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LISBON, Portugal
May 31 - June 3
2016

Public Participation and Co-design in a process of environmental impact assessment.

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12th International Symposium on Urban Planning and Environment
1th UPE Lusophone Symposium



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**Sweco-Belgium
Urban Habitat
plans and designs the
communities of the future**



International presence

Sweco is established in Sweden, Norway, Finland, Denmark, Estonia, Lithuania, Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Germany, Belgium, the Netherlands, the UK, Poland and Turkey.

Sweco carries out tens of thousands of projects in some 70 countries worldwide to ensure clean water, efficient infrastructure and sustainable energy solutions.

Approx. 14,500 employees



The focus of Sweco Urban Habitat is on creating ideal environments for people to live, work and enjoy.

Public Participation and Co-design in a process of environmental impact assessment.

Presentation

- Strategic Environmental Assessment and the role of public participation
- Infrastructure Project in Bruges (Belgium) – approached as an integrated urban project
- Public co-design workshops – supporting and enriching an open and transparent decision-making

Public Participation and Co-design in a process of environmental impact assessment.

- **Strategic Environmental Assessment and the role of public participation**
- Infrastructure Project in Bruges (Belgium) – approached as a integrated urban project
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Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA)

- Directive 85/337/EEC (European Commission, 1985) on environmental impact assessment: covering projects only
- Growing perception that environmental consequences also needed to be considered in decision-making above the project level
- Directive 2001/42/EC (European Commission, 2001) on the environmental impact assessment of plans and programmes

SEA aims to ensure that due consideration is given to environmental and possibly other sustainability aspects in policy, plan and programme making above the project level. *(Thomas Fischer, 2002)*

Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA)

- A systematic, objectives-led, evidence-based, proactive and participative decision-making support process for the formulation of sustainable policies, plans and programmes.
- A support instrument that is supposed to add scientific rigour to decision-making and leading to increased accountability of decision-making
- A systematic decision-making framework establishing a substantive focus, particularly in terms of alternatives and aspects to be considered

A proactive tool in plan-making – addressing the causes of environmental impact rather than simply treating the symptoms of environmental deterioration

SEA and public participation

- Generally regulated by legal requirements (Flemish Legislation):
providing only one moment of public consultation in the early stage of the process.
- Scoping stage:
 - determination of the extent and level of detail of the assessment,
the aspect and alternatives to be considered,
 - the objectives and indicators for the assessment,
 - the information to be concluded in the report
 - the identification of stakeholders/actors to be involved

The public is giving information about the aim of the plan (scoping document) and is giving an opportunity to express their concerns and ideas

SEA practice in Flanders and the effectiveness of public participation

- Communication about the public consultation is often limited: authorities are not required to organise more than a publication in a newspaper and website and to take requirements so that the public can consult the scoping document and make remarks
- As the document describes the possible environmental impact the further debate is often dominated by a negative perception
- These practices often led to a decreased public acceptance and consequently to delays in the decision making process.

Nevertheless the legal framework does not exclude more informative and participative initiatives!

Enhancing more effective public participation

Our challenges to gain confidence:

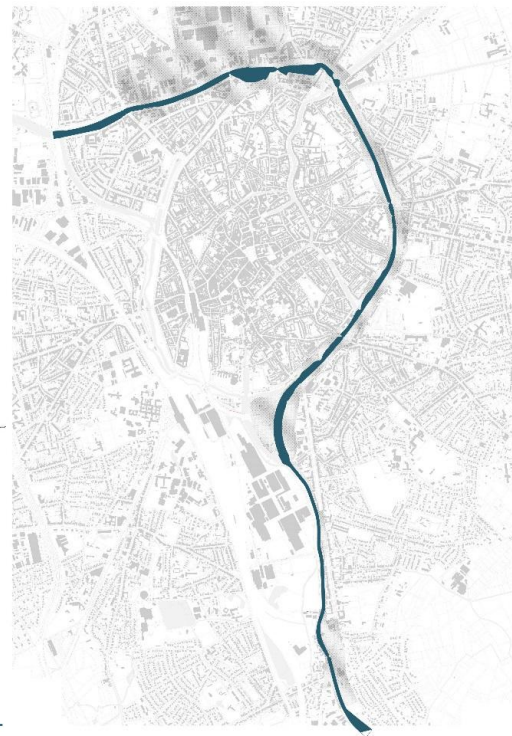
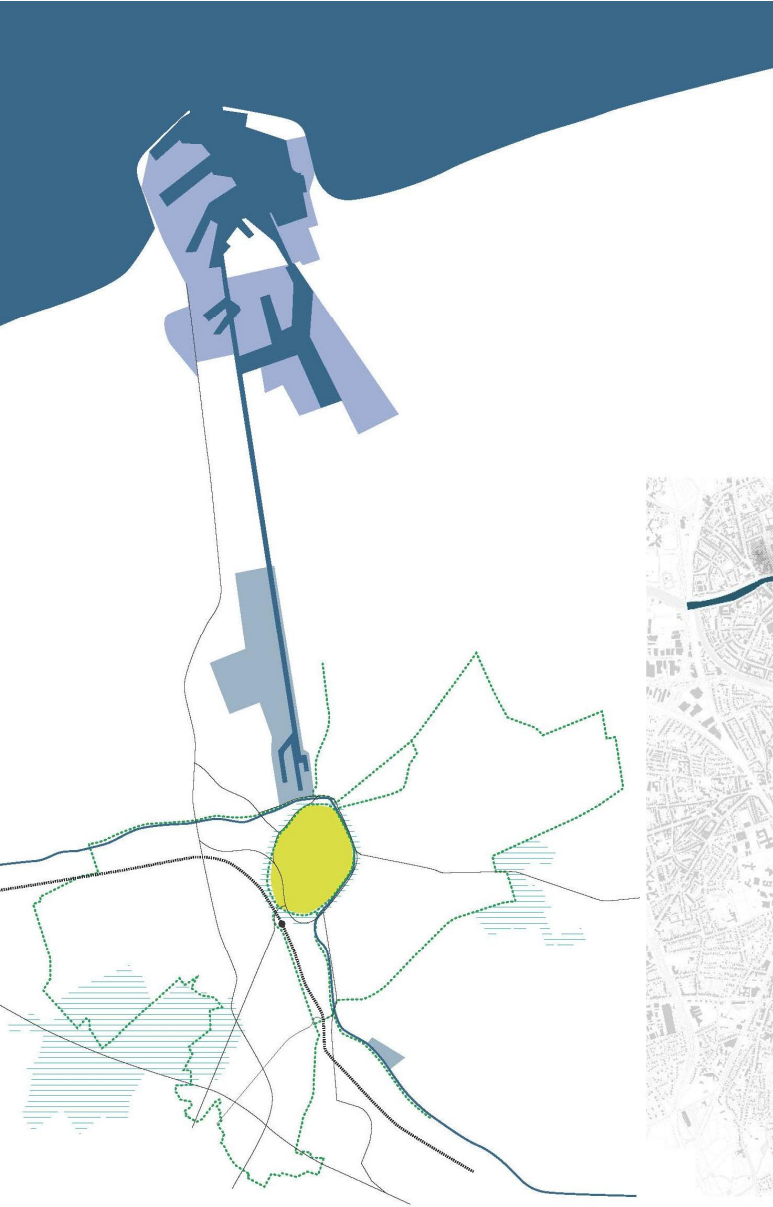
- Explain and motivate the plan in direct contact with the public
- Listen to concerns of stakeholders, local communities
- Ensure that alternatives are truly considered and that people can propose reasonable alternatives
- (As SEA is a evidence-based assessment) Increase the transparency of the assessment: work on a mutual ground for objectives and indicators
- (regarding effects on human health and well-being and sound urban organisation and development): use local knowledge and the vision of the community on quality of their environment and development objectives -> in the assessment criteria

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Modification of a canal located alongside the ancient ramparts of the historical city of Bruges.
Aim is to improve the connection between the Seaport of Bruges and the inland waterways of Belgium and Northern France in order to support sustainable transport



