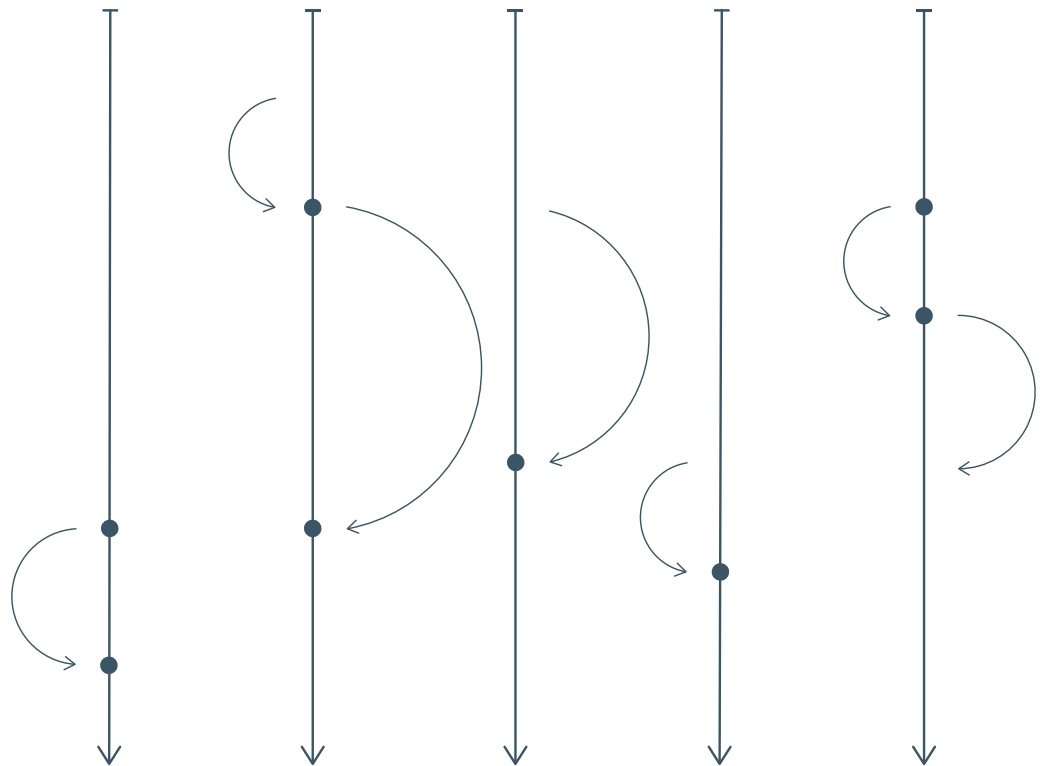


LAB XX

Lageweg pilot project



LAB XX

Lageweg pilot project

Foreword

Rob Van de Velde — alderman for spatial
planning, city of Antwerp

It is now a well-known fact: Antwerp is breaking new ground with its urban development policy. With the modernizing of the strategic Spatial Structure Plan Antwerp, we are working with all our partners on the city of tomorrow. We are not only looking for new visions for the future, but are also developing new methods and instruments to achieve those visions. That is why we pay close attention to concrete experiments and pilot projects. The Lageweg is a particular example hereof.

The aim of the Lageweg pilot project is the conversion of a partly abandoned residential and industrial area in the district of Hoboken. Not on the basis of a vision that the city has drawn up beforehand, but entirely in collaboration with the owners of the plots and the businesses that are established there. The pilot project is part of the Lab XX research project, which is breathing new life into the districts beyond the ring road. We wish to reinforce the areas in the twentieth-century belt of the city and transform them into mixed areas that are pleasant to live in and where new job opportunities emerge for all inhabitants.

The Lageweg pilot project was a learning process, both for the city and for the owners concerned. It was not always easy to preserve a general overview or to get everyone to pull in the same direction. During the process itself I was able to talk to the stakeholders and learned that, despite the project's tremendous complexity, people are willing to go forward together. This really proves that we can achieve a lot more with a common search and a constructive collaboration than with a linear or hierarchical planning process where the end result and the process have been laid out from the start.

I wish to extend a particular thanks to OVAM and the Kenniscentrum Vlaamse Steden, which, together with the city of Antwerp, commissioned the pilot project. OVAM has been involved from the start because of the contamination

problem on the Lageweg, and is looking for ways to tackle the decontamination in a multi-plot approach. The Kenniscentrum Vlaamse Steden boasts years of experience in complex urban projects. Its support guarantees that other cities in Flanders too can learn from the expertise that we have gathered on the Lageweg.

Today a next phase has begun. For the layout of the master plan, the city has received the support of the programme *Pilootprojecten Terug in Omloop*. With this, Flanders is facilitating projects that couple urban transformation to economic transition according to the principles of 'circularity' and integrated soil decontamination. Thanks to this programme we have benefited from the indispensable guidance of OVAM, Ruimte Vlaanderen, het Team Vlaams Bouwmeester, the Vlaams Agentschap voor Innoveren en Ondernemen and the Agentschap voor Binnenlands Bestuur, Stedenbeleid, Inburgering en Integratie.

As with Lab XX and Lab XX_Work, we are sealing the end of the preparatory and research phase with a publication. This enables us to record and to share the knowledge and experience that have been acquired.

I wish to extend my thanks to all the partners and in particular to the involved companies and owners for their incredibly constructive collaboration! I hope you will enjoy reading this publication!

Rob Van de Velde



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Introduction

Veva Roesems & Katlijn Van der Veken
— city of Antwerp

This publication recounts the first phase – the so-called exploratory process– of the Lageweg pilot project. This pilot project is one of the test cases of Lab XX and Lab XX_Work, the research and redevelopment programmes of the city of Antwerp that focus specifically on the city’s twentieth-century belt.

Lab XX was called into being because Antwerp anticipates tens of thousands of new inhabitants in the coming decades. This population growth can no longer be completely contained in the area within the ring road. In the nineteenth-century belt there is only little room left today for densification and we wish to avoid cutting into the remaining open space. That is why we are now focusing our attention on the area outside the ring road.

The demographic growth poses important challenges, because it means that we have to build thousands more housing units. More people also implies more facilities such as schools, care institutions, sports centres, youth centres, green spaces, etc. More people ultimately also means creating more jobs.

The ‘hybrid area’ of the Lageweg is an ideal case study for Lab XX and Lab XX_Work. A lot of industry and economic activity is still present in the Lageweg. We wish to preserve it, reinforce it, transform it, make it ‘circular’ and better integrate it into the urban fabric. The reinforcement of the economy in the city offers a lot of advantages. A lively city is created, we avoid unnecessary commutes, and we can better make the change to a more sustainable and ‘circular’ organization of the city.

The Lageweg pilot project poses an important research question. In a classic urban renewal project, the authorities often own a large share of the land and can as a result weigh in on the project, the programme, the design, the public space, etc. In the Lageweg, however, the city does not have that leverage. The land is largely owned by private

actors. Moreover, ownership on the Lageweg is heavily fragmented. How can we intervene here? In a traditional, 'linear' process, the authorities would begin by expropriating the owners, would then tackle the decontamination, and lastly team up with a property developer that would redevelop the site and put it back on the market.

We have deliberately refrained from choosing such a scenario. We consider the Lageweg as an area rich in opportunities, precisely because of its diversity of functions and owners. After the frequent sell-off of industrial grounds to housing projects, we now know more than ever that we have to cherish the companies that are active today and combine them in a healthy manner with the surroundings. We can only preserve economic activity on the Lageweg if the landowners work together and develop the site themselves. This means that we wish to work with the capital that is already present on site. In this way, the capital will not flow out of the site. The value added that is created by a redevelopment can be reinvested in the area itself.

As this publication takes shape, the exploratory phase has been completed and a partnership agreement is on the table. During this first phase, we tried to build a coalition among ten landowners. That took some doing, and as we write this introduction, not all owners have (yet) got on board the project. And yet we know that all owners today have a better insight into the chances, the possibilities and the value added that a collaboration offers. In the next phase we will see in what way and with what partners we can draw up a more concrete vision for the Lageweg.

In the meantime – the year 2017 – the project has been selected as apart of the *Pilootproject Terug in Omloop*. This is the starting point of the next phase. In this phase we will continue to work as a coalition. We will further concretize the spatial ambitions that were formulated in the exploratory phase and develop a strategy whereby

decontamination and redevelopment can run together as smoothly as possible. We also wish to activate the underused plots faster from the perspective of the circular economy. Lastly, and crucially for the success of the project, we also wish to anchor the integrated urban development vision from a legal perspective.

The Lageweg is a test case, as there are certainly others in Antwerp or in Flanders. We are approaching the project in an experimental, supportive and at the same time pragmatic manner, without losing sight of our most important objectives, namely: keeping the capital in the area, bringing about a mixed area, and enabling the transition to a circular economy. In addition, we also wish to take additional steps in the learning process of the 'renewal of urban renewal'.

On the Lageweg, the city of Antwerp is offering the owners the possibility to take control. We have helped the owners organize themselves. The pilot project is in that sense a search for a way in which the authorities and citizens can work together on the future of the city. We are convinced that this will lead to a more sustainable form of urban renewal.

Reading guide

This voluminous publication does not seek to provide a summary of the exploratory phase. It is perhaps too early for that. By contrast, we wanted to take the learning process itself as a starting point. That is why we decided to let the many partners with whom we have worked on this project have their say, each from the perspective of their own expertise and experience: the various municipal services, the Kenniscentrum Vlaamse Steden, OVAM, the design office 51N4E, the transition office Connect&Transform, the various experts, and last but not least, the owners – the actual actors of the pilot project.

The first part of this publication outlines a tripartite portrait of the Lageweg. The *spatial portrait* depicts the fragmented and impoverished area and looks at how the area is embedded in the context of Hoboken and in the city as a whole. An area is made not only by spatial factors but also by the factors that are active in it. The *group portrait* therefore depicts all stakeholders involved in the pilot project: the commissioners, the consultancies, the landowners, the entrepreneurs and the local residents. Photographic impressions of the area by Jasper Leonard completes the spatial and groups portraits.

The second part of this publication relates the exploratory process, which ran from January 2015 until December 2015. Dieter Leyssen and Freek Persyn of 51N4E and Jan de Visch of Connect&Transform each wrote a text on the complex process that was carried out and on the new set of instruments that they jointly developed for this purpose. Jan Verheyen of RebelGroup recounts the layout of the financial model and the advantages that a land bank offers for a multi-plot development. Peter Van den Bossche of Witteveen+Bos explains the financial, ecological and spatial advantages of an ‘integrated soil management’,

where the soil problem is already integrated in the process early on, instead of only afterwards, when a master plan is already on the table.

Lastly, the third part collects some considerations on the future and the follow-up process of the pilot project. Michiel Dehaene of U Gent and Annette Kuhk of KU Leuven open the debate. Their critical reading of the exploratory process on the Lageweg raises a number of urgent questions for the practice of urban renewal as such.

Ellen Luyten and Walter Tempst of OVAM sketch the challenges that the Lageweg will face in the second phase, now that the project has been selected as part of the *Pilot-project Terug in Omloop*. The key ambitions in this regard are to reuse polluted areas, to give industry a place in the city once more, and to bring about a circular economy.

Veva Roesems of the city of Antwerp writes about the need to activate the area now already. Not only can temporary use break through the status quo and breathe new life into the site, but it can also be a way of learning what use is desirable or appropriate for the Lageweg.

Koen Bastiaens of the city of Antwerp describes the potential of the Lageweg as a 'broad learning environment'. The presence of three schools on the site offers an opportunity for the exchange of space and knowledge, where the industry and the economic activities on the site could be involved in the learning processes of the schools.

Isabelle Verhaert, also of the city of Antwerp, looks back on the process and the set of instruments that was used, and draws lessons that can be learned for the follow-up process or for similar future projects.

Lastly, this publication gives the floor to the landowners, who talk about their experience of the past process and about their expectations and ambitions for the future.

This volume is appearing simultaneously with the publication *Lab XX_Work*. The latter gives an overview of the results of a sample of research and design teams and translates these for the first time into possible commissions for the city and its public and private partners. The research focuses on both the interweaving of living and working, and on the densification and renewal of industrial zones. It is recommended to read both publications as part of one and the same ambition.





7 ambitions of the Lageweg pilot project

Isabelle Verhaert — city of Antwerp
Dieter Leyssen — 51N4E

1

Starting out from the area's current qualities

The Lageweg is a 'hybrid block'. The study Lab XX (2014) defines hybrid blocks as 'blocks that have grown organically and often emerged in places where zoning areas touch one another'. The Lageweg comprises a great diversity of scales (from working-class homes to apartment blocks), functions (housing, industry, schools, retail), construction years (from 1887 to 2014), day and night shifts, developed and undeveloped plots. We do not wish to sweep away that diversity with a large-scale new development. By contrast, we do wish to deepen the interlacing and order it in a more satisfying manner.

Concretely this means that we wish to retain the existing companies as much as possible and add production space and manufacturing industry, together with housing, services and facilities. That is an ambition that was shared early on and very clearly with the owners and the neighbourhood. It was important to break through the expectations of a traditional urban development project, where zones for industry and small to medium-sized enterprises (SME) are often converted into lucrative housing projects with only a few facilities.

2

A coalition-based development

Starting out from the current qualities also means working with the current stakeholders. These are not only the owners of the undeveloped plots and empty industrial buildings, but also the current entrepreneurs, the schools and all the inhabitants that live in and around the area.

The group of the city of Antwerp currently owns only a very small plot (1.6 % via AG VESPA) and does not wish to buy out the other owners. As a result it has less control than in other urban projects. It can assume a facilitating

role and it must preserve the social interest and the spatial quality. But the right of initiative of the project lies with the coalition of landowners.

The research work of Lab XX has shown that hybrid blocks cannot be developed one plot at a time. If we wish to develop a quality project, the various owners must bring into being a multi-plot partnership. That is why the Lageweg pilot project is an experiment in launching a process that must in the end lead to the creation of a coalition of plots and a multi-plot project.

3

A healthy financial project that restores something to the area

Gathering private stakeholders to develop multi-plot projects remains difficult. Many urban renewal projects in Europe get stuck because of the financial feasibility of the project, often at the end of the process. In the multi-plot collaboration, however, there is a chance to create densification operations that are healthy from a qualitative and financial perspective in the twentieth-century belt, an area that mainly consists of larger, private plots.

A qualitative densification operation in the twentieth-century belt of Antwerp must target the improvement of the broader surroundings. That is why the project must restore something to the area and increase the quality of life of the surrounding neighbourhoods.

A basic assumption in the Lageweg pilot project is that by preventing or postponing plots in the project from being sold (on), greater value creation can be achieved within the area. In this way we avoid the situation whereby, during the development, a large part of the value of the project flows out of the area in the form of financial profit. In other words, the value added of the development can be reinvested in the area.

4

Establishing links between various actors and programmes

The creation of value added for the environment is only possible where enough links have been established between the inhabitants, the companies, the schools and the project that is to be newly developed. This means that the end users of the project must be known. In urban development projects, it is often the case that the end users are either not known or known only in a very late phase. The Lageweg is an exception to this rule because it seeks to achieve a project with the existing inhabitants, companies and schools in the area. As a result, some of the end users are known, and this offers an opportunity to reinforce today already the links between actors and inhabitants, associations and companies.

The coalition-building phase is an exploratory phase where we take the time to get to know the stakeholders and to integrate their plans and opportunities in the project, before spatial decisions are taken. During this phase we worked on various parallel processes: spatial reconnaissance, financial models, soil research, programme, stakeholder research, local residents, etc. By pursuing these processes simultaneously instead of successively they can influence one another. This enables us to lay more links between the various functions on the ground, between the inhabitants and users of the project and the area. We can also trace opportunities between the spatial narrative and the soil research, or between the programme and the stakeholders.

5

Learning together (living lab)

The Lageweg pilot project takes an experimental approach to the issue of urban renewal and densification. We have refrained from choosing an approach where experts conceive beforehand an 'ideal answer' to a specific urban renewal question, and have opted instead for an approach where we 'learn by doing'. Both the spatial choices and the process are constantly evaluated in the pilot project, so that we can constantly learn more and adjust our course.

At the same time the stakeholders also have very different backgrounds. There are owners that have inherited the land, entrepreneurs whose main concern is their economic activity, but also property developers and investors. By getting on board the coalition process collectively, everyone learns to speak a common language. They are guided by experts in process management, spatial planning, soil and property. For their part, these experts get to know the owners' questions and concerns. From this interaction we wish to develop a new set of instruments that can be used at several locations in the twentieth-century belt, but also in other cities in Flanders.

