes it fit into the category of 'quiet' subjects, not very suitable for the media. I would argue that this is often a matter of framing.

When it comes to the habitat of animals, National Geographic powerfully and lively manage to cover the changing habitats, and strike a broad audience, Keller Easterling argued at the lecture at KADK. In a dramatic way they zoom in to the level where you experience the feelings of the monkey, which brings the scientific main content of the program to life.

When zooming in to real life situations, in our real life habitats that function within these larger planning structures, a real life wilderness hides. I would claim. As architects we can visualise its drama and reveal the symptoms of the regulations as recognizable objects found in everyday streetscapes. It's possible it the symptoms are pointed out and framed.

Exactly the skill to produce seductive visualizations of concepts, is, on the contrary to writing, a strong tool of architects that can be drawn more benefit from - in the design of an idea's entry into culture.



Superzoom on the urban living environment - for animals  
National Geographic

# Super-zoom - distorted reality



Michael Reisch

# Reality +



2A+PA





## APPROACH INSPIRATION 2 OF 3

### **Pedagogic graphics + Social media = A participatory planning instrument?**

Could new methods of pedagogic communication work as participatory planning instruments by engaging more people in the project of urban planning?

In New York, the nonprofit organisation, Center for Urban Pedagogy, work with exactly this combination to demystify urban policy and planning issues. Their ambition is to break down complex issues - from zoning law to water infrastructure to food access - into simple, accessible, visual explanations. In collaboration between graphic designers, advocates, policy makers and communities they for example make fold-out posters, small videos and educational workshops.

For this thesis, I'm wondering if we as architects can focus the strengths of popular communication on making the topic of urban planning issues in Denmark more approachable for a wider range of people?

A simplified version of the reality can break past the field jargon and acronyms, and make urban planning easier for non-field people to engage in a more informed dialog about land use and urban development.

The entry of social media as an important provider of news, could be a constructive tool for planners in conveying the qualities of the Planning Act's different rules. And, as never before, the social media are providing good possibilities for feedback. This points to the potential to create a more democratic public architecture debate.



Top: 'How Can I Improve My Park', foldout poster, 2014  
Bottom: 'The Water Underground', video, 2010. By Center for Urban Pedagogy





## 'Neo Naïve'

An 'empathy seeking' naïve drawing style. Even though it's not the case, it appears more like an open sketch. It could, suggested by Zaera-Polo, appear to be "(...) a better tool to communicate with the public".

Style:

- Naïve, "cute", soft colors
- Axonometrics and 2Ds. At times as retrieved from a post-modernist aesthetics
- Communicating "everyday life"

Recognisable imagery:

- Conventional typology vocabulary: pitched roof-home, the container, the conventional housing block...
- 'Ready-made fragments' in collage



Andres Jaque - Office for Political Innovation  
Våsby, Sweden (2014)

## 'Populism'

Aimed at the medias and politicians. Uncertainties are eliminated with a conceptual simplification - a direct and effective sort of communication:

- Style:

- Imagery: Surprising, depicts amazing new realities
- "Dead pan diagrams"
- Comic book inspiration
- Language: one-liners, talking in points

Recognisable imagery:

- Lego houses, mountains etc



BIG - 2WTC. Cut to the bone diagram  
New York, US (2015)

ArchDaily News Articles Materials Interviews Competitions Events Classics More

ArchDaily News Bjarke Ingels Named One of TIME's 100 Most Influential People

## Bjarke Ingels Named One of TIME's 100 Most Influential People

10:35 - 21 April, 2016 | by Vladimir Gintoff

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Like 4.0k Tweet Pin it



'Populism' have proved to be powerful...

Returning to the research question of the thesis, using this simplicity to communicate planning puts high demands on the curation of the chosen messages. An inherent pitfall could be simply to create new harmful misunderstandings.

However I see two main arguments to follow a representation approach, that draw on the point-by-point, didactic explanations and/or the simplifying abstraction level that the naive drawing offers.