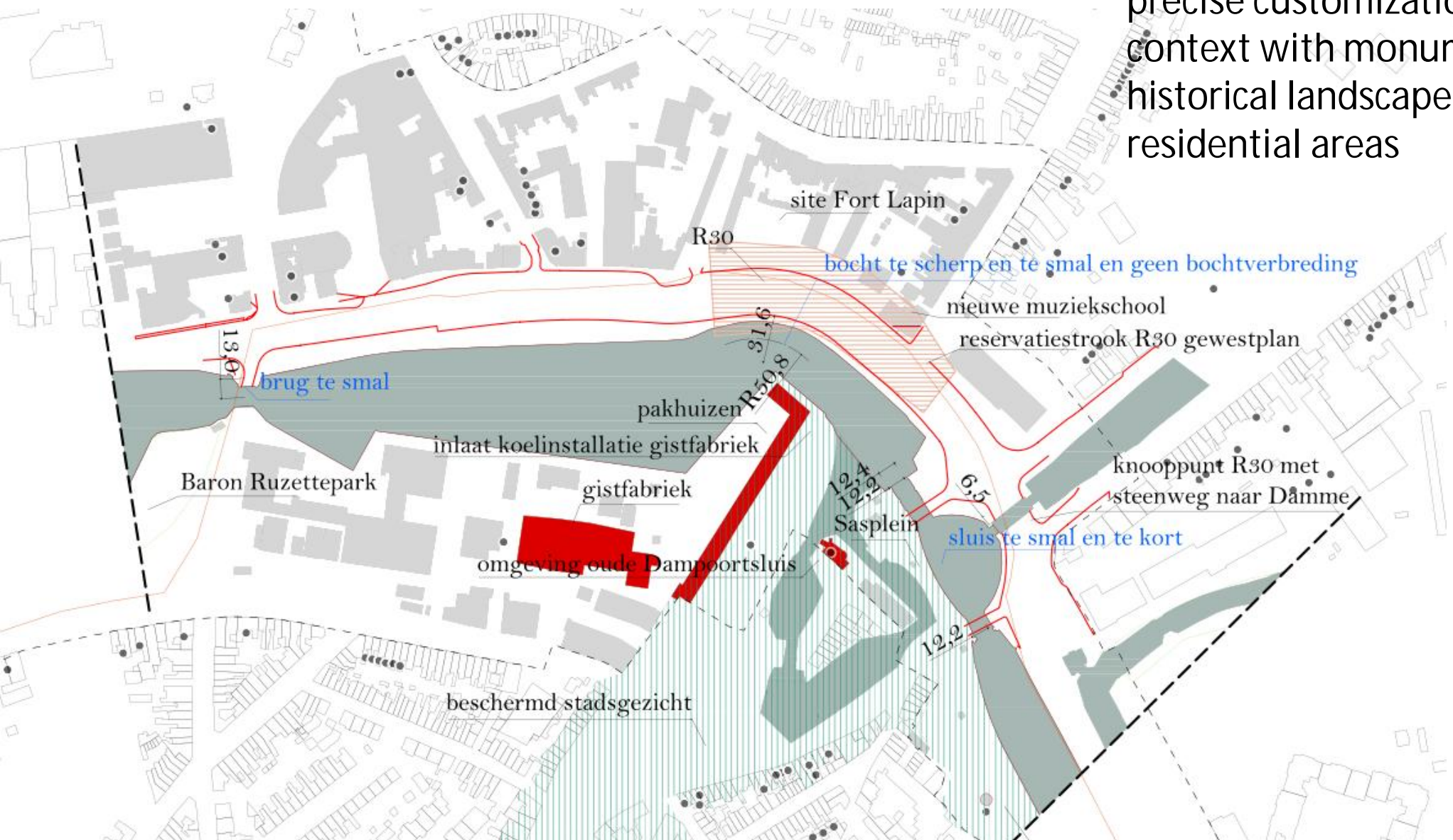


Embedded in protected urban heritage
(UNESCO-Heritage)