6

Integration of the decontamination in an early phase of the process

The Lageweg project area is exemplary for other urban places in Flanders. It is an area with a complex property structure and multi-plot soil contamination. This led OVAM to join the process, making it possible to discuss the decontamination issue early on in the project and to better integrate it in the project development.

Instead of a complicating factor, the decontamination can be an opportunity to facilitate choices and to create win-win situations between various landowners. Just

think of the local reuse of the decontamination land, the processing and reusing of demolition materials on the site itself or the slow redevelopment of the land by natural solutions.

In laying down the outlines of the pilot project we have also taken into account the cost-defining balancing exercise between, on the one hand, the removal of as much pollution as possible (so that no mortgage is imposed on flexible functional uses in time) and, on the other hand, working the least invasively possible (e.g. covering a rubbish dump in anticipation of new technologies that can process rubbish material) so there is less pressure in terms of mobility and climate at this moment.

7

Involving the area in a circular logic

The Lageweg project area is home to companies that need to expand. These include a logistical company, a tow company, an export company and a pharmaceutical logistics company. First we wish to research how these companies can remain active on the site (or even expand) in the future urban development. If that fails, we will set up a support process to optimize relocation.

We further wish to research how the companies can reinforce their relations with the area by establishing links with the schools, training and employing workers from the area, or sharing spaces with local associations. The schools on the Lageweg and the technical campus that is still to be built at Blue Gate Antwerp can tune their training offer to the present industry, infrastructure, studio and workspaces. Conversely, companies can offer internships to the students.

However, our ambition goes even further: we wish to involve the existing and future industry and facilities in a new, circular logic where various waste and rest flows and

logistical means are tuned to one another. That means that we will have to look at the area with a much broader outlook. The surrounding areas will also have to be taken into account, and more particularly the neighbouring and still-to-be-developed Blue Gate Antwerp industrial zone.

The circular logic will be followed throughout the development, from preparation to occupation. Neither do we wish to consider the decontamination process as a linear one, with clearly defined waste flows, but as a circular system in which the raw materials are used and reused as efficiently as possible.





































Portrait of a spatially and socially fragmented area¹

Pim Van Gestel & Virge Smets
— city of Antwerp

The Lageweg is a fragmented urban area with a lot of vacant buildings and pollution. The site is home to an incoherent mix of various functions. There are three logistical companies, a construction company, a laboratory, a tow company, abandoned hangars, some obsolete terraced houses, two apartment blocks, undeveloped plots and three schools. A lot of buildings are empty and the soil is contaminated in many places. While the industrial zone includes some functions that are not conform to the area, the residential area accommodates part of an industrial building. The lack of investments means that the area is in a downward spiral. The inhabitants and local residents identify the project area as dismal and without much staying quality.

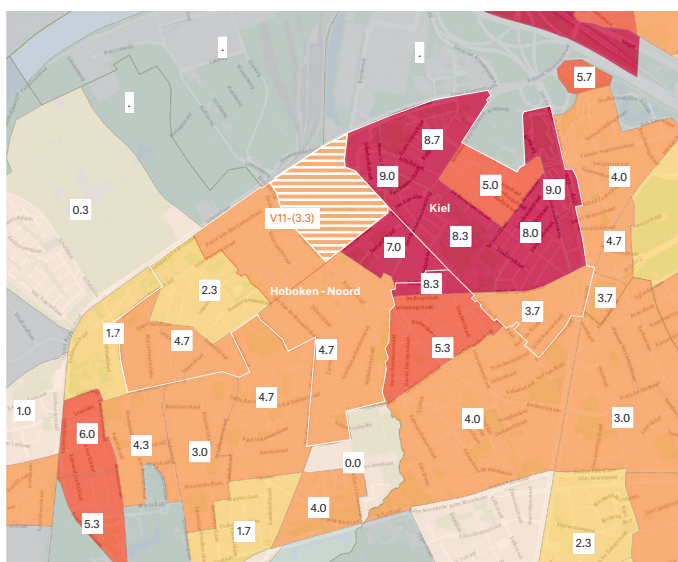
On a social level too we can speak of a fragmented area. There is little talk in the area of a genuine neighbourhood or outdoor life. Exploratory research by the city of Antwerp shows that inhabitants and local residents do not feel much involved in their neighbourhood and that there is little contact among neighbours.

One of the reasons for the lack of social cohesion is perhaps the important social differences in the area. A data analysis² of the surrounding neighbourhoods shows a great diversity between the areas to the east and south of the project area (average deprivation index). The data shows that some areas of Kiel and Hoboken-Noord (project area and western, southern and eastern sides) are struggling with various socio-economic problems (low education level, higher unemployment, lower incomes, higher deprivation index).

Another reason for the lack of social cohesion can be found in the many changes that take place in the areas, such as removals or the ageing population. The disappearance of functions and facilities can also be an important cause. While the space has gradually been built up, the

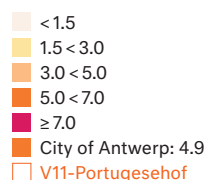
¹ This portrait is based on the results of the quantitative neighbourhood analysis and an exploratory quality analysis. For the qualitative research, eight city workers were interviewed in the spring of 2015, who were all active in Hoboken and/or Kiel. Information from conversations with the directors of a primary school and neighbouring service centres were integrated in the portrait.

² <https://stadincijfers.antwerpen.be>



Deprivation index of the area

The darker the colouring, the higher the deprivation index. The Lageweg project area lies in zone V11. Especially the areas on the Kiel (to the east of the project area) and a neighbourhood of Hoboken-Noord (to the south-east of the project area) score 7 or more on the deprivation index. The Lageweg has a lower deprivation index (3.3) than its north-eastern neighbours. As a whole, the city of Antwerp has a deprivation index of 4.9.

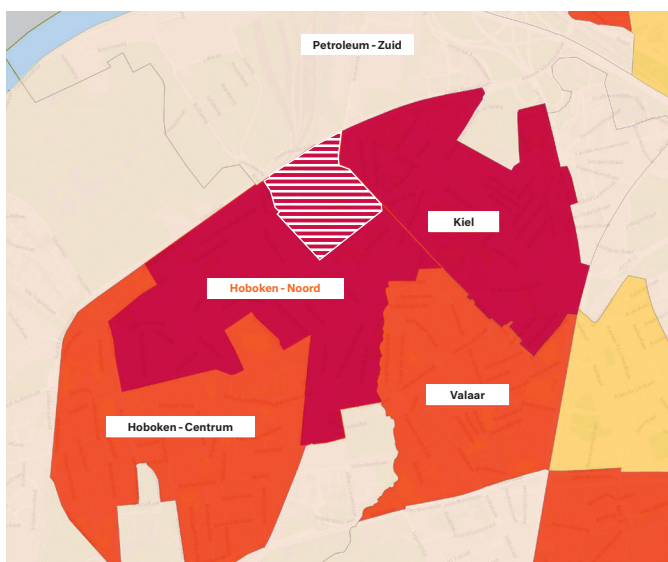


Special values
Empty value
Hidden value

Source: Stad Antwerpen, Studiedienst

population density has also increased, and few if any new and qualitative public space has emerged in its stead. The lack of green spaces and play areas (Hoboken-North has the worst score in this regard in the whole of Antwerp) today creates user conflicts, such as loitering and noise pollution. The noise on the site is between 55 and 74 dB. More than 60 dB is considered a 'moderate noise level'. From that level on, dampening measures are recommended. Besides the actual or measurable nuisance, there is also the 'perceived nuisance', such as feelings of insecurity. A number of older residents of the blocks on the Weerstandlaan (Amelinckx blocks³) say that they no longer dare go out in the evening. They refer to the proximity of the social housing areas in Kiel. Some local residents show signs of discrimination and racism.

- 3 Amelinckx was an important property developer in the 1960s-1970s in Belgium and characterized by the monofunctional and characterless high-rises with large terraces and car parks aimed at the middle-class. Today their energetic renovation, which represents a known challenge, is under discussion.



Total number of inhabitants per neighbourhood

The project area is part of the Hoboken-Noord neighbourhood bordering the Kiel neighbourhood. Hoboken-Noord has more than 15,000 inhabitants.



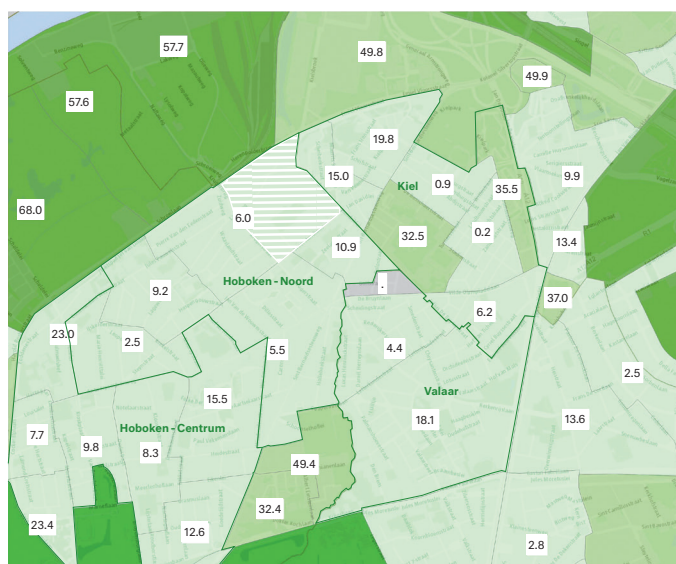
Source: Stad Antwerpen, Districts- en loketwerking

An area with great potential

And yet the Lageweg has great potential. Although the site now forms a barrier between the surrounding areas, it can become a key place that connects the different areas in Antwerp-South. While the closed character of the site today limits the use by the neighbours, the large scale of the site offers possibilities to improve the passage. The Lageweg could take on a role as a central area for the surrounding neighbourhoods.

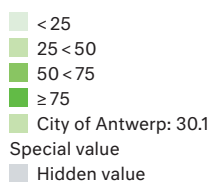
The Lageweg can offer solutions for the *overuse* that is generating nuisances at various places in the areas of Kiel and Hoboken, such as claim behaviour on the squares or undesired play behaviour in the streets. The Lageweg can also help to change the *underused* spaces in the environment (little social interaction on the streets, little talk of staying) into more meaningful places, created in close collaboration with the inhabitants.

Creating places for young people to do their thing, both indoors and outdoors, is a specific point of attention. This is what emerged from conversations with the neighbourhood workers. Young people are looking for a (re)creative space, a place and a chance to meet. The old factory rooms could for instance serve as youth, reception and meeting spaces for the surrounding neighbourhoods.



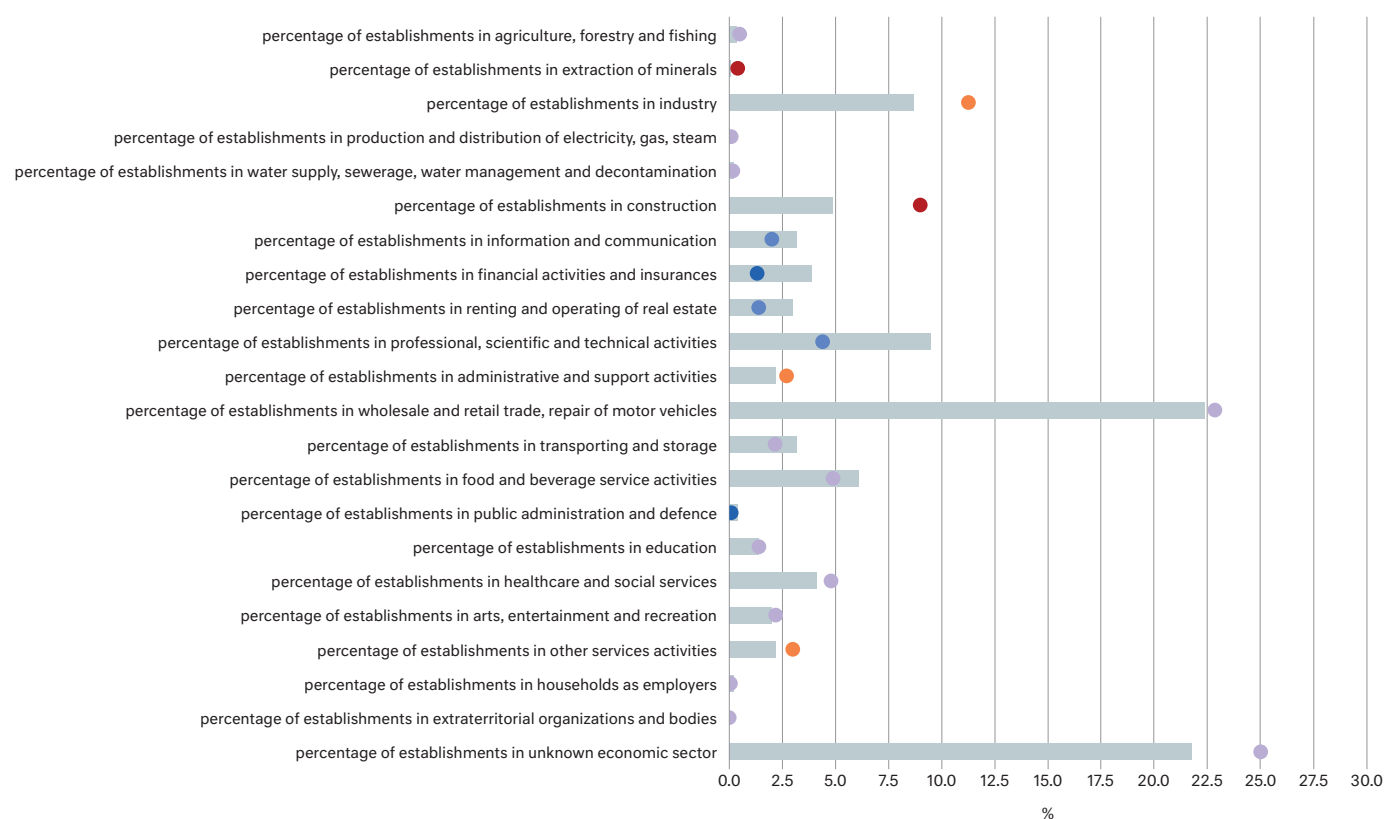
Percentage of green space in the environment

The percentage of public green space (without private green space) in the area of the Portugesehof totals 6 %. That is very low by comparison with the whole city of Antwerp, where the percentage of green space reaches 30.1%. The areas in the bordering neighbourhoods of Hoboken-Noord (6.2%), Kiel (16%), Valaar (14.3%) and Hoboken-Centrum (14 %) also have a low percentage of public green space.



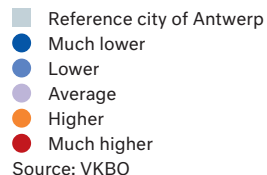
Source: Stad Antwerpen, Stadsontwikkeling

Economic sector (NACE-Bel sectors) 2016 – Hoboken-Noord



Branches of industry in the area

The area (Hoboken-Noord) is mainly home to companies in the secondary sector (industry, construction and extraction of minerals).



The Lageweg project area and broad environment

Hoboken Polder

The railway forms a barrier between Hoboken and the river Scheldt. Along the Scheldt lies the natural reserve of the Hoboken Polder. The crossings to the Hoboken Polder are not used much.

Blue Gate Antwerp

A former rail yard will be converted into Blue Gate Antwerp, a regional industrial zone which will be developed according to principles of circularity. Further to the south lies heavy industry, with among others Umicore.

Pierre van den Eedenstraat

Along the railway, adjacent to the project area, lies an underused SME zone, which is opened up by the Lageweg.

Kiel

The area of Kiel has a high population density. The area is mainly known for the large tenements from the 1920s on the Jan Davidlei and the high-rise on the Emiel Vloorstraat by architect Renaat Braem (1950). Some 20,000 people live there. Recent figures show a high population density and a strong greening of the area. The area, and in particular the social housing complexes on the north-eastern side, face many social and spatial problems.

Zweedse wijk

The Zweedse Wijk or Swedish area (1970) is an area with mainly terraced houses. A lot of middle-class families live there. The number of removals was low until recently, generating a strong neighbourly feeling. This has changed in recent years. A lot of new residents with lower incomes have moved in, such that the social cohesion seems to be diminishing.

Zeelandstraat

The area to the south-east of the Weerstandlaan near the Zeelandstraat has been built up chaotically in recent years with apartment blocks. Four supermarkets with car parks generate a lot of traffic nuisance. Motorized traffic dominates the area, to the frustration of the inhabitants. The public green space is substandard. There are hardly any meeting functions.

Portugesehof

The area to the south-west of the Krugerstraat is characterized by a classic post-war, very dense spatial organization with, on the street side, terraced houses and, in the interior area, industrial hangars and apartments. The public domain is not much loved by the inhabitants. There are not enough green spaces, play areas or meeting places.