1) Tapping into the "popular" culture with recognizable vocabulary and images, would be a way to attempt to give planning agendas a new, more approachable face in the public.

2) The opportunistic 'populist' approach that work *with* the media criteria definitely has a 'traction in the present media scape, and do therefore contain a very pragmatic element.



Animated comics, handdrawings and diagrams about the societal usefulness of an architect  
'Ulvetid' by Tredje Natur

# HAND-IN

Through case study analyses and a communication project I will investigate and unfold new methods to convey urban planning agendas to a general public.

## 1. Background case study

Depiction of main shifts in Danish planning's public relations 1938 - 2017



**Cases:** The Fingerplan (1948) - Loop City (2010)

**Format:** Written with graphic support

## 2. Foreground case study

Analysis of the chosen cases related to the Planning Act. The point of departure is taken from the planlaw suggestion tabled by Troels Lund Poulsen in september 2016.

- Analysing actors and backtracking discourses.
- Finding stands and angles that can work for a campaign.

**Cases:** Two-three cases. Could e.g. concern coastal protection and hypermarkets.

**Format:** Written with graphic support

## 3. Campaign

My design proposal will be a campaign that aims to make the foreground cases 'go into culture'. The more specific target group is to be defined later.

**Formats could e.g. be:**

- Posters
- Small online videos / storyboards
- Guides for affected citizens
- Arch Daily material for the purpose of debate
- Mass media articles
- Slogans
- Adds



Bernard Tschumi  
- Advertisements for  
Architecture (1976-77)



ETH - Didactic poster  
City of God (2013)



Tredje Natur - Video (2014)



To really appreciate architecture,  
you may even need to commit  
a murder.



The High Window 1947

Architecture is defined by the actions it witnesses  
as much as by the enclosure of its walls. Murder  
in the Street differs from Murder in the Cathedral  
in the same way as love in the street differs from  
the Street of Love. Radically.



Look at it this way:

The game of architecture is an intricate  
play with rules that you may break or accept.  
These rules, like so many knots that cannot  
be untied, have the erotic significance of  
bondage: the more numerous and sophisticated  
the restraints, the greater the pleasure.

## ropes and rules

The most excessive passion  
always involves a set of rules.  
Why not enjoy them?





# How can I improve my park?

We want a capital project in our park. What do we do?

Getting a capital project (a physical improvement to your park) usually requires funding from several elected officials. Every year, capital project proposals work their way through the different levels of city government. Some projects go on to get funded in the citywide budget.

**START HERE!**  
USE THIS POSTER TO FIND OUT HOW TO GET SUPPORT FOR YOUR PROJECT

**BUILD YOUR COALITION**

You'll need to find lots of people to support your project—the more the better. They will plan and advocate with you. Keep building your coalition as you move through this process.

**REACH OUT FOR SUPPORT**

The officials below can't give you money, but you need their support to get your project built. Work with these groups to get funding and support from elected officials.

**REACH OUT FOR FUNDING**

The officials below can fund your project. They have access to discretionary funds—money that elected officials can give out each year to projects or organizations in their community. They can also help your project by encouraging other decision-makers to support it.

**NYC Parks**  
Department of Parks and Recreation

This city agency develops and maintains parks, playgrounds, beaches, and other public spaces. The people you'll work with include:

- Borough Commissioner:** Manages parks and prioritizes capital project proposals for his borough.
- Borough Commissioner's Chief of Staff:** Often takes the lead in meeting with advocates who have capital project proposals.
- District Manager:** Oversees the activities of the Community Board and can help you to get your issue in front of its members.
- Parks Committee:** Focuses on park issues and holds hearings to listen to concerns and proposals from residents. Its members meet with NYC Parks once a year to recommend projects the Community Board wants funded.
- Parks Manager:** Oversees park operations and staff.

**Your goal:** To get a meeting with the Borough Commissioner's office to request support and an estimate of your project's cost. NYC Parks can also advise you on where to find other funds from sources like the state or local businesses.