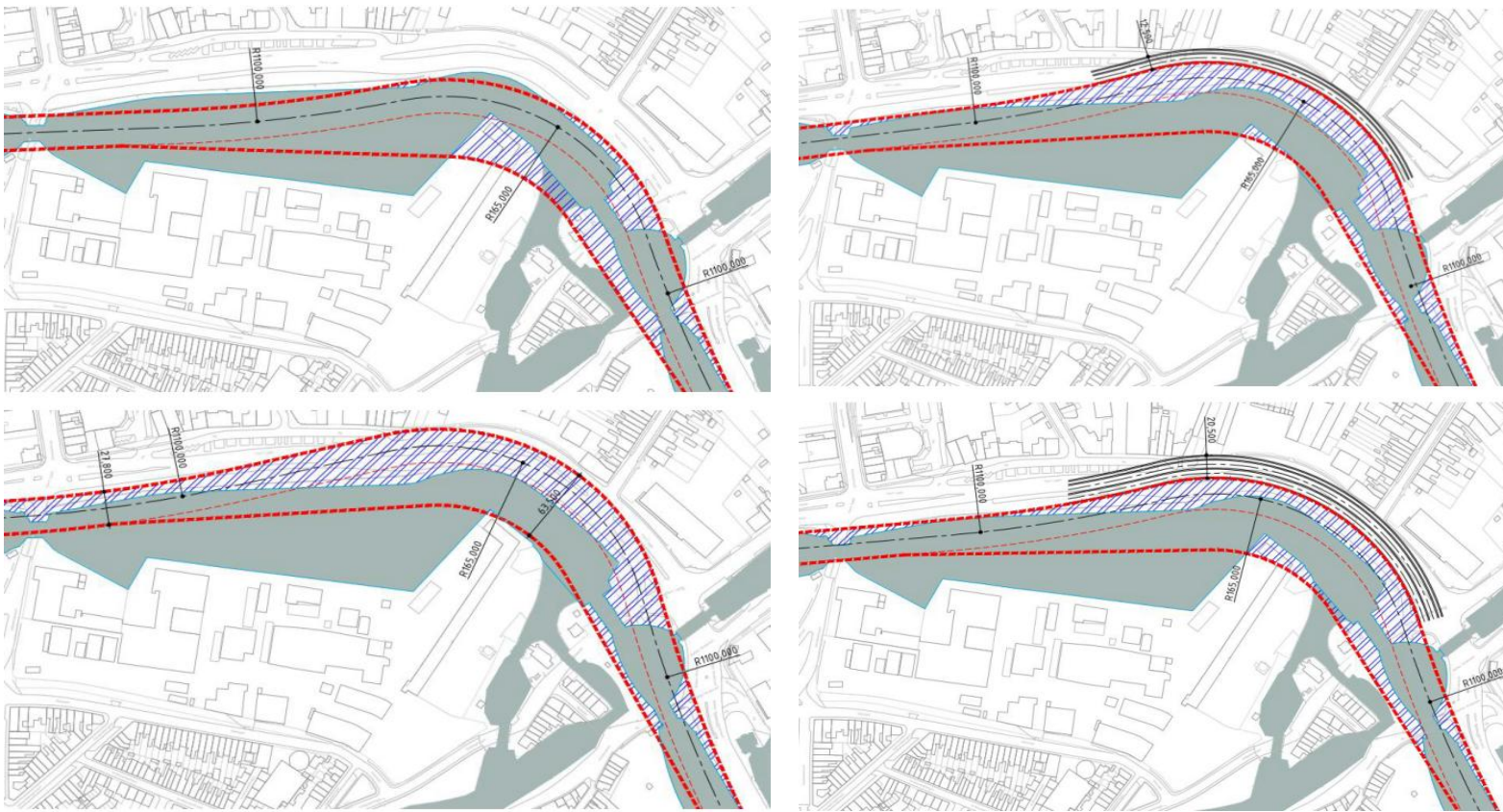
Large effects on urban mobility (access to the
inner city)