Aerial photo source: GDI Vlaanderen, 2012

Blue Gate Antwerp

Hoboken Polder

Lageweg project area

Portugesehof

Umicore



The Lageweg project area and environment

Lageweg

People do not like to linger on the Lageweg (to the east of the Krugerstraat). Empty buildings and undeveloped plots make it an unattractive place. Motorized traffic is the area's main user. The street is often used as a shortcut. The road surface is poorly maintained and the road is often flooded in case of heavy rain. Illegal dumping is a problem. Cyclists see it as an unpleasant and unsafe neighbourhood, especially in the evening.

Krugerstraat

The Krugerstraat is a street with mainly terraced houses. It resembles many other streets in Hoboken-North. Although most inhabitants have a garden of their own, many of them feel a lack of green space and play areas. The street is too narrow for two-way traffic and there are a lot of lorries. The Krugerstraat leads to the Krugerbrug. The bridge over the railway, which connects the Lageweg site with the Hoboken Polder and Blue Gate Antwerp, is in need of renovation. It is currently closed to circulation.

Frieslandstraat

The Frieslandstraat is a dead-end street, which literally ends at the Crown Packaging company. As a result, there is a lack of connection with the other streets and locations on the site. Some newly built apartments have been occupied. This street gives access to one of the high-rise blocks.

Weerstandlaan

The Weerstandlaan is a busy street with through traffic. Because of the different housing typologies on the edges of the street, the area has an impersonal and metropolitan character. The blocks are occupied by a lot of elderly inhabitants with a Belgian background, while a lot of families from an immigrant background live on the other side of the road. Cohabitation is not always harmonious.

Garden project D'n Akker

The garden project D'n Akker is a collective initiative of the school (GO!) and La Strada (part of Jeugdzorg Emmaüs vzw). The garden promotes healthy food and education. The garden will be taken over by Samenlevingsopbouw Antwerpen-stad. In the future the latter will also try to involve inhabitants from the immediate surroundings. The green playground of GO! is located at the rear.

Hendriklei

The relation between the street and the rear side is unclear. The rear side of the social housing units is not pleasant. A pharmaceutical logistics company (Belmedis), located at the rear, used to let the children from the neighbourhood play in the stretch of grass along the street, but after a case of arson the plot was closed off. A former laundry was recently converted into a school (Lucernacollege).

Enclosed interior area

The location of the Hayez-Lemmers plant, the Crown Packaging plant, the high blocks, the school, the social houses and Belmedis means that an inaccessible interior area has emerged in the depths of the site, where nature has developed spontaneously.

Aerial photo source: GDI Vlaanderen, 2015





Emiel Moorstraat

Depanage 2000

Lageweg

Lucernacollege

Hendrikker

Hayes Lemmerz

Remedis

GO! De Schakel
Atheneum Hoboken

Crown Packaging

Enclosed
interior area

Green playground
of GO!

Garden project

Krugerstraat

Frieslandstraat

Weerstandlaan

Group portrait

Veva Roesems — city of Antwerp

Many people and bodies were involved in the exploratory phase of the pilot project (January 2015 until December 2015). The council of the city of Antwerp commissioned the business unit Stadsontwikkeling to launch a pilot project on the Lageweg in the context of Lab XX. Stadsontwikkeling hired several bodies to join the project, such as AG Vespa, the Kenniscentrum Vlaamse Steden and the consultancies 51N4E and Connect&Transform. Since large parts of the land are polluted, the Openbare Vlaamse Afvalmaatschappij (OVAM) is also an important partner. On several occasions the group was complemented by experts from civil society, academia or the financial world, the inhabitants of the site and from the surrounding neighbourhoods, the district committee of Hoboken and local associations. The project's most important challenge is the building of a coalition between the different stakeholders, in particular between the different landowners.

The landowners

The Lageweg has a complex property structure with different types of owners. The plots are the property of private individuals, businesses, education groups, various authorities and the independent municipal company AG VESPA.

Property limits are sometimes even unclear for the owners themselves. Zoning borders and property borders do not always coincide. Some plots are partly in an industrial zone, partly in a residential area. Other plots are fully enclosed. Large parts of the project area are for sale or in liquidation. In total there are 844 plot parts or properties on the Lageweg, of which 512 in the high-rise blocks. Ten owners – who together own most of the area – were selected to take part in the pilot project.

The commissioners

The pilot project was commissioned by the project managers of the city of Antwerp, the Kenniscentrum Vlaamse Steden and OVAM.

City of Antwerp

The Lageweg is a pilot project in the context of Lab XX. With this pilot project the city wants to test and implement strategies of densification and revaluation of the twentieth-century belt. The city set the initial objective to retain the present industry on the site, to reinforce it and interweave it with other functions such as housing and new facilities. Given that the city owns little or no land in the project area, they have to rely on the coalition between the biggest landowners.

OVAM

The Openbare Vlaamse Afvalmaatschappij is involved because much of the soil in the project area is polluted. It wishes to test how an area in a coalition can be decontaminated and involved in a circular logic. The Lageweg project was selected in late 2016 as part of the *Pilootproject Terug in Omloop*, a joint initiative of OVAM, Team Vlaams Bouwmeester, Ruimte Vlaanderen, Team Stedenbeleid, Agentschap Ondernemen and the Flemish ministers Schauvliege, Homans and Muyters. The *Pilootprojecten Terug in Omloop* have a threefold ambition: to reuse underused and contaminated plots, to reintroduce manufacturing and industry in the city, and to make the change to a circular economy or a short-chain economy.

Kenniscentrum Vlaamse Steden

The Kenniscentrum Vlaamse Steden has built up expertise

in urban renewal projects, area management, participation and co-production. It wishes to explore how the expertise and the instruments that are being developed in the Lageweg pilot project could be used on other sites and in other cities.

The project managers

The project managers guided and managed the process with the various stakeholders and experts and ensured the ongoing interaction between contents and process. The role of this team was assumed by the urban planners and architects of the design office 51N4E, the transition office Connect&Transform, and the project managers of the business unit Stadsontwikkeling of the city of Antwerp.

51N4E

51N4E was in charge of conceiving the content-related interpretation of the instruments. The contribution consisted in presenting relevant references from other projects, design exercises and the creation of representative sketches and simulations.

Connect&Transform

Connect&Transform ensured the focus on the process. They determined when an instrument was necessary and what steps could be taken.

Stadsontwikkeling

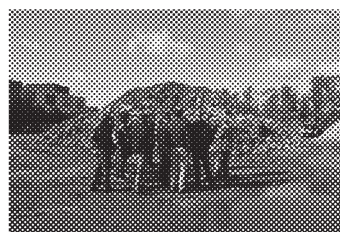
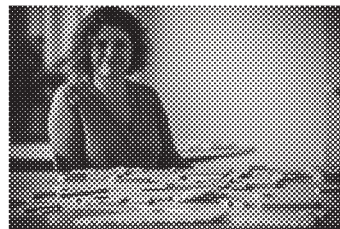
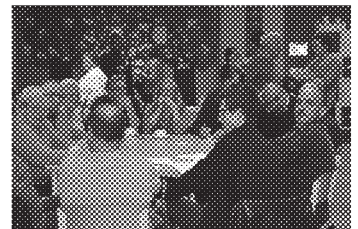
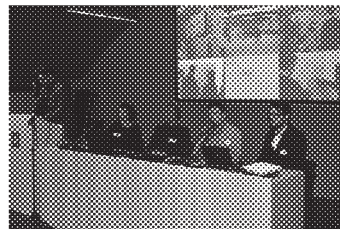
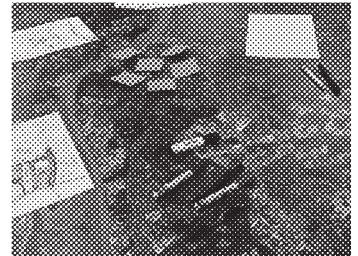
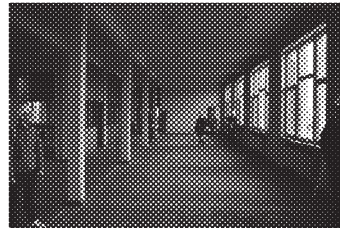
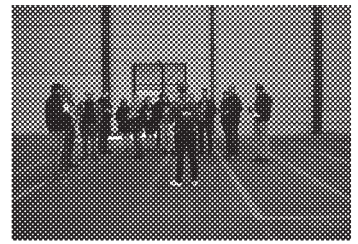
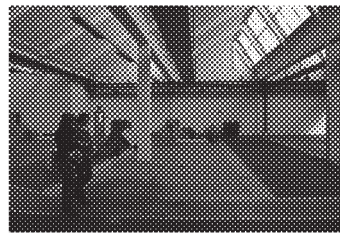
The process managers of the spatial department of the business unit Stadsontwikkeling were responsible for providing the city authorities with transparent feedback and for an optimal application and recognizability of the legal possibilities of spatial processes.

The advisory group

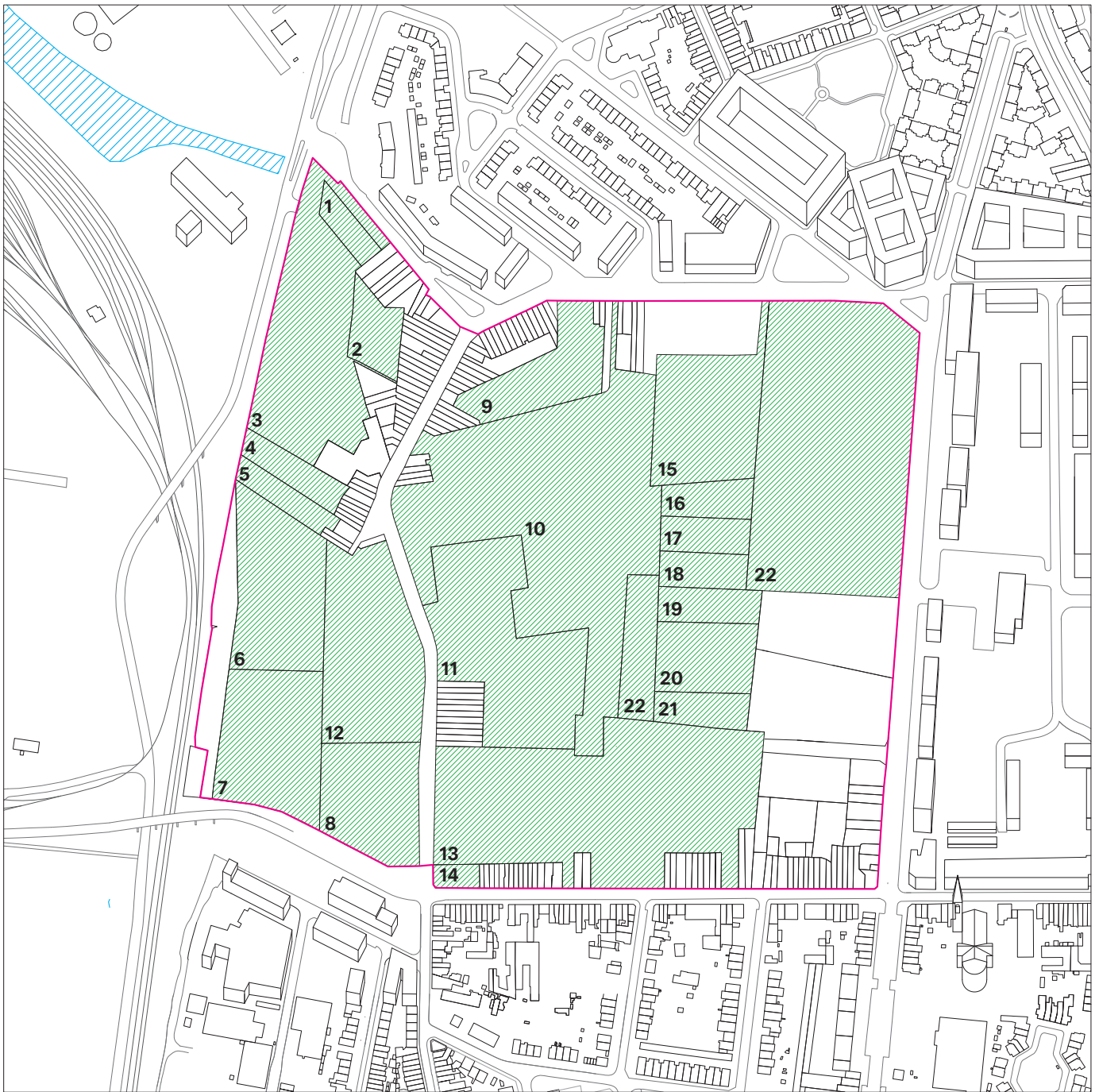
The advisory group reflected on issues of content and process and evaluated the output of the various sessions with the landowners. It advised the process managers on how the following steps of the process could reinforce the coalition among the owners. The advisory group comprised representatives of the various cabinets and city services, the Kenniscentrum Vlaamse Steden, OVAM, the Labo S research group of the Faculty of Urban Development of Ghent University and the research offices 51N4E and Connect&Transform.

The local residents

During the exploratory phase, the neighbourhood was also consulted. Some 60 inhabitants attended the consultative session. The inhabitants were at first opposed to the Lageweg project as described in the Lab XX study. They were put off by the sketches, which featured, among others, residential towers in the green interior area. The opposition was perhaps also due to the fact that the neighbourhood had not been consulted beforehand. During the consultative session, it was made clear to the residents that there was no master plan on the table yet and that in other words we would start with 'a clean slate'. That reassurance was able to remove the resistance and led to a constructive discussion. The consultative session led to a number of useful ideas that can certainly contribute value added for the project (see p. 64 – 65). The (as yet one-off) consultation with the inhabitants will have to be employed much more intensively in the following phases of the pilot project.







Most important landowners

1-6 Depannage 2000 NV

Percentage of land: 16 %

Depannage 2000 is part of the VAB Groep. The company is responsible for towing illegally parked cars and cars involved in accidents in the Antwerp region. In addition, the company specializes in temporary energy facilities and logistics for big events and forensic research of cars involved in crimes. Depannage 2000 has a plot of land that is properly opened up on the Emiel Vloortstraat, a side street of the Lageweg, on which the company is also planning the construction of a biofuel petrol station. It also owns the rear plots along the railway. The company is struggling with a lack of space and is looking to expand.

7 Sany Logistics NV

Percentage of land: 4.7 %

Sany Logistics is a logistics business with warehouses at various locations in Flanders, of which Hoboken has the smallest capacity. The company offers logistical services for the storage and transfer of various goods. It is looking to expand its activities on the site.

8 Krugerbrug NV

Percentage of land: 3.7 %

Geerts en Kinderen, a subsidiary of Krugerbrug, recycles construction waste (concrete, brick, metal). The company used to be established on a nearby site that is currently part of the Hoboken Polder nature reserve. After relocating to the site on the Lageweg, the company has been struggling with complaints from local residents about nuisances.

9 Zon Immo NV (no. 9)

Percentage of land: 2.8 %

Zon Immo is a small import-export company that owns a warehouse in the project area, as well as the land and the buildings of the primary school of the Lucernacollege. The problematic water balance on the school's playground is not being dealt with because the corporate neighbours have moved out of the buildings and it is not clear who the interlocutor is. As a result, the children can only play outside for a limited time of the year.

10-12 EDS bvba in liquidation by Kjell Swartelé bvba and Vanhoucke-Verkest bvba

Percentage of land: 29.8 %

The lawyers' office Kjell Swartelé and Vanhoucke-Verkest are currently managing the properties on the former site of the Hayes Lemmerz plant. After the bankruptcy of the car-rims manufacturer in 2008, the lawyers' offices have been tasked with selling the property to pay off the creditors.

13-14 Crown Packaging NV

Percentage of land: 14.3 %

The company Crown Packaging left its property on the Lageweg in 2013, a year after the international concern had closed its establishment in Deurne. The plots on the Lageweg are for sale.

15 Belmedis NV

Percentage of land: 4.6 %

Belmedis is an active company that is responsible for the distribution of medication to pharmacies in the city. It is part of the French group Welcoop. The company owns a piece of land in a residential zone of the project area, and is not easily visible from the street. The location close to the city is a big plus point, since it is a 'last mile' logistics company.

16-21 The Vits, Schunzelaar, Borms, Ballon, De Rem and Janssens Families

Percentage of land: 7.7 %

Some families have inherited plots in the interior of the project area. The plots are in a residential zone, but are at present enclosed. To develop the plots, they are therefore dependent on their neighbours. Due to the joint possession of the property, agreement is necessary between the heirs on what course to follow.