**Community Board**

Your Community Board represents you and your neighbors. It holds monthly public meetings, identifies community needs, and meets with city agencies to make recommendations on the city's annual budget. The Community Board doesn't have money for projects, but its Budget Priorities List influences the Borough President and the City Council. To be supported for your project, you'll work with:

- District Manager:** Oversees the activities of the Community Board and can help you to get your issue in front of its members.
- Parks Committee:** Focuses on park issues and holds hearings to listen to concerns and proposals from residents. Its members meet with NYC Parks once a year to recommend projects the Community Board wants funded.

**Your goal:** To get your project on your Community Board's Budget Priorities List.

**Mayor**

The Mayor is the head of New York City's government. He oversees city agencies and works with the City Council to develop an annual budget. He has discretionary funds to give to projects.

**Your goal:** You will not be able to contact the Mayor directly, but support from NYC Parks helps your project get money from the Mayor.

**City Council**

The City Council passes laws and approves the city budget. Council Members have discretionary funds from the city to give to projects.

**Council Speaker:** He has funds for capital projects across the city. She is selected by Council Members to be that leader.

**Participatory Budgeting:** A process some Council Members use to allocate a portion of their funds directly to capital projects proposed by and voted on by the community.

**Your goal:** To get a meeting with your City Council Member to request discretionary funds for your project.

**Borough President**

The Borough President advocates for the needs of her borough and chairs the Borough Board. She has discretionary funds from the city to give to projects.

**Your goal:** To get a meeting with your Borough President to request discretionary funds for your project.

**Contact your Borough Commissioner**

- Check with your Outreach Coordinator for help contacting the Commissioner's office.
- Call or email the Commissioner's office and ask for a meeting. Follow-up if you don't hear back.

**Call your Community Board office**

- Introduce your coalition, explain your problem and your request. Ask to present your issue to the Parks Committee or the full Community Board.

**Write to your City Council Member**

- In a formal letter, introduce your coalition, explain your problem, your request, and any other support you have from the Community Board and public officials.

**Write to your Borough President**

- In a formal letter, introduce your coalition, explain your problem, your request, and any other support you have from the Community Board and public officials.

**Follow up**

- Contact your Borough President's office by phone or email to ask for a meeting.

**Meet**

- Talk with the Borough Commissioner and her staff to explain your project. You need their support to get it built. They may also be able to influence the Mayor's proposed budget.
- Ask for an estimate of what your project will cost. This information will be helpful when you approach other public officials about your project.

**Advocate for your project at a Community Board meeting**

- Present at a Parks Committee meeting or a full Community Board meeting. You will have 2-3 minutes to explain your issue and request a follow-up meeting.
- The Community Board can give you a letter of support that you can take to other elected officials to make a case for your project.

**Follow up**

- Contact your Council Member's district office by phone or email to ask for a meeting.

**Follow up**

- Contact your Borough President's office by phone or email to ask for a meeting.

**Meet**

- Make the case for your project.
- Ask if the Borough President can put discretionary funds towards your project.
- Ask to help getting your project on the Borough Statement of Budget Priorities.

**Attend public hearings for the District Budget Priorities List**

- This is the Community Board's list of the 40 capital projects it thinks are most important for its district. It's submitted to the citywide annual budget process.
- This list influences the Council Members' and Borough Presidents' funding decisions.

**Borough Board creates Priorities List**

Your Borough Board is made up of all Council Members and Community Board chairs in your borough and your Borough President. It creates a list of capital projects for the Borough Statement of Budget Priorities. This list is a resource for the Mayor's Office as it develops the budget.

**Meet**

- Make the case for your project.
- Ask if the Council Member can put discretionary funds towards your project.
- Ask for help getting your project on the Borough Statement of Budget Priorities.
- Ask your Council Member if you should apply to the City Council Speaker's fund for additional money.