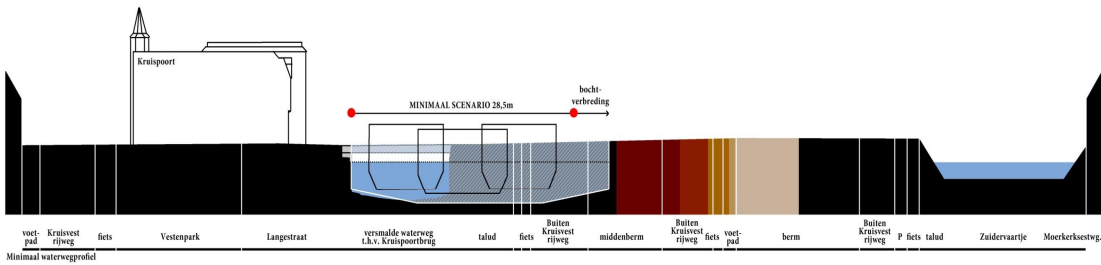
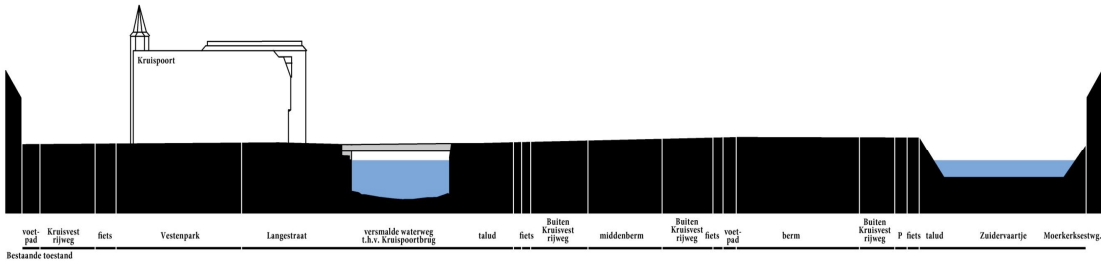
Reshaping the landscape

precise customization in an context with monuments, historical landscapes, residential areas



Reasonable alternatives with different effects and significant local impact
Stakeholders and inhabitants with serious concerns and a critical view on this 'infrastructural' project

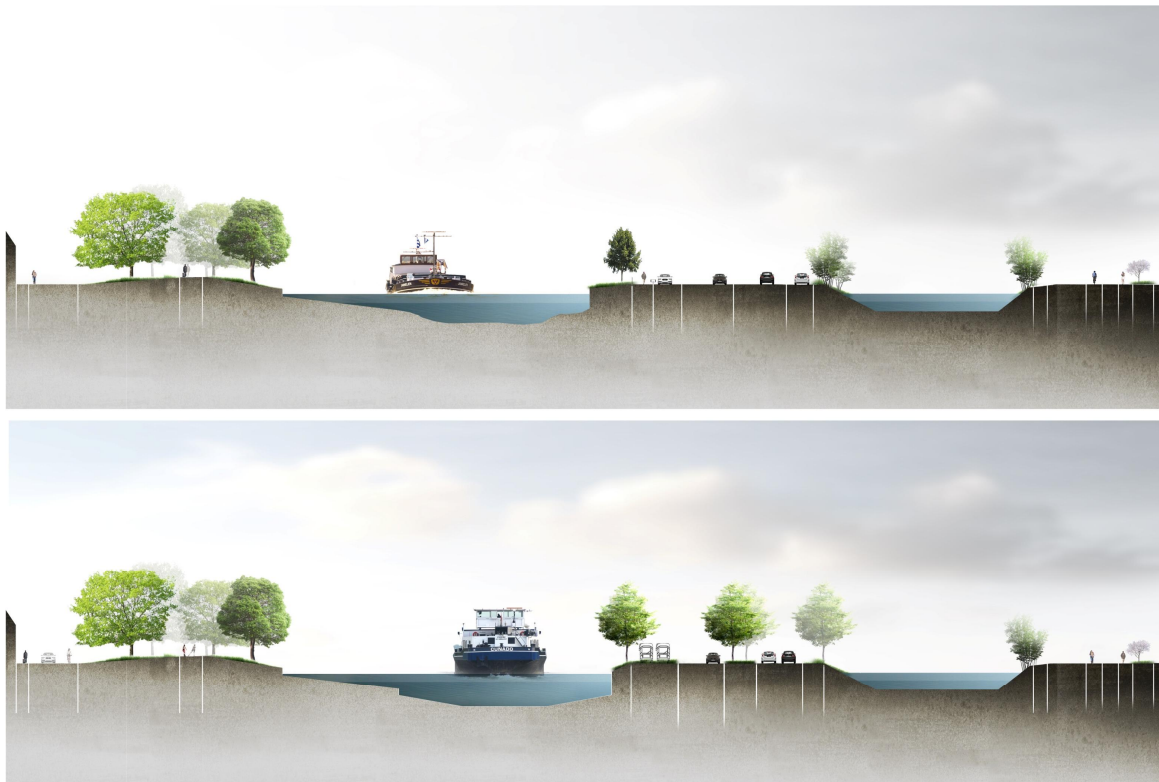




R30 / 2x2 + FIETS fiets rijweg 2x2 fiets

R30 / 2x1 + FIETS fiets rijweg 2x1 fiets

Potentials gains: more sustainable urban mobility.
Rethinking the car-oriented urban mobility and the functional design of the peripheral expressway alongside the canal and ramparts