22 AG Vespa

Percentage of land: 1.6 %

AG VESPA, the 'autonomous municipal company for property management and urban projects for Antwerp', works as an expert and public entrepreneur on a liveable and attractive city through the realization of property, construction and urban projects. Besides the realization of leading housing and public building projects, and the management of an extensive property portfolio, AG VESPA also plays an important role in area developments and complex urban projects. AG VESPA supports the city and its branches in the preparation of complex urban projects and joins forces when necessary with private and public partners to arrive at multi-plot developments. AG VESPA owns a small but centrally located plot in the project area, which at present is enclosed.

23 Gemeenschapsonderwijs (GO!)

Percentage of land: 14.7 %

The Gemeenschapsonderwijs (GO!) has two schools in the project area: the primary school De Schakel and the Koninklijk Atheneum Hoboken. The primary has been occupied for almost three years and in 2014 totalled 585 pupils. GO! recognizes that a collaboration offers chances to invest in the area in an integrated manner. The existing abandoned halls and hangars on the site can be considered for the expansion of the school. The industrial infrastructure on the site also offers opportunities for the flow from training programmes to the local job market. The new technical campus that is soon going to be built on Blue Gate Antwerp also offers opportunities for the Lageweg and the education functions on the site.





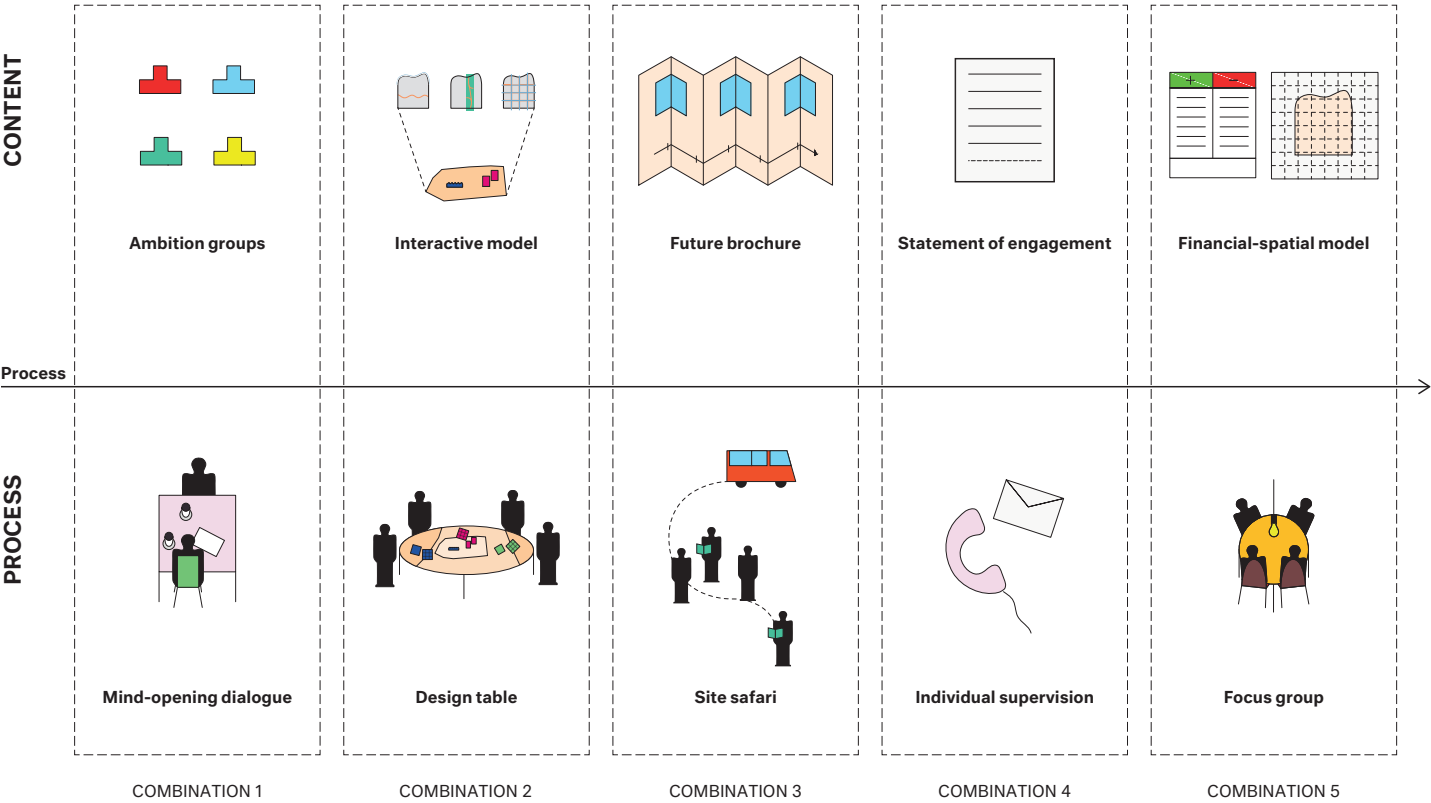






Method and instruments

Dieter Leyssen — 51N4E



Process and content instruments

The challenge for the Lageweg pilot project consisted in bringing about a coalition of policymakers, landowners, investors and other social actors. Our hypothesis was the following: by setting to work from the start with the available capital and the available actors, we would increase the likelihood of a qualitative, mixed development that was rooted in the neighbourhood. What method makes it possible to involve everyone and to activate the available capital? What instruments can we use to forge a robust coalition that is capable of achieving a financially healthy and qualitative urban renewal project?

The approach taken with the Lageweg pilot project differs from urban renewal projects of a comparable size. Collaboration with the available actors has been done before, under the name of 'participation', but was mostly limited to the consultation of a broad field of parties concerned. In such an approach, experts, after extensive studies, put forward solutions, which the involved parties then get the chance to respond to. Such a consultation round often only happens late in the process, at a moment when many decisions have already been taken. In the Lageweg we are experimenting with a different approach. The parties concerned were not 'consulted', but instigated to dialogue, creativity, doubt and conflict.

The collaborative model rests on other starting points: making connections between the owners, integrating progressive insight, bringing about mutual trust, contributing according to one's means, and supervising the quality of the process organization. In this model, solutions can no longer be developed in isolation. The traditional work method of the architect or urban planner who conceives a harmonious plan and implements it step by step does not work, because we are dealing with a highly fragmented property structure.

The method rests moreover on complex relations between different specializations and sectors and between different interests and perspectives. This heightens the complexity of the problem, since it is necessary to integrate different fields of expertise in a coherent whole and at the same time to take stock of all these different perspectives throughout the process.

To make this complexity manageable, we tested a series of instruments that attempt to establish new pairings between the different specializations in the project, between the various opinions and interests, and between different temporal perspectives. By means of these instruments we were able to test and reinforce the coalition. Which proposals resonate, which ones do not? Which concepts reinforce the coalition, which ones do not? Which principles of urban development is the group familiar with, and which questions demand more detailed explanations?

It proved to be essential to tune, per instrument, content and process meticulously to one another and to make a reassessment after each step. By *content* we mean the 'what': the development's ambition and the typologies that could be developed in future on the Lageweg. By *content* we also mean the project's legal and financial arrangement. In the instruments around the question of content, the emphasis was on a gradual construction of vision. In doing so we always tried to tie in as closely as possible to the experiences of the parties concerned. We tried to create storylines that could bridge the diversity in the coalition.

By *process* we mean the way in which the various parties were involved: 'how' we can deal with uncertainties, conflicts and interests. The key for a good process is the realization of a constructive context in which there is room for dialogue, knowledge sharing, conflict and enthusiasm.

'In the Lageweg we are experimenting with a different approach. The parties concerned were not 'consulted', but instigated to dialogue, creativity, doubt and conflict.'

The process instruments always anticipated on possible fields of tension and tried to exploit the potential of those fields of tension to the fullest.

Two insights emerged from the testing of the *content instruments*. Firstly, that continuing to sharpen an outline of a vision is an iterative process in which the content can always be discussed within a larger complexity. Secondly, the idea that individual value-creation must always be connected to communal value creation. In itself this demands the realization that 'current' valuation is subjective and depends heavily on the individual experience of the parties concerned.

Two insights emerged from the testing of the *process instruments*. Firstly, that we could bring the future closer via representation and that this could connect the parties concerned. Secondly, that the construction of intelligence could be achieved by means of a flexible connection between parallel tracks. This means that capacity building is not a linear process, but a selection process where insights are developed simultaneously on different levels.

We always combined one content instrument with a process instrument. Taken together, these instruments form a first impulse for a new systemic methodology in which development strategies are provided for the renewal of the twentieth-century urban fabric around Antwerp. The instruments therefore serve a double purpose: on the one hand, to break through the status quo in the project area itself, and on the other, to try out strategies that can be repeated in other, comparable projects.

Combination 1: mind-opening dialogues and ambition groups

A beginning based on possibilities

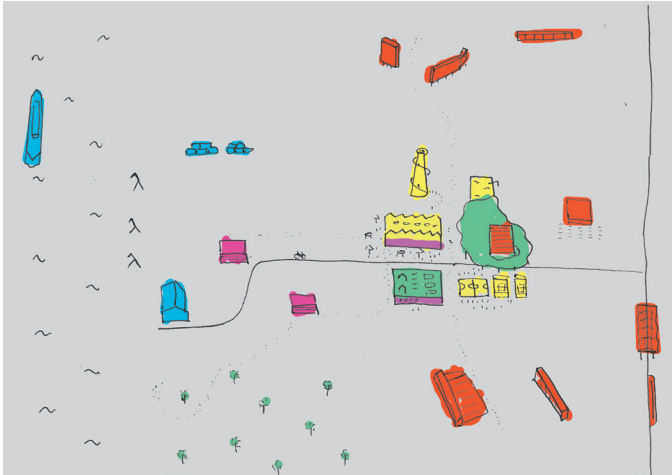
We initiated the conversation with the landowners with a series of *mind-opening dialogues*. During the individual discussions, we sounded out the owners' plans, wishes and ambitions. An external expert was invited to each conversation, who inspired owners to set out their ambitions more clearly.

We introduced each individual dialogue with a presentation of possible ambitions for the area. We then listened to what the owner found relevant in this. We divided up the ambitions according to four themes (the so-called *ambition groups*): 'living social fabric', 'urban economy', 'new housing experience' and 'sustainable surroundings'. Within each theme we distinguished three levels of ambition: a 'basic level of ambition' (transformations and improvements requiring no coalition), a 'sharing level of ambition' (transformations thanks to limited new connections and collaborations), and an 'anchoring level of ambition' (transformations borne by the whole coalition).

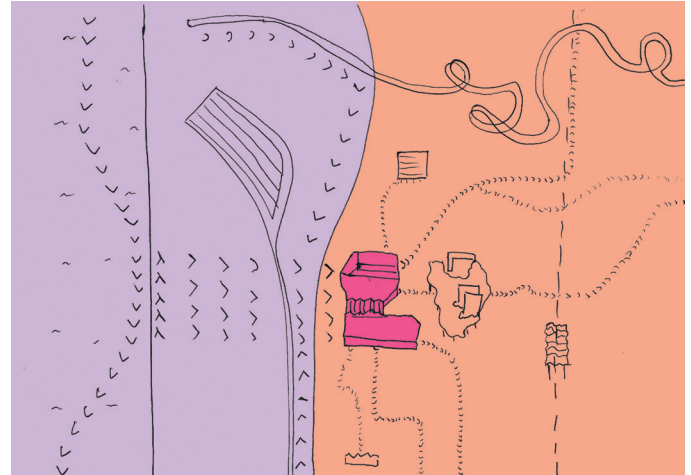
We illustrated the four ambition groups and levels with international case studies that present similarities with the Lageweg project area. The case studies were supplemented with examples provided by the owners themselves.

The ultimate purpose of the *mind-opening dialogues* was to stimulate the enthusiasm of the stakeholders and to incite them to take part in the co-creative process. During these dialogues we conveyed the message that the pilot project could strongly influence the future function of their own plot, and that by working together the project could be raised to a higher level of ambition.

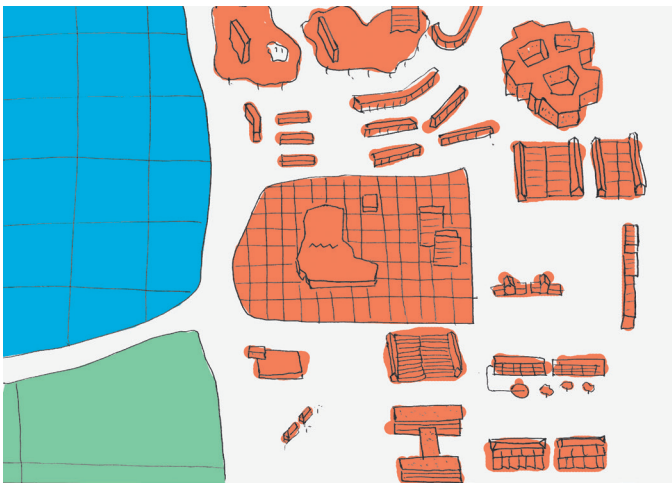
The ambition groups



1



2



3



4

1 Living social fabric

In the ambition group 'living social fabric', we explored opportunities to mobilize the project area for the improvement of the level of facilities in the broader surroundings. The large scale of the terrain, the open space and the empty industrial infrastructure can provide room for many public functions that are currently lacking in the neighbourhood. Community gardens could, for instance, sell vegetables to a local restaurant, which in turn could co-finance the activity of the community gardens. Pending a development, undeveloped spaces could be occupied temporarily as exhibition space, community centre, artist studio, play area or skatepark.

2 Urban economy

In the ambition group 'urban economy', a number of ideas emerged regarding the embedding of economic activities in the urban fabric. Empty infrastructure could be rented at an advantageous fee to start-ups. The activities already

available in the fields of recycling, construction and logistics can be an occasion to introduce new economies. The Lageweg is a suitable site to experiment with new building techniques and materials, such as the application of 3D printing in construction. Thanks to the presence of schools on and near the project area, the Lageweg can grow into a professional 'learning environment', in which companies and schools exchange space and knowledge.

3 New housing experience

In this ambition group, the inhabitants explored ways in which housing and industry could be organized in such a way that they neither hinder nor disturb one another. This is possible by shaping the housing fabric in such a way that any direct relation between housing and work is avoided as much as possible. Another possible strategy is to mobilize the qualities of the industrial heritage to enrich the housing experience. For instance, workplaces or car parks could be given a new function after work hours, as

a meeting or play area. In the ambition group the inhabitants also expressed the desire to introduce new forms of housing – care housing, co-housing, etc. The much needed renovation of the Amelincx blocks can be an occasion to experiment with new models of lifelong housing.

4 Sustainable surroundings

The ambition group 'sustainable surroundings' raised the question as to the ambition of the pilot project in terms of sustainability. The Lageweg offers an opportunity to achieve results in a relatively short term and on a relatively large scale. Demolition waste, for instance, could be recycled on the site and be reused as construction material. Companies could also experiment with new forms of transport and distribution (e-bikes, electric car sharing, etc.). The proximity of Blue Gate Antwerp and the new residential development Nieuw Zuid on the quays of the Scheldt creates possibilities in terms of the exchange of materials, goods or residual heat (heat network).

Combination 1 bis: consultation of residents and ambition groups

Sharing knowledge and gaining trust

In parallel to the process with the landowners, the city engaged in dialogue with the inhabitants, local residents and users of the area. In a classic urban renewal project, this type of informative or participatory stage mostly occurs on the basis of a first design proposal. For the Lageweg there was no design yet. All that existed was the important starting point – already formulated in the study *Lab XX* – which was to set out from the present qualities, actors and capital. Moreover, the city had expressed the desire that industrial activities must continue to exist in the area, supplemented by other functions such as housing and facilities.

The city posted an invitation in all letter boxes in the project area and the neighbouring streets. Staff of the city area consultation addressed the inhabitants at the entrance to the high-rises and invited them to the discussion evening. The expected attendance of 5 to 15 people was largely exceeded with 60 people attending.

The evening began with a film about densification of the twentieth-century belt. The film made clear in a concise manner what the challenges consist of for the population growth in Antwerp – the need for extra housing, extra facilities and extra workplaces in the city – and what role the twentieth-century belt could play in this.

We then took the time to clarify the visions for the site's future, as published in the study *Lab XX*. The publication (and exhibition) namely featured a number of representations of possible developments for the site. Those visions for the future had generated a lot of questions and negative reactions among the inhabitants, users and associations such as *Natuurpunt*. We explained that this was a

'feasibility study', and that the drawings and ideas from the book would not be used as a basis for the redevelopment. In other words, we would start from 'a clean slate'.

To better get to know the concerns of the inhabitants and users and to set the discussion in motion, we invited everyone to sit down and to work together around the four ambition groups. Some left the room at that moment. There were six tables with about six to ten people per table. Each ambition group was given very concrete questions. How, for instance, can existing projects be improved? How can inhabitants contribute to the neighbourhood? How do you see the housing of the future? For each of these questions, we tried to tease out an answer for three terms: what is possible or desirable within a short, medium and long term?