**Meet**

- Make the case for your project.
- Ask if the Borough President can put discretionary funds towards your project.
- Ask to help getting your project on the Borough Statement of Budget Priorities.

**Meet**

- Make the case for your project.
- Ask if the Borough President can put discretionary funds towards your project.
- Ask to help getting your project on the Borough Statement of Budget Priorities.

**How long can it take to get our project funded and built?**

1 YEAR to build your coalition

1 YEAR of going to public events and meeting with public officials to explain your project

1 YEAR you need to fund your project. It's unlikely you'll get all the funding you need in a single budget year

Once your project is fully funded, it can take 3 YEARS (or more) until it's built/constructed

**Mayor's Preliminary Budget (Jan-Feb)**

**Executive Budget (April)**

**Elected officials pick projects**

Council Members and Borough Presidents select capital projects to fund. These choices become part of the citywide budget at different times—Borough Presidents call their picks to the Executive Budget, and Council Members add their picks to the Adopted Budget. Borough Presidents add more picks to the Adopted Budget if they get additional funds to give out.

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**MAKING POLICY PUBLIC**

**Your project wasn't funded this time.**

You'll have to keep talking to public officials and try to get your project into the next year's budget. You've already been through this process, so you've had ground-level and built relationships that will make your next try easier.

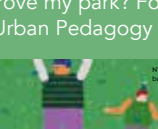
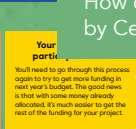
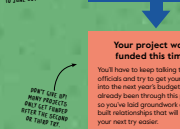
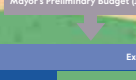
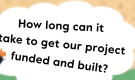
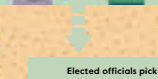
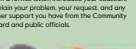
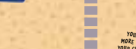
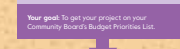
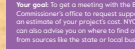
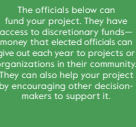
**Your path:**

You'll need to go through this process again to try to get more funding in next year's budget. The good news is that with some money already allocated, it's much easier to get the rest of the funding for your project.

**NYC Parks will begin designing and building your project.**

**How can I improve my park? Foldout poster by Center for Urban Pedagogy (2014)**

YOU'VE FINISHED LET'S CELEBRATE! LET'S UNWIND! LET'S ENJOY THE PARK! LET'S GO TO THE PLAYGROUND! LET'S GO TO THE SLIDE! LET'S GO TO THE SWING SET! LET'S GO TO THE SAND PIT!



The 2032 Marvelous City Award goes to:

# CIDADE DE DEUS!

26 Destaques que fazem uma cidade melhor!

## Destaque No 12:

### Praça Cooperativa

Programando os espaços comuns!



GOAL:  
- To maintain public spaces

CATEGORY:  
- Management

DESCRIPTION  
Enhancing quality of urban life is the main goal of city development. Public spaces necessary to maintain diversity in the city need to be protected and cared for over time. In order to raise awareness and encourage community development, public spaces are thematized and public facilities are built by residential areas. Maintenance responsibilities are assumed by cooperatives established by residents of buildings adjacent to the facilities.

As praças têm funções e caracteres específicos. Eles organizam os edifícios circundantes em comunidades menores. Cada praça é mantida e operada por uma cooperativa diferente.





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## **CV**

2015- 2017 - KADK. Master programme: Urbanism and Societal Change. Programme directors: Deane Simpson & Charles Bessard

2016 - Danmarks Medie- og Journalisthøjskole 'Tillægsuddannelsen i Journalistisk Formidling' (Exchange semester)

2011-2014 - KADK. Bachelor programme: Department 8. Programme director: Frank Bundgaard  
Bachelor project: Nordhavn Harbor Market and Quay.

## **WORK EXPERIENCE**

2015 & 2016 - Internship with Kristoffer Lindhardt Weiss: Worked as an editorial assistant with research and bits of text for publications.

2014 - Internship at SLA, Copenhagen: Worked with communication & business development.