Enhancing a integrated urban project

Our challenges to create a comprehensive urban project:

- To mobilise the 'Flemish department of waterways' (owner of the process) and the 'city of Bruges' (main stakeholder) in a joint initiative
- To explore the opportunities of the project for urban development and creating new landscape components
- To advocate the potential gains in terms of sustainable urban mobility and regional economic development
- To involve the inhabitants and stakeholders in the reasoning about the plan, the definition of objectives and the formulation of reasonable and accepted solutions

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Open and transparent communication

Interviews with stakeholders, focusgroups, surveys, ...: explaining the aims of the plan and listening to questions and concerns



Interactive debate and mutual understanding on indicators and criteria for assessment of alternatives and perspectives on urban development in Bruges



Open and transparent communication

Website and locally distributed brochures: accessible information



MEEDENKEN?

Het project Stadsvaart is mogelijk dankzij de samenwerking met verschillende partners. Daar zijn we oprecht blij om, maar het volstaat niet: Stadsvaart wil immers ook werken van onderuit, en **iedereen de kans geven om mee te denken**.

We gaan dan ook resoluut voor **open en eerlijke** communicatie. Die verloopt in de eerste plaats **via deze website**: hier vindt al wie belangstelling heeft de meest concrete en up-to-date informatie over de verschillende deelprojecten, nu én in de toekomst.

OVERLEG ALS MEERWAARDE

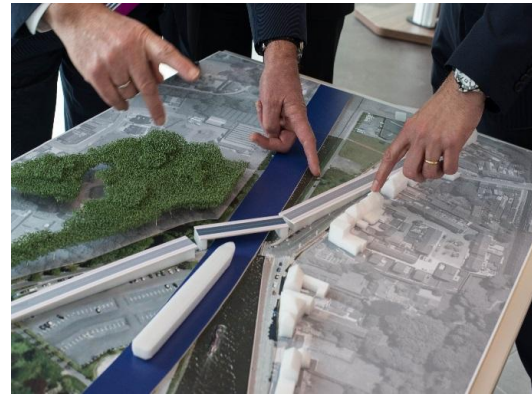
Een ingrijpend project als Stadsvaart telt een groot aantal **betrokken partijen**. Inwoners en omwonenden, havenbestuur, bedrijven gevestigd in de havens en langs de vaart, beroepsschippers, pleziervaarders, erfgoedinstanties, ...: zij hebben **allen het recht om gehoord te worden**.

In de loop van 2014 **luisterden we** op verschillende plaatsen naar **suggesties en bezorgdheden**. Stadsvaart was ook aanwezig op de inspraakvergaderingen ter voorbereiding van het nieuwe mobiliteitsplan voor Brugge, en sloot aan bij de campagne "[De Toekomst van Brugge](#)".

Collaborative process

Creating a collaborative process with decision-makers on the Flemish level and the level of the city and municipalities: joint workshops and press conference

Mutual identity for the plan: "Stadsvaart" or CityCanal – combining the comprehensive objectives of the plan: sustainable transport – urban mobility and development – respect for the urban heritage





[Het Project](#)

[Meedenken](#)

[Partners](#)

[Nieuws](#)

[FAQ](#)

Co-design workshops with stakeholders and inhabitants:

looking for reasonable solutions and alternatives, perspectives on urban development, sustainable objectives for the city (for instance a better accessibility for bicycles, downgrading access roads)

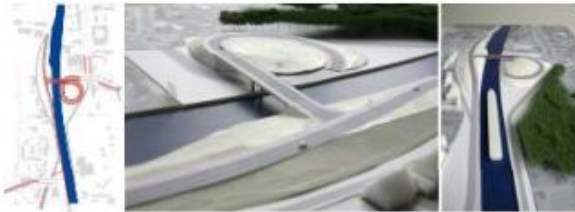
ALTERNATIEF 4

Een tunnel, met een steile helling (16%) in combinatie met een vlakke beweegbare fietsbrug, op de huidige locatie