We then conducted an open discussion with the inhabitants and users about the ambition groups. That generated a lot of reactions and interesting ideas that can mean value added for the project.

A lot of inhabitants expressed their fear that the green spaces on the site would disappear. Older inhabitants recalled that the green interior area used to be a sports field for children and that there were several pedestrian shortcuts through the block, and that that was now lacking. During the sessions the proposal was made to combine the green space with sports and play areas, a pond and a catering function, so that parents and children could spend time there together. A proposal for the project 'gardening together' could be combined with the idea of collecting the green waste of both residential blocks and composting it.

The local residents also pleaded for more space for local initiatives. Thus, the empty hangars could be used temporarily for neighbourhood activities, in anticipation of a permanent space for community activity.

Ideas were also put forward in terms of housing. The inhabitants wanted to make housing more attractive by providing for quality outdoor spaces. According to them, the area should not be built up completely with only high-rises or social housing, but no less only with ground-floor houses (which would result in little public space). The inhabitants appeared to support residential buildings of 5 to 7 floors around a central green area. The inhabitants were also in favour of the introduction of new housing types in the area to enable lifelong housing, for instance. Various types came up for discussion, such as cohousing, kangaroo housing, service flats, home zones and accompanied cohabitation.

We also learned that the industry was not seen by definition as a bad neighbour. The inhabitants of the apartment building next to the Crown Packaging plant (which has since closed) had never felt any nuisance. Noise pollution was minimal, there was no mention of the smell or dust. It is only the transport by lorries and cars that has a negative effect on the quality of life. Inhabitants wondered how mixed forms of housing and working could be combined and whether good examples already existed.

‘The discussion with the inhabitants and users about the ambition groups generated a lot of reactions and interesting ideas that can mean value added for the project.’

Combination 2: design table and interactive model

Creating trust in the coalition

During the first collective moment, we gathered the ten participating owners around an interactive model. The high level of attendance clearly showed that the mind-opening dialogues had stimulated interest. The intention was to bring the stakeholders into contact with one another and to deepen involvement, but also to create a first concept around possible spatial conditions and choices.

We began the discussion with a short summary of the individual reactions from the mind-opening dialogues. We then presented possible spatial development scenarios for the area. For that we used the 'interactive model'. It gave all owners an overview of the spatial situation of the project area. Thanks to the model, various spatial conditions became clear at a glance – such as the difference in height between buildings, or the (in)accessibility of green and open space. We then laid out three possible future structures, cut out from large sheets of paper, on the model. This enabled us to set the discussion in motion.

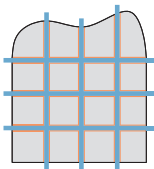
The spatial models incited the owners to think up alternative proposals themselves. Using sheet and paper, each owner put forward an initiative and explained it. One representative of an owner declined to take part. He questioned the status of such drawings. The other owners made a first sketch, which allowed them to share an outline of their vision with the others.

Afterwards, during an informal moment, the owners continued the discussion. It then emerged that some owners were wondering about the value of their land. The researchers interpreted these questions as being part of a broader question, namely: what's in it for me? Among

some owners (and/or their representatives), negotiations were already ongoing regarding the sale/purchase of property. As yet these conversations had not been very successful, mainly because of a lack of information and mutual distrust. We used the dialogue about the valuation to underline the idea that a greater 'value' could perhaps be created through collaboration, in contrast with a strategy where each owner would develop his own plot on his own. That is when the idea was first put forward of exploring a number of financial scenarios in complete transparency.

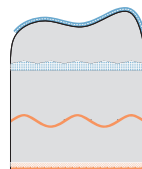


Three possible future structures were projected onto the interactive model.



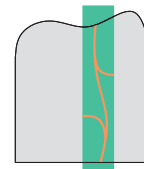
Classic parcelling pattern

The 'classic parcelling pattern' draws the street layout of the adjacent area (the Portugesehof) into the project area. This spatial model is based on ground-floor houses with a private garden. This structure breaks radically with the current organization of the area. One of the disadvantages of this scenario is that a vast road system is necessary to make an equally large area of land developable. Little public space remains.



Green fingers

The 'green fingers' scenario establishes an east-west connection across the site. This connection does not currently exist. By developing the green areas in the east and in the inner area as qualitative shortcuts and open space, we can respond to the need for open space in the neighbourhood.



Integrated clusters

In the current project area, four zones can be distinguished (from west to east): an active zone with activity, a zone with a lot of empty buildings but some valuable industrial structures, a green zone, and a residential zone with facilities. The scenario of the 'integrated clusters' creates a north-south connection across the site, from the Kiel area to the Portugesehof. This model aims to optimize the existing zones and attractive transition areas between the zones.

Combination 3: future brochure and site safari ***Combining representation with a group experience***

We invited the group of owners out on a site safari in the project area. Everyone received a brochure: *Doorbraak SQS De Lageweg ... binnen 1, 5 en 20 jaar* (Break through the Lageweg status quo ... within one, five and twenty years). With the site safari, the emphasis shifted from instruments that offered a bird's-eye view of the site (the interactive model, the ambition groups) to a more direct experience of the project area.

The site safari was an experience and idea walk. At various halting places, the guides sketched various possibilities within one year (temporary use), five years and twenty years. The experience of the concrete situations clearly offered something to grasp hold of when imagining the future of the area. It enabled the owners to further develop their own ideas and to talk with the city. One of the owners played with the idea of organizing temporary collective workspaces in the area. Another wanted to use the empty halls temporarily as a storage space.

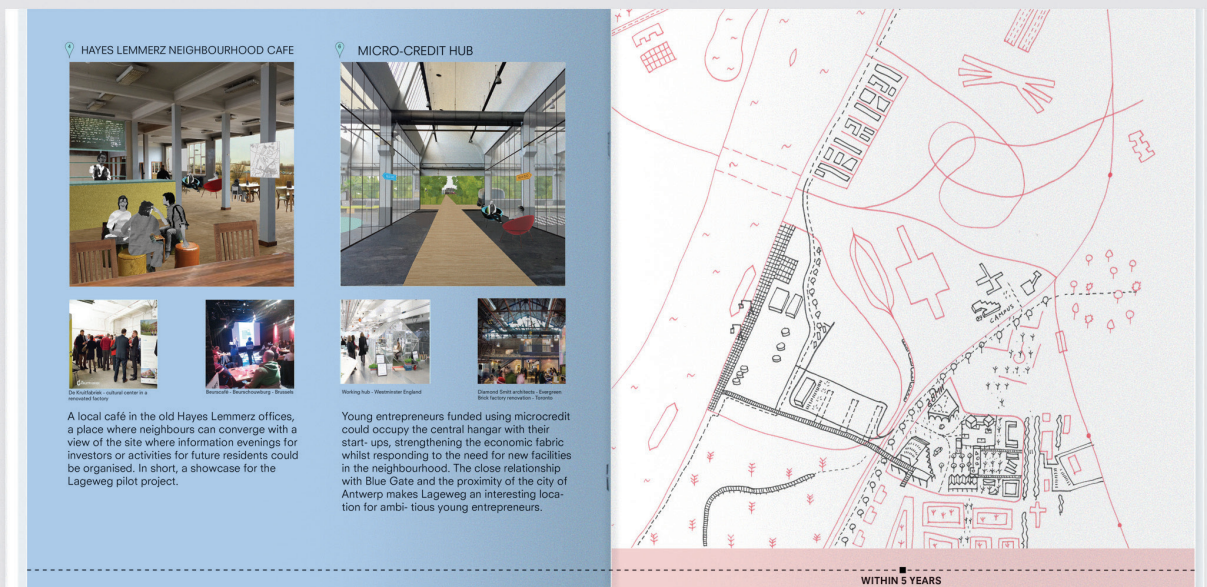
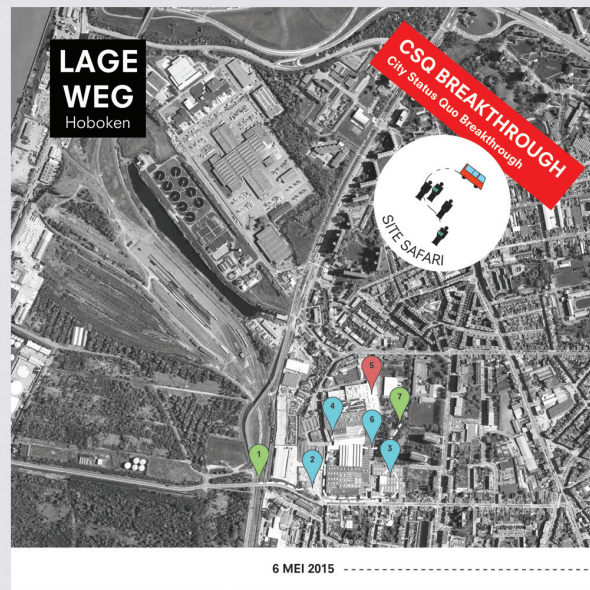
The future brochure comprises future pictures of seven locations in the project area within one, five and twenty years. The future pictures were based on the results of the mind-opening dialogues. They were therefore the result of co-production, translated into words and images by design office 51N4E. The consortium Witteveen+Bos and De Nijs Advies provided additional information about the possible approach to soil contamination.

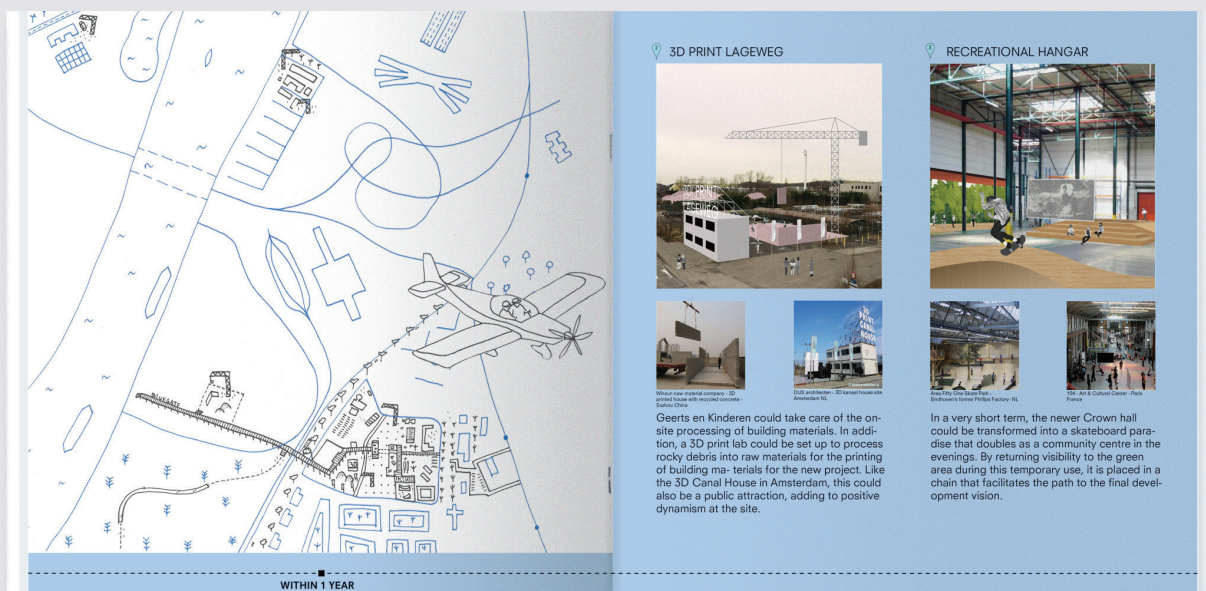
The site safari



‘We invited the group of owners out on a site safari in the project area. Everyone received a brochure: *Break through the Lageweg status quo ... within one, five and twenty years.*’







MULTIMODAL KRUGER BRIDGE



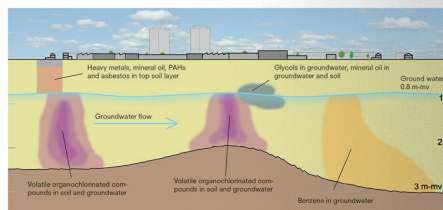
The Kruger Bridge is an important node between Lageweg, Blue Gate and the Hoboken polders. A pedestrian bridge connects the Scheldekast to the Lageweg. By also linking a urban observatory to the new Kruger Bridge, the public gains insight into what is happening in the neighbourhood.

'HIGH ROAD' CROSSING

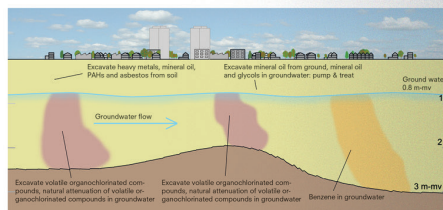


The green area is the beating heart of the site, but it is currently completely separated from the city. By building a new path through the site that links the new projects, the green areas become accessible but also preserve their natural and pristine quality.

SOIL CONTAMINATION



Before



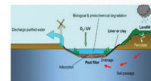
After

1. Soil Management and Building Materials



In the context of the redevelopment, the re-use of existing buildings or building materials and the maximum application of closed-cycle land mass excavation can be very beneficial. Land mass excavated for underground structures can be reapplied within the area, for example to create an elevation.

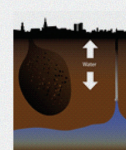
2. Soil quality



The soil contains several non-mobile and mobile contaminants. The treatment of these contaminants will be integrated with the future redevelopment taking into account the 1-, 5- and 20-year periods (see the illustration to the left). The groundwater "plume" contaminated with chlorinated hydrocarbons could be assessed for the application of the innovative "natural catch" principle (see picture to the right) by making a ditch in lower areas.

In the context of the redevelopment, the re-use of existing buildings or building materials and the maximum application of closed-cycle land mass excavation can be very beneficial. Land mass excavated for underground structures can be reapplied within the area, for example to create an elevation.

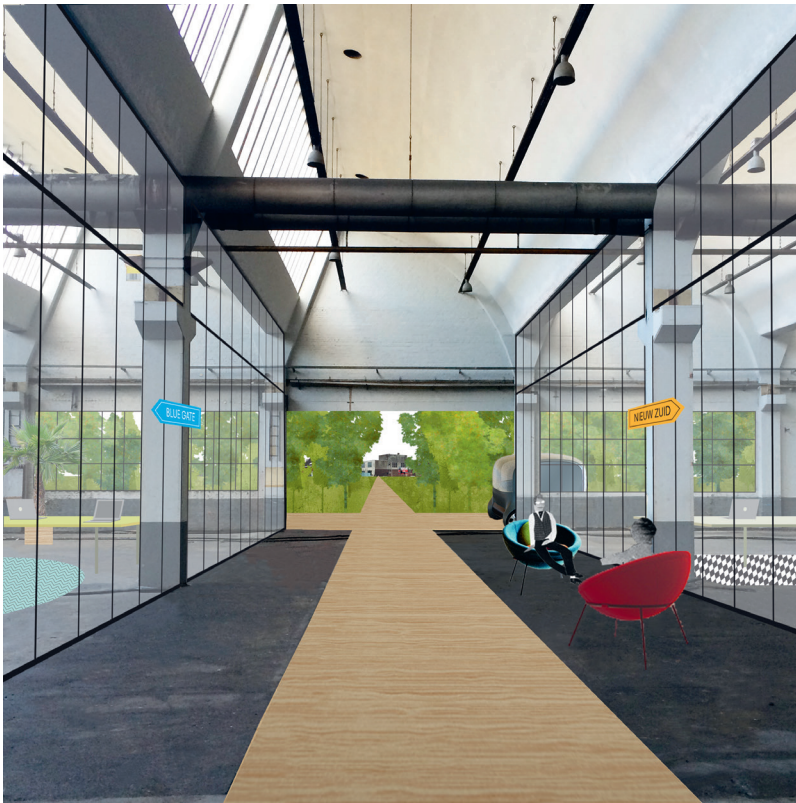
4. Water Storage and Infiltration



The re-use of existing buildings or building materials and the maximum application of closed-cycle land mass excavation can be very beneficial. Land mass excavated for underground structures can be reapplied within the area, for example to create an elevation.

3. Geotherman Energy





Future projection of a micro-economy hub in one of the empty hangars



Future projection of a skate park in a former logistics centre

Combination 4: statement of engagement and individual accompaniment

From receptive to active involvement

As the coalition-building process progressed, a moment dawned when owners transformed their non-committal engagement into active involvement. By signing the statement of engagement, a first step is taken in the direction of collaboration. Concretely, this implied that they were given the chance to endorse the ambition groups for the Lageweg. There was also a mutual agreement to invest collectively in a valuation by an external office.

The introduction of the statement of engagement generated a lot of discussion. What is the status of the engagement? Can the document be made legally binding? What is understood by 'valuation'? How would a legally disconnected group of clients pay the sum to the external office? There also arose the question as to the project follow-up in the mid and long term. That is why we distinguished 'milestones' in the process: we chose to identify the pilot project as a preparatory process, which can then lead to planning, framing and lastly execution.

The introduction of the statement of engagement in the process was coupled with the individual accompaniment of the different owners by the city's project manager. It was clear that some 'owners' with whom we had been in discussion until then were not competent to sign. The statement of engagement was thus a means to identify the real owners or decision-makers and to bring them up to date on the project development.

We did not see the statement of engagement as a binding legal document, but as a means to build a coalition. That is why the owners were authorized to sign a 'tailor-made' statement of engagement, from which paragraphs which they were not ready to commit to could

be removed. We did not strive after the best, but after the best possible progress. Seven owners signed the first two paragraphs, comprising the ambition groups for the Lageweg. Nine owners signed the third paragraph, which mentioned the contribution in terms of percentage for the drafting of the financial model. Lastly (during the negotiations surrounding the signing of the statement of engagement, a second milestone, which took place after the exploratory phase), the last owner also signed the statement of engagement.

'We did not see the statement of engagement as a binding legal document, but as a means to build a coalition.'

Combination 5: financial-spatial model and focus groups ***From a linear to a circular process***

The pilot project rested on the initial assumption that a coalition of owners can achieve greater financial value added and fairer distribution. From the first collective moments with the owners, we explored this assumption step by step. The unanimous decision to commission an external office to prepare a financial model was a key moment. It is precisely because the model was paid for by the owners themselves that a feeling of ownership emerged: the Lageweg was increasingly their own project.

The financial model tests the financial feasibility of the coalition project. It is combined with the development of a spatial model that makes it possible to connect all the relevant parameters in the value development. In order to make up that spatial model without already advancing a well-defined master plan, we evoked the results of the previous rounds: the ambition groups, the case studies, the scenarios discussed around the interactive model, etc.

The financial model was tailored to this assignment with as its basic principle a distinction between the urbanistic cluster and the operational cluster. The *urbanistic cluster* contains the plots or parts of plots that can form a spatially cohesive whole. Per plot it is possible to determine what percentage will be part of what cluster (e.g. 50 % residential-work area, 50 % park). Each urbanistic cluster is assigned one data set that resulted from the research by design. Among others, that data set contains the surface distribution between residential space, storage and manufacturing, offices, retail, public facilities, public space and parking spaces. The redevelopment cost was also calculated. Per cluster, a phasing over time can also be introduced. The *operational cluster* contains the plots or parts of plots that are subject to a multi-plot development, i.e. for

which a land bank or comparable partnership is being set up. During the pilot project, the operational cluster always contained the complete project area, but this can possibly be adapted in the future to sub-areas.

Using different typologies we built up contact with important parameters such as the FAR (floor area ratio, which describes the authorized density), the percentage of green space or the percentage of residential area. For this we made extensive use of the input from the mind-opening dialogues. The references quoted by the consultancy and the involved parties were tested on the project area and their feasibility was evaluated collectively. The cited shortages of functions in the project area were integrated too. The design exercises that were shown during the design table on the interactive model were a starting point for the throwaway master plans that were drawn up in the financial-spatial model.

The make-up of the spatial models was a study of possibilities, not of a single feasible result. First we jointly selected nine possible throwaway master plans, of which the research team and the research-by-design team of the city elaborated two more: the 'integrated model' and the 'green Z movement'. The designs were deliberately called 'throwaway master plans' since their purpose was to generate insight into the spatial and financial conditions and not to be further developed as definitive master plans.

In both scenarios, we had a look at the complete project area. This enabled us to illustrate the value added of the collaboration. We then compared the scenarios with the value added that could be generated in a stand-alone scenario, where owners limit themselves to development within their own plot limits, where the existing zoning designations remained unchanged. In the scenarios relating to 'integrated clusters' and 'green Z movement', abstraction was made of the current designation.



The financial model showed that every landowner will benefit to a greater or lesser extent from the development of a coalition. The financial expert explained this by means of the possibility of making assessments in a multi-plot development that optimize the investment. The following assessments were identified:

Assessing the cost of decontamination and the cost of development

The soil contamination on the site was integrated in the spatial scenario by, for instance, leaving undeveloped the pieces of land where the pollution did not pose any risks as long as it was covered by a concrete slab, and transforming them into a skatepark or sports field. Urbanistic or spatial choices therefore have an important impact on the cost of decontamination.

Assessing the construction cost of an underground car park and the clustering of parking places

By developing a larger area, car parks can be clustered smartly and construction costs optimized.

Assessing new development and existing activity

By including existing buildings and activities in the financial model, a more realistic valuation is made of the value-added creation.

Assessing profit creation and phasing

By working together, stakeholders can better respond to the market demand and the newly created offer can be brought onto the market in a phased manner.

Assessing the development of the plot and of the surroundings

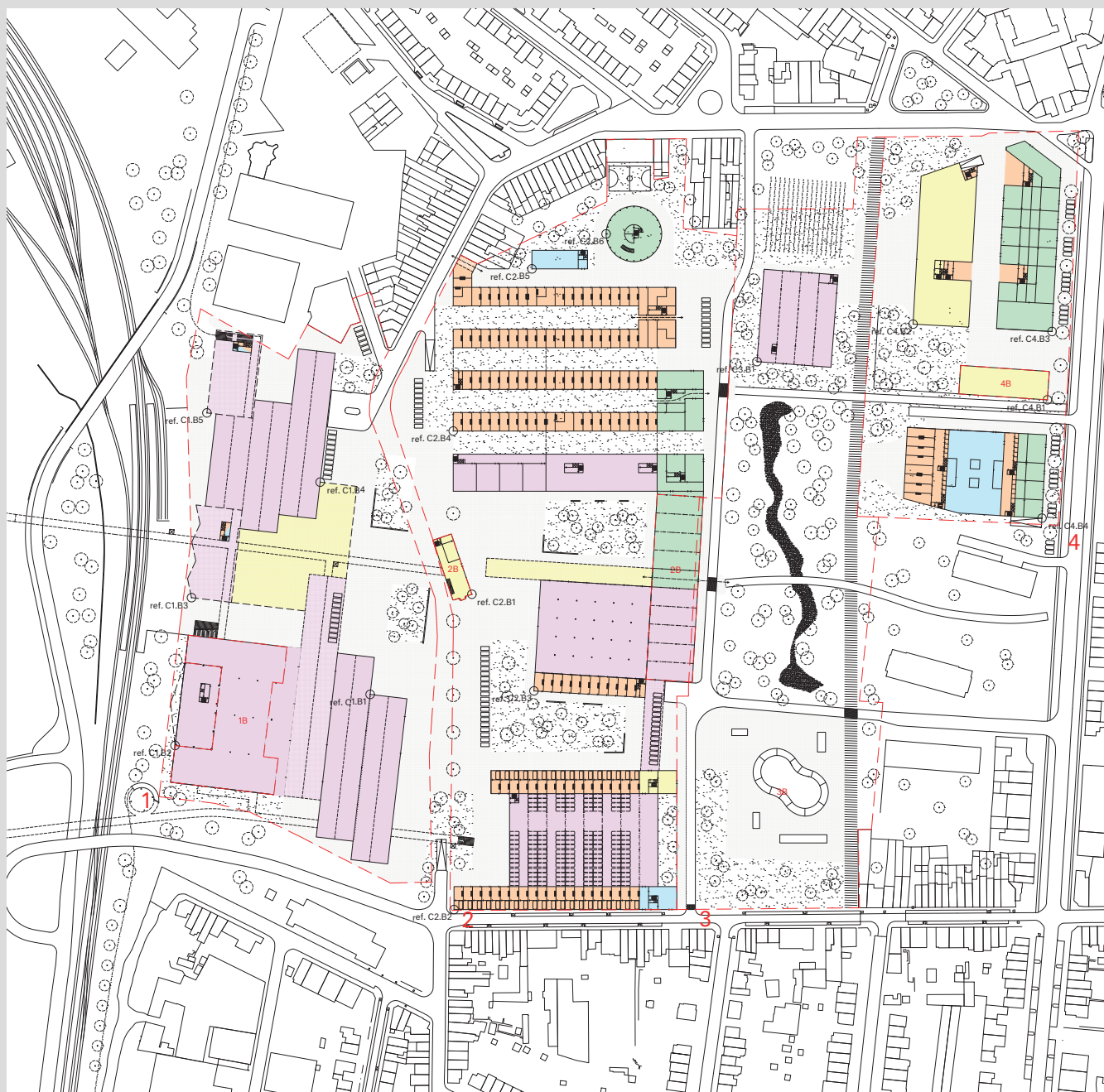
In the coalition development one can better assess what interventions contribute to the improvement of the area, and therefore count on subsidies from the authorities.

We presented the spatial-financial model to the group of landowners during three focus sessions. During the first session we discussed the principle. During the second session we presented the first results. Lastly, the third session was an exercise session to learn how to use the model itself.

There were two sorts of reactions. On the one hand, reactions that went into the assumptions of what had been concretely suggested, such as the percentages of green space, housing and work. A number of owners considered the FAR parameter as the main parameter for the future value creation. The owners' reactions illustrated the difficulty of looking at the whole as a system instead of concentrating on a single sub-element in making potential decisions. On the other hand, there were a number of questions around the willingness of some partners to get on board the communal project. Namely, from the start, the representative of the owner of a large plot in the area did not think in that direction. In his absence, the voices of the other owners came to the surface to stimulate cooperation from that owner via a coalition among them.

'It is precisely because the model was paid for by the owners themselves that a feeling of ownership emerged: the Lageweg was increasingly their own project.'

The two throwaway master plans



The 'integrated clusters' scenario consists of four urban-development clusters:

- 1 A zone with company buildings and residential towers along the railway, in which the company buildings benefit from the excellent accessibility from the railway and the proximity of the city, and the towers benefit from the view over the Hoboken Polder and the green industrial zone Blue Gate Antwerp.
- 2 A residential and work environment in which small-scale work opportunities (crafts) are combined with housing.
- 3 A generous park environment on the scale of the entire neighbourhood.
- 4 A new residential environment with facilities and a broad school.



- 1 An industrial zone along the railway.
- 2 A residential zone with small-scale development in relation with the Portugesehof area.
- 3 A combination of company buildings and residential buildings along the railway.
- 4 A green, predominantly residential development with the completion of the existing blocks.
- 5 A zone for work and facilities in the vicinity of the park.
- 6 A green zone on the scale of the area.

Design in consultation

Freek Persyn — 51N4E

The Lageweg is characterized by a great diversity of plots, types of use and types of owners. That makes the assignment for the redevelopment very different from a traditional *brownfield* development. When redeveloping a military hospital or an abandoned mining site, we can count on a complete change of functions. With the Lageweg, however, it is not just about a change from one monofunctional function to another, but about the revitalization of a hybrid area.

The biggest challenge of the Lageweg pilot project consists in dealing with that hybrid situation. The high degree of complexity that ensues is not something that we should want to wipe away. We have to learn to deal with functions that are adjacent to one another, influence one another or interact with one another. That is why the assignment consists in interweaving functions and living environments, in bringing about a situation where different uses and users come together.

This can lead to conflict, or at the least to a sort of assessment of how different perspectives and expectations can be realized simultaneously. The design tools play an important role in the assessment process. They make it possible to avoid conflicts or, in other cases, to bend them into something productive.

How can the future work?

It is often thought that the interweaving of functions is only possible by avoiding conflicts, and therefore by keeping sufficient distance or providing for a buffer between the various functions. In the twentieth-century belt of Antwerp, however, the buffers have virtually all been used up. That forces us to mobilize the zones differently. If the city still wishes to use the scarce space that it has, then it is crucial to rethink collective living and working. Here in lie a lot of opportunities – opportunities to reactivate lands that have

fallen into disuse, opportunities to bring about shorter chains, opportunities to better interweave training and work or work and housing.

The assignment has therefore changed. Interwovenness is high on the agenda. That means that the design in this context is different than the design of a monofunctional brownfield. With the latter, the strategy generally consists in sketching as sharp a vision of the future as possible that will serve as a catalyst or indicator for the new development. Such images naturally have a binding power, and yet that approach faces a lot of obstacles: the level of complexity is too high, the conditions are too multifaceted, the interpretation too lopsided or not evolutive enough. With the Lageweg, we have not only attempted to sketch a vision for the future, but also to bring into focus the underlying complexity of that future vision.

Ten owners are intensively involved in the preparatory process of the Lageweg, each with their own outlook and expectations. The design is a means to try out the idea of interwovenness among the various partners. What does interwovenness mean from the perspective of the inhabitant, the entrepreneur, the investor, education, public space, mobility, etc.? Rather than being about the design trying to 'wear out' a future, it is about gradually collecting arguments and qualities. The design and dialogue process shows what interwovenness can imply, how it can work and how it can provide quality and coherence to the area.

The design and dialogue process did not start out from one clear ideal of how the future could look. It is rather about the gradual focusing of different intentions. They are tested step by step on the basis of a number of hypotheses, and subsequently communicated and shared with a growing group of people. In the design and the accompanying discussions, we are always looking for the tension between what the site is today and what it could become.

In this way both ambitions and obstacles come clearly into view. As a result, a position can be taken and a possible engagement tested. That approach makes it possible to experience shared potential. The proactive force of design is mobilized to actively challenge various parameters and in that clarify obstructions and open them up for discussion.

Progressive insight emerges in the process about how a more interwoven future could work. The insight emerges among both the process owners (city, process manager, designer) and the future users (in the first instance and in this phase of the dialogue process, mainly the owners). With this, the course of the process is characterized by a series of moments whereby experiences and chances are shared, so that trust gradually also grows.

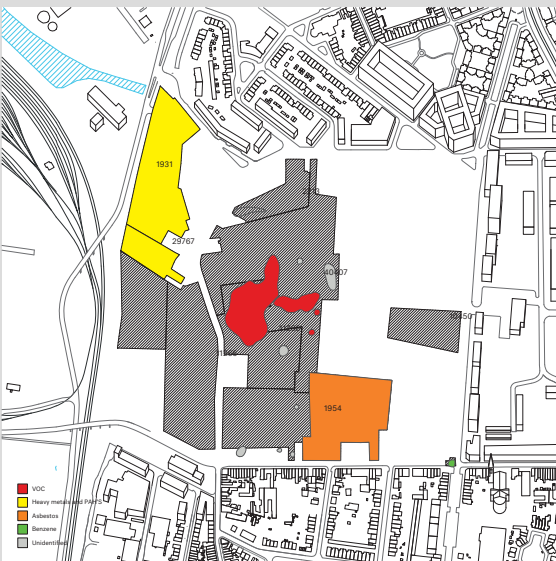
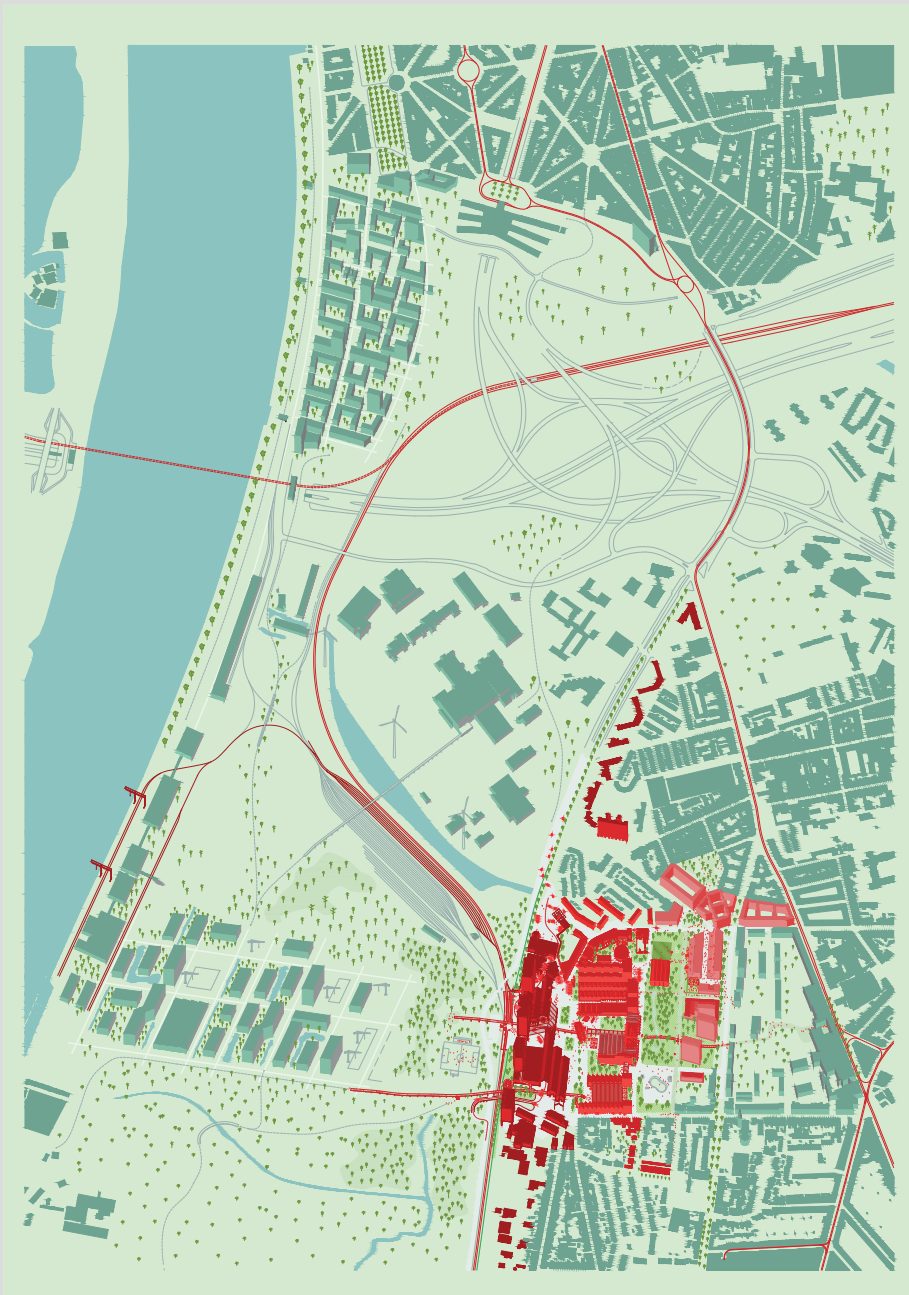
Making room in order to discover together

The discussion with the different parties becomes manageable thanks to intense tuning between design and consultation. The dialogue is made possible by breaking up the process in simple, graspable steps, and thus as it were by each time creating windows onto a manageable sub-aspect. This does not prevent the complexity from being evoked each time, in order to bring to light tensions but also possible syntheses.