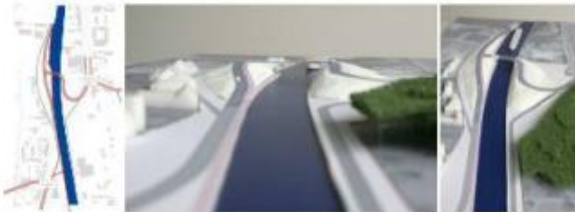
ALTERNATIEF 5

Een halfhoge beweegbare brug, met een flauwe helling (4%), ten noorden van de huidige locatie



ALTERNATIEF 6

Een hoge vaste brug, met een flauwe helling (4%), ten noorden van de huidige locatie



ALTERNATIEF 7

Een hoge vaste brug, met een steile helling (16%) in combinatie met een vlakke beweegbare fietsbrug, ten noorden van de huidige locatie



(In)Direct Results of the co-design workshops and participative actions in the scoping phase of the planning process and strategic environmental assessment

- Elaboration and selection of reasonable alternatives (new alternative after the public co-design workshop)
- Consultants were able to elaborate further the alternatives based on the knowledge of different stakeholders
- The public learned about the complexity of the plan and saw that there was not one obvious solution

(In)Direct Results of the co-design workshops and participative actions in the scoping phase of the planning process and strategic environmental assessment

- An open exchange of ideas and mutual learning and understanding
- A start for mutual deliberative process and an assessment that could be more responsive to the specific public interests (objectives and indicators) in order to support the decision-making on the plan and further elaboration of the project

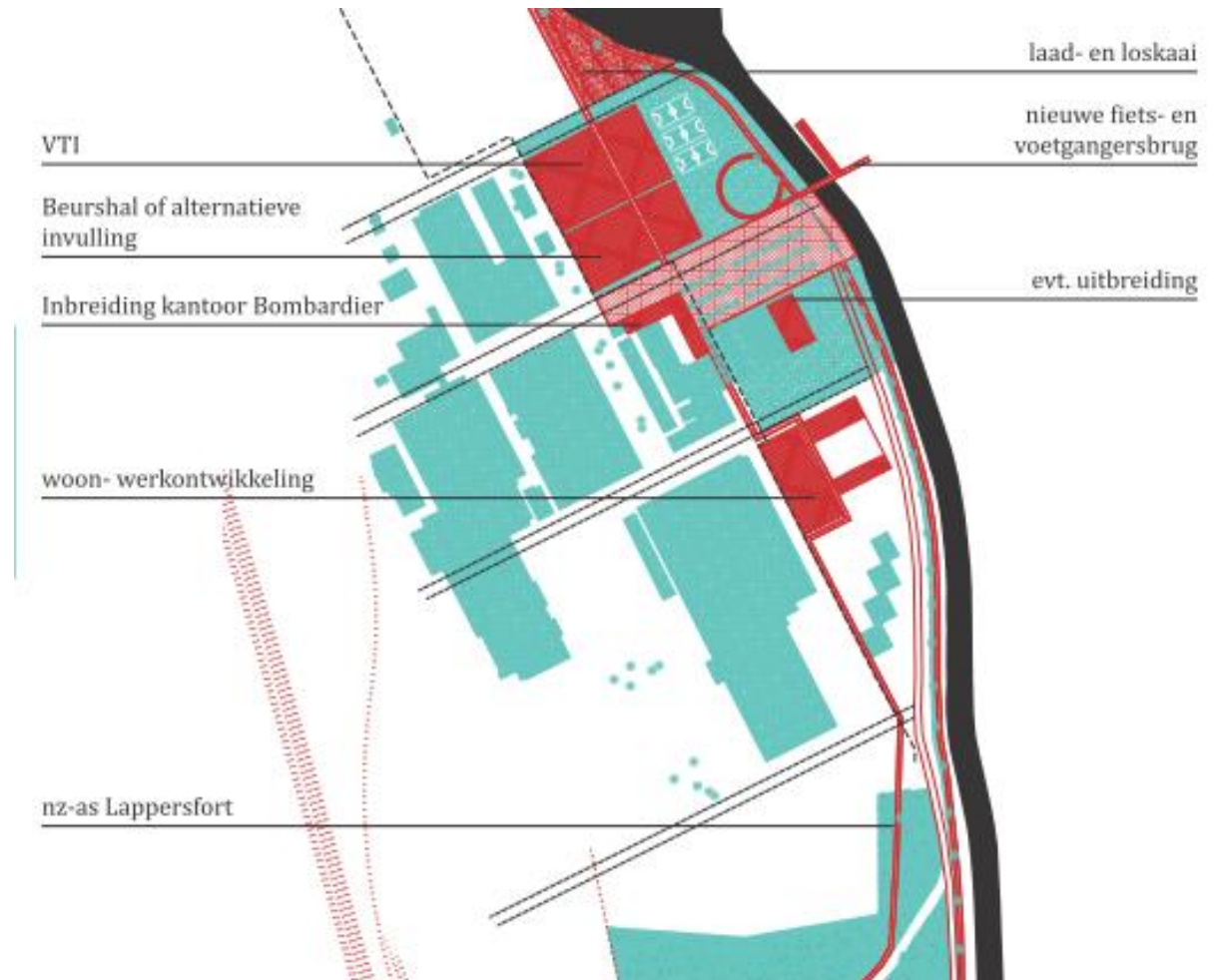
Bedankt, jullie input was fantastisch!