The sharp lines of approach also make it possible for people to introduce their knowledge in a very targeted manner, to be invited to contribute to a common frame of reference and no longer only from their own frame of reference. To make that possible, precise information is systematically combined in the various design sessions with more qualitative appreciations. By visualizing the hypotheses gradually and by pushing them forward, it is also possible to see what people disagree on.

The representative power of the design reveals possibilities and brings the reality closer. It ensures that people

‘Working on something together has a real impact: working together creates a feeling of cohesion.’





‘Paper models, technical reports, photomontages or sketches also trigger different reactions and stimulate different ways of thinking. Representation relies therefore also on the right choice of format.’



can share their insights or reactions more rapidly. Paper models, technical reports, photomontages or sketches also trigger different reactions and stimulate different ways of thinking. The right choice of *format* is therefore also very important. The chosen *format* can emphasize the seriousness of something or, conversely, the sketchiness of a study. The difference in status and form of the various design instruments makes it possible to introduce immediately a lot of nuance and layeredness into the discussion in a tactile, implicit manner. It is not just about building up information, but also about creating feelings and perception, such as curiosity, pride and entrepreneurship.

The point is therefore not that the involved parties per se have to pick up their pen themselves, as the cliché often goes (or as the designer often fears). It is rather about structuring the design material in such a way that the participants are able to make assessments, about being able to push forward the design so that the underlying reasons for a certain choice can be validated.

In the Lageweg pilot project, with its many involved parties, each with its own time frame in mind, the future scenarios with differing deadlines are an example of a *format* that pushes forward both a common development framework as well as a series of variations that are understandable and tangible for each of the participants. That kind of clear *format* makes it possible to create a clearly delimited playing field, with (temporarily) acceptable rules. It makes it possible not to sweep away the complexity, but to make it accessible and manageable.

Reframing

To try out the idea of production in the city, it is important to actively challenge the various parameters and to involve them in a design: so, not only spatial, but also financial, economic and social logics. The values added that can be

found are often located outside one's own plot. Searching, testing and finding the right connections is a permanent exercise of zooming in and out, in order to bring to light the various interdependencies by means of hypotheses. That goes beyond finding *one* particular solution for *one* problem, but requires the redefinition of qualities and measurements. It is through such a *reframing* that profits can be found in the act of interweaving.

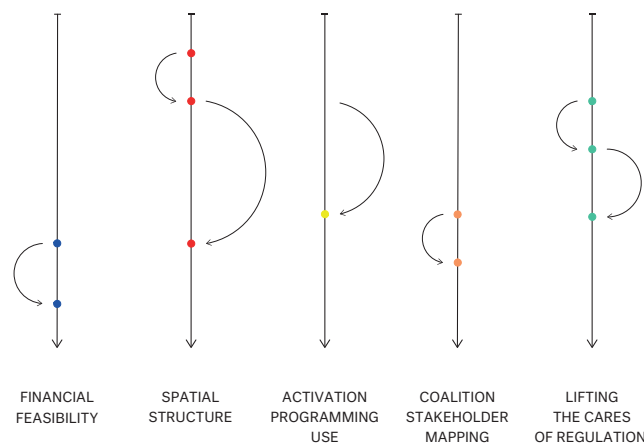
Reframing requires that sufficient elements are on the table that can be brought into contact with one another in various manners. That happens among others through the *design tables*, which combine several frames of reference from the place itself in Hoboken to the scale of Antwerp as a whole. Combined with external *benchmarks*, this makes it possible to clarify opportunities and obstructions and open them up for discussion. These external references are interpreted both in terms of figures and in terms of user quality. A combination emerges of a quantitative and qualitative assessment, and the examples are always paired with their impact, with a verifiable and feasible list of wishes.

Rapidly building up and sharing knowledge together

The role of the design (and the designer) in the dialogue processes consists in stimulating collaboration and in grasping and connecting one's own insights and those of others. The goal of the design is to generate, collect and organize information and knowledge together. Simply keeping note of all the information – regardless of who provides it – and keeping it in a way that is well organized already makes a big difference. The design is not only the creation of a synthesis, but functions also as a sort of open database that is fed methodically, where the designer not only assumes responsibility for his own knowledge, but also for the knowledge (and choices) of others.

Parallel connection outline

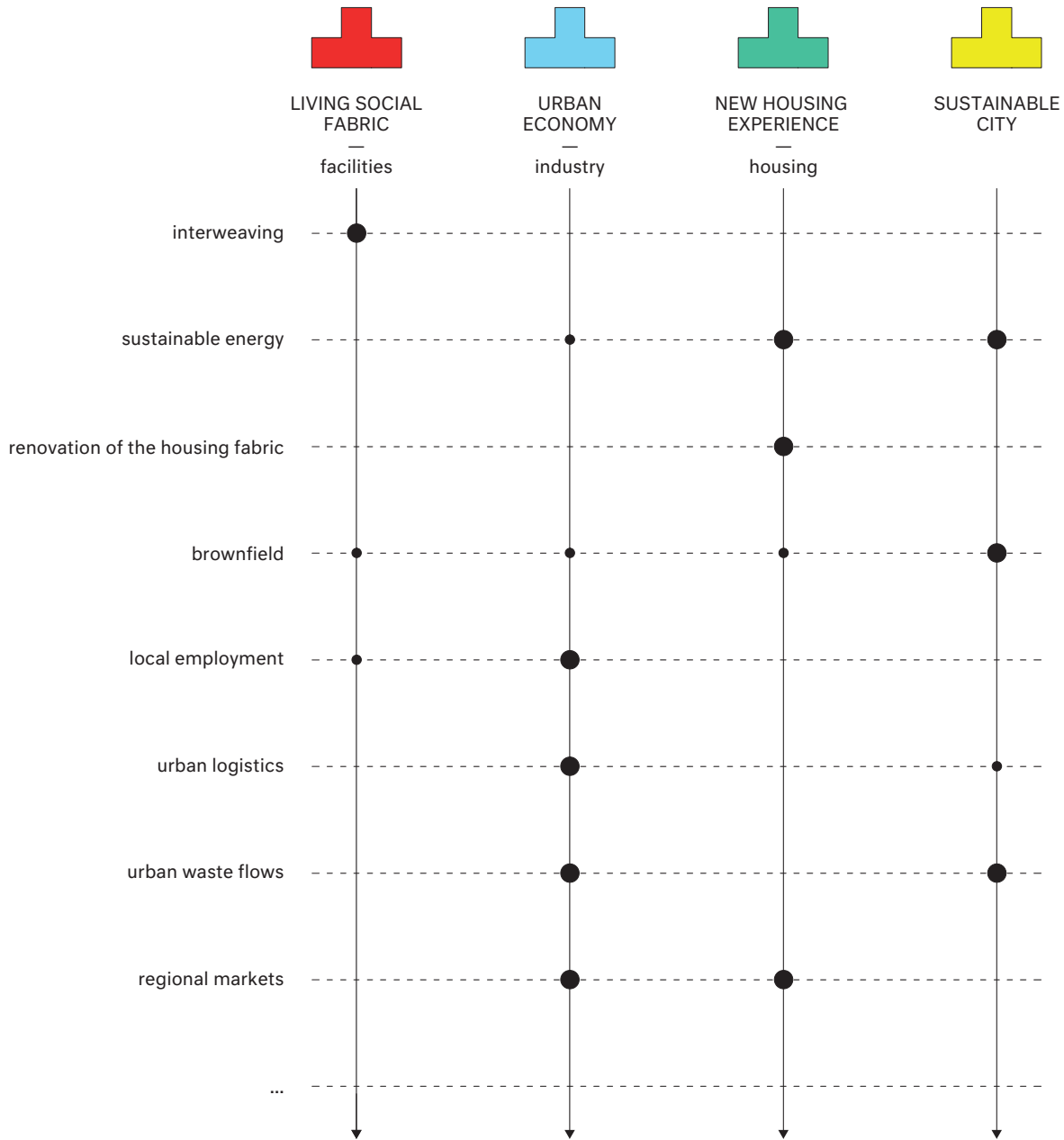
COALITION DEVELOPMENT THANKS TO ONGOING PROCESS EVOLUTION





Schematic representation of four ambition groups (horizontally) and four levels of ambition (vertically), discussed individually with different owners and partners via the method of the mind-opening dialogues

AMBITION GROUP



Matrix representing various parameters
per ambition group

Keeping track of the situation and suggesting possible syntheses is a role of crucial importance. It is as much a question of visualization as it is of bringing into a common frame various and diverse information. It can be summed up as a critical evaluation process, whereby the question is returned, as it were: 'is this what you mean?' By visualizing and 'reflecting' the insights purposefully and precisely, a play of action and reaction emerges that makes it possible to create progressive insight rapidly. The dialogue is about jointly discovering what could work, and what choices and aspects find support.

The choice in information occurs by assessing them with regard to the most ambitious, workable proposal. It is about creating a commonly supported frame, which works less as a master plan and more as a shared frame. In the case of the Lageweg pilot project, the search for a redefinition of the area is also the search for partners (or a coalition of partners) that believe in redefinition and want to support it as a project. Today the Lageweg has not yet reached that phase where a project has been defined. And yet the 'idea' that a project is possible and appealing is taking root and beginning to bloom. That is a crucial phase of each redevelopment project and that is also what makes the pilot project so exciting. The dialogue process is a search to design *together* both the question (the choice of direction) and the coalition (the entrepreneur or developer).

That belief is also fed by the concrete trying and testing, by the 'designing'. By producing and sharing knowledge together, not only does knowledge emerge, but a connection with the knowledge is also created: one can stand behind it and feel related to it. With the Lageweg, the approach – due to circumstances – was still insufficiently focused on the activation of the site itself. The experience on site can play an even bigger role in order to change the perspective on the place by creating concrete experiences

and activating a fabric of actors and users. But independently of that, it is clear that 'working on something' together has a real impact: working together creates a feeling of cohesion. Building a coalition is therefore also a concrete result of working on something together.

All the same, the quest for self-organization on the Lageweg is precarious. Although the properties are fragmented and the city does not own any property (with the exception of a small share via AG VESPA), a situation has nevertheless emerged where various owners have jointly supported and made possible an initiative. The common investment by the group of owners in the make-up of the financial model is promising for the future. It shows that stimulating self-organization can be a way in which the authorities and citizens can work together on the future of the city.

'The common investment by the group of owners in the make-up of the financial model is promising for the future. It demonstrates that the stimulation of self-organization can be a way in which the authorities and citizens can work together on the future of the city.'

Co-creation. Building up collaborative intelligence

Jan de Visch — Connect&Transform

The Lageweg is characterized by a complex urban fabric and a tangle of stakeholders and actors. How are we to deal with such a complex urban project? We proposed a *co-creative approach*. From the start we gathered around the table as wide as possible a field of actors and experts: owners, project developers, city services, inhabitants, civil-society organizations and academic institutes.

In a classic urban renewal project, one generally follows a linear process. In such a process, various zones are managed separately by various services or instances. To avoid problems, the instances try to keep contact between the properties but also between the various sectors as minimal as possible. This has the advantage that it makes it easier to communicate the process to the different actors and stakeholders. This approach also has a lot of disadvantages, such as missed opportunities, a lot of stumbling blocks and, as a result, often substantial delays too. A good example of this is soil decontamination. Decontamination is often perceived as a technical problem that emerges at the end of the planning process as an independent study. Contact with the stakeholders and actors is minimal.

A co-creative approach strives after an iterative development process. Themes are picked up repeatedly, the potential comes into view better, and choices are increasingly refined. The co-creative approach is a way of interweaving thinking and acting. The challenge consists in connecting the various parties and inciting them to a common collaboration. This generates a shared and common basis.

In a co-creative approach, the input of experts and bodies runs parallel to the input of social actors. This offers a lot of advantages. On the Lageweg, the problem of decontamination came up for discussion very early on in the process. That generates transparency for all owners and reveals unsuspected possibilities. For instance, one

‘In the design you make clear that the space is limited and that choices have to be made.’

can choose to keep a concrete layer above a zone in need of decontamination and to arrange the place as a paved playground. This saves decontamination costs and time.

The search for a new process

How can we deal with the site's complexity? How can we show and communicate that complexity? What concepts can we use to stimulate the formation of a vision? How can we substantiate the insight that taking a multi-plot approach can lead to results of greater quality? How can we bring each of the actors to show understanding for the perspectives of the others?

We devised a range of methods in order to pair the classic 'expert logic' with a 'change logic'. In an *expert logic*, a subject is viewed from the perspective of the expert who considers his perspective as the only 'right' one. A notion such as 'quality' is interpreted in various ways by different experts, each from their own frame of reference. In a *change logic*, by contrast, the involved stakeholders strive to clarify the great variety of perspectives in order to find a number of common themes in the plurality. One does not start out here from a single 'right' truth, but from the potential to transcend the various simple (expert) perspectives.

An important challenge in this was to represent the future possibilities and to use them to improve the quality of the dialogue between the stakeholders. That is why we supplemented the traditional role of the process managers with three new roles: a connecting role, a transcending role, and a role of stimulating a common action.