16 juni 2015



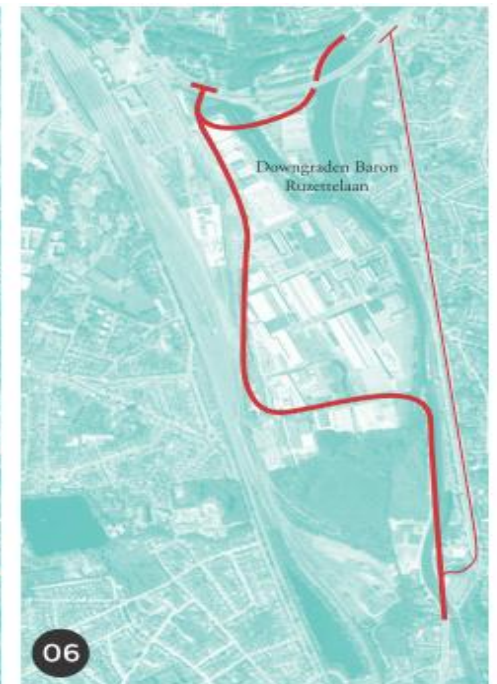
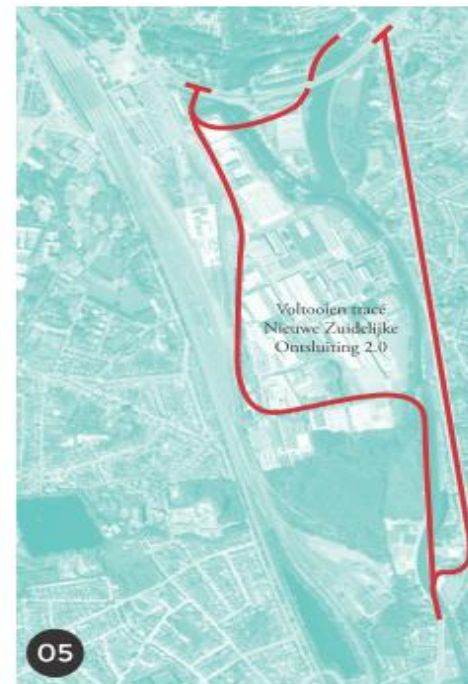
Spin Off Results of the co-design workshops and participative actions

- City of Bruges ordered a vision on the urban development of an old industrial zone alongside the canal –looking for new urban development



Spin Off Results of the co-design workshops and participative initiatives

- Local Grassroot Committee elaborated further their ideas, discussed in the Co-design workshop: building a new bridge gives the opportunity to redirect the main road access to the city. They made a vision on a downgraded green boulevard situated in the residential area
- The city of Bruges ordered a feasibility study on the realisation of this project



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