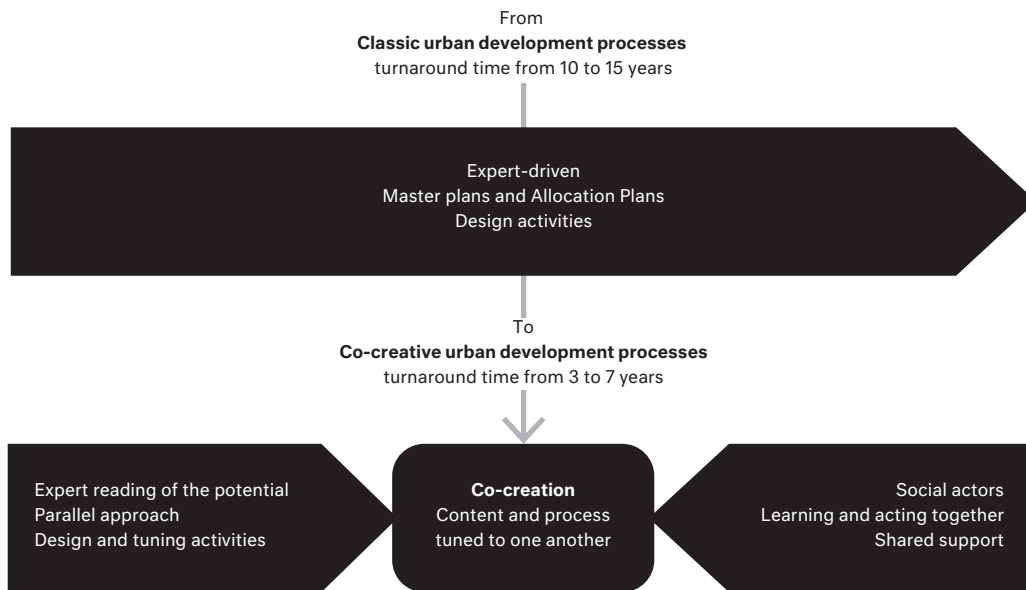
The connecting role

The connecting role means that you help all parties find a connection with the project. This can happen, for instance, by distinguishing levels of ambition in your proposals as a

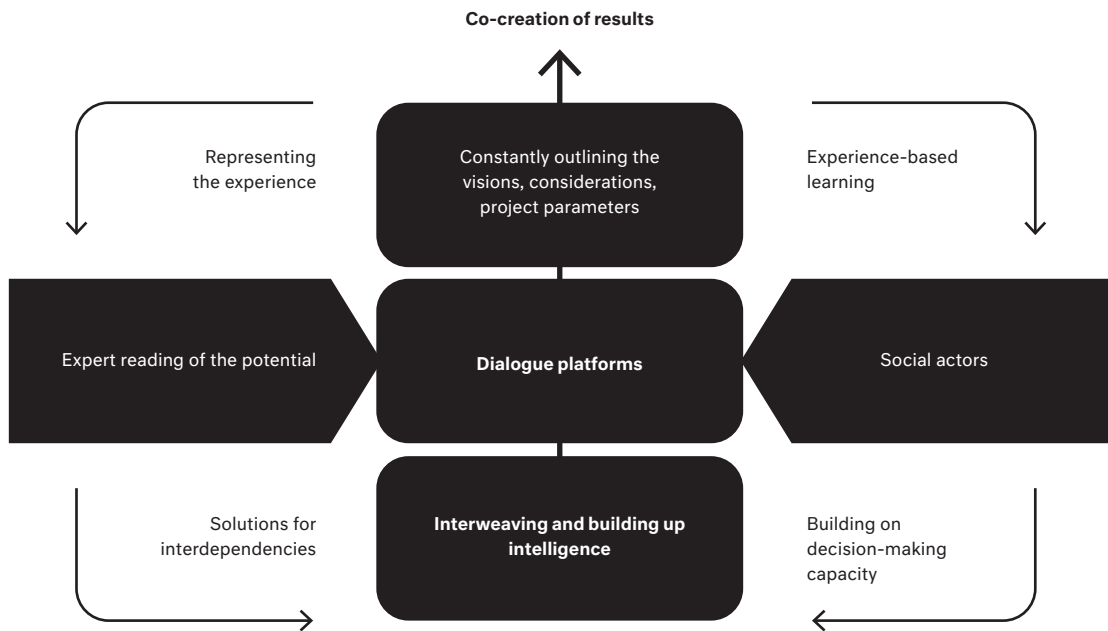
starting point for a dialogue that stimulates the reflection of the involved parties. You can represent a theme such as 'sustainability', for example, on a 'basic level' (depicting how buildings, materials and infrastructure can be reused), on a 'sharing level' (showing how creative and far you can go in sharing space and infrastructure) and on an 'anchoring level' (showing how, by designing things in relation, you can achieve mutually reinforcing interventions). That makes it possible to discover around which future qualities the broadest consensus can be built up. The parties concerned then gradually discover the mutual dependencies and the complexity of an urban project.

Thanks to the connecting capacity of the designing, it becomes possible to integrate specializations in a coherent whole. In the design you make clear that the space is limited and that choices have to be made. The design also shows the potential of the interactions between the various stakeholders or users. On the Lageweg, for instance, the school could deliver workforces to the companies on the site. For their part, the companies could offer internships and in that way guarantee the flow of students to the work market.

A number of things are essential if these connections are to succeed. Firstly, we sought a balance between the discussion on the content and the discussion on the process. In a classic design process, the content-related aspects of the proposals are especially discussed. But by also involving the various parties in the 'how', they gradually grow towards one another. Secondly, we organized the interaction processes. Interaction supposes more than just reacting to something. The use of all sorts of conversation techniques influenced the way in which the dialogue developed. In this way we could avoid that opposite standpoints blocked the discussion.



Co-creation as an iterative process



The essence of co-creation

Opposite opinions could continue to exist. They were made manageable, for instance, by switching temporarily to other themes, in order to then return to earlier differences from a brand-new perspective. In order to be able to grasp all chances, we spent a lot of time preparing the meeting scenarios. This required intense consultation about the way and the order in which the themes were introduced, the sequence and the method of presenting the question, how we dealt with the absentees, what level of consensus we were striving after, etc. When, for instance, new experts were invited to a meeting with the stakeholders, those experts always had to get used to the animated discussion. They initially saw this as a failure of the coalition, but after a while it was clear that expressing opinions offers the opportunity to take them into account and to arrive at solutions, as a result of which progress can be made faster.

The transcending role

With the transcending role it is important to create more encompassing perspectives. All parties involved have an idea of how the surroundings could change. Some owners generally think in this respect in a very concrete manner, from a limited number of parameters (e.g. sale price per m², or FAR) or from the perspective of their own profit maximization. The essence of the transcending role consists in transcending the initial focus on one's own interest and on one's own plot. By thinking from the perspective of the broader whole or of the general interest, a framework can emerge in which to discuss various related ideas and optimizations.

For this purpose we used, for instance, the instrument of the mind-opening dialogues: open, individual discussions in which we searched for the owner's ambitions, and in which we tried to raise those ambitions to a higher level.

Only later did the different owners come together during a first collective moment. Thanks to the initial mind-opening dialogues, everyone was ready to engage in the discussion from a much broader perspective.

The role of stimulating a common action

We found it important to explore very early on in the process what common initiatives were possible. Shared experiences and teamwork are necessary to create trust, especially in a context where openness and transparency are not obvious. Shared action also offers the leverage by which to tune the individual perspective to the common perspective. We devoted a lot of time to the signing of the statement of engagement, in which each of the parties committed himself to help finance a part of the process, namely the make-up of the financial model. This led to an increase in the number of dialogues between the owners and greater attention and involvement at the meetings. We saw the act of *doing things together*, such as the statement of engagement and the site safari, as a condition so as to be sufficiently strong as a group later in the process and to deal successfully with natural fields of tension that could surface during the realization of parts of the project.

From master plan to throwaway master plan

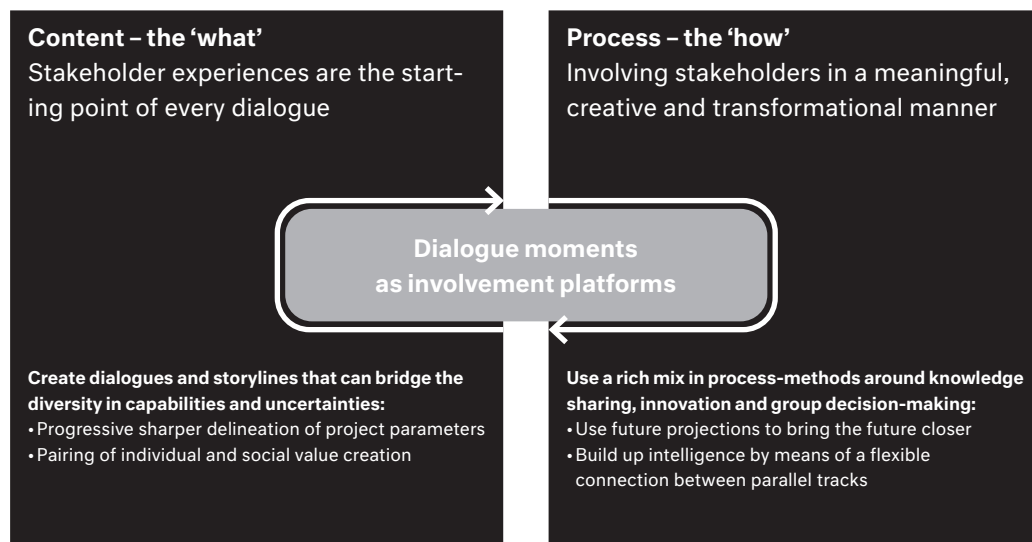
The co-creative approach is not yet finished in the Lageweg pilot project. In the definitive spatial model, some 'margin' can be anticipated to encourage parties to work together constructively and to attune the decisions mutually. Instead of talking about a definitive and clear-cut master plan, that is why we prefer the term *throwaway master plan*. This is an instrument used to interpret a master plan in a new manner. If you develop a vision univocally

'Interaction supposes more than just reacting to something. Opposite opinions could continue to exist.'

– regarding space, content or process – and approach it linearly, this leads in many cases to resistance. In the margin it is possible to keep sharing suppositions, traces of solutions, to arrive at richer and better integrated solutions and to gain implementation speed.

The Lageweg pilot project is mainly a search for the right balance between content and process, between individual and common perspectives, between singular solutions and cohesion, between the short and long term. Building up a collaborative intelligence is one of the most important building blocks to create possibilities in complex environments like the Lageweg. A traditional approach would possibly take a lot more time here, before ultimately foundering on not very satisfactory results.

‘A traditional approach would possibly take a lot more time here, before ultimately foundering on not very satisfactory results.’



The essence of co-creation

The make-up of the financial model

Jan Verheyen
— RebelGroup Advisory Belgium

The site of the Lageweg is highly complex. The area has a fanciful plot structure. Some plots are enclosed and difficult to access. There is a wide range of buildings, and moreover of diverging quality. Some soils are contaminated. The area is also characterized by a strong mix of functions. Some functions still have a place there, while other activities are dying out.

When we were asked to draw up the financial model in collaboration with the owners, I was at first rather sceptical. There is a risk with such a commission that the process rapidly degenerates, resulting in a negative atmosphere or even in a situation of conflict. I initially assumed that the city of Antwerp was indulging in some wishful thinking. But I was quite surprised when I first came into contact with the owners concerned.

Despite their diverging agendas, a very positive atmosphere immediately emerged around a potential collaboration. Some stakeholders wanted to join in very intensively, others were willing to work along but preferably within a simple structure. We could build on the good work that the city of Antwerp, 51N4E and Connect&Transform had already done. My first impression was that there was a real desire to succeed among stakeholders.

Learning process

Given the complexity of the site, there was of course also talk of a more or less forced collaboration. Although not all stakeholders felt the same need to collaborate, and although a number of them could play their game well even without collaborating, collaboration was necessary to achieve a potential change of function for the site. It soon became clear that, by working together, new opportunities were generated for all stakeholders. The owners' desire to retain control created a value added that can be invested in the area itself. In other words, the capital will not vanish

‘The owners’ desire to retain control created a value added that can be invested in the area itself.’

into the pockets of one or other anonymous project developer who, once the development is completed, withdraws from the region.

When we began developing the calculation model, we did not yet have at our disposal a concrete project or a specific structure for the project area. Only during the make-up of the calculation model did the pressure to start drawing and designing make itself felt. There were nine possible spatial concepts on the table. 51N4E and the research-by-design team of the city of Antwerp elaborated two of these spatial concepts in so-called throwaway master plans. Thanks to the method of the 'throwaway master plans', we were able to simplify radically the complex situation. We could demonstrate that the Lageweg pilot project is an interesting story with a clear structure and that the process could move forward relatively quickly. The calculation model offered a first foundation on the basis of which everyone could take further decisions.

I saw three roles reserved for RebelGroup in the Lageweg pilot project. Firstly, we faced the task of drawing up the financial model that, during the planning process, was meant to make the value development visible for the owners in an interactive manner. Secondly, the calculation model had to speed up the development. In practice, we see that master plans, once they have been calculated financially, have to be renegotiated. By initiating the calculation model in an early stage already, we ensure that there is financial transparency from the start and that the spatial feasibility is put to the test. Lastly, our task consisted in giving people insight into the financial aspect of the planning process. You can see it as a learning process.

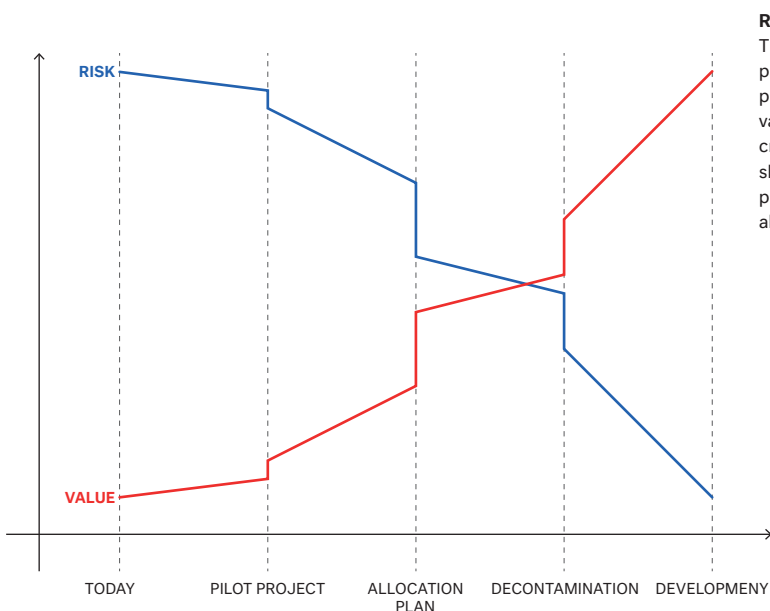
Land bank

The financial model was made up after the model of a 'land bank', a collaboration model in the form of a com-

pany whose shareholders are the landowners. The shares structure reflects the relative value of the various properties. In principle, little or no cash is injected in a land bank. The capital consists of the property assets. That option offers several advantages. It ties in with the owners' desire to remain in control and to enjoy the ensuing value added. Here too, despite the early stage of the project, we took into account from the start the financing and accounting aspects of a project development. The land value that will emerge for the owners is therefore the realized value of the cash that can be paid out to the shareholders in the course of the project. The realization of the value must happen with a specific demand for return. In the context of the Lageweg, the demand for return evolves with the project development. The risk is methodically cut back by the creation of (legal) certainty, among others by concluding a partnership agreement, the preparation of a master plan or the granting of an allocation plan (RUP) by the city of Antwerp.

An important unknown today is the current value of the properties and lands. It is after all key for the relations in the land bank. In a greenfield development, this is rarely a problem. There the value is generally directly proportional to the area. In an urban context, with different use, soil composition and function, value development is a lot more complex. One of the next steps will therefore also have to be to achieve among owners an 'objectified' valuation. All owners must agree on the starting point of the valuation.

The properties are so heterogeneous in terms of physical state and so dependent on the definitive project in terms of value that it is difficult to start drawing the master plan without a starting reference. However, if you do not determine anything now, it will be all the more difficult to do so at a later stage, and there will be a risk of speculation or disagreement among owners. There is also a risk



Risk evolution

There is a lot of uncertainty at the start of the project and there are high risk margins. As the project evolves, the risk decreases and the financial value rises. The risk is methodically cut back by the creation of (legal) certainty: concluding a partnership agreement, the creation of a land bank, the preparation of a master plan or the granting of an allocation plan (RUP) by the city of Antwerp, etc.

of speculation if the development occurs for third parties, such as developers without any further interests in the area. The starting values would become higher and higher. To calculate the starting values, one can make a sharp distinction between land and buildings. The land falls into two categories, namely an industrial zone and a residential zone. As a result, there are a number of plots with negative values because of the decontamination obligation and a number of plots with negative values because they are enclosed by other plots and buildings. The valuation must happen before the master plan is drafted. Otherwise this will perhaps lead to a fragmentation of the collaboration and the process will incur delays.

Because the financial model was prepared in an early phase of the development, each parameter raised new questions. What is the feasibility of the proposed programme? Is it necessary to retain so much economic activity on the site while the construction of housing could yield a bigger profit? What about parking places or offices? These questions generated uncertainties, even after the make-up of the financial model. We do not yet know in fact what stakeholders and owners will take part, and there is as yet no operational structure either.

In the basic scenarios, the unit of account for the valuation was always the plot itself. But the objective of the calculation model is to arrive at a multi-plot design process and calculation model by means of drawings and calculations. The multi-plot approach offers a clear value added. The sum of the parts is greater than the parts individually. Of course, as the pilot project progresses, we will of course evolve from this first calculation model to a more complex one. I hope that the first calculation model has not created any false expectations. It might perhaps be necessary to make a new calculation model when the project becomes more intricate.

‘I hope that the first calculation model has not created any false expectations. It might perhaps be necessary to make a new calculation model when the project becomes more intricate.’

The potential of the soil

Peter Van den Bossche — Witteveen+Bos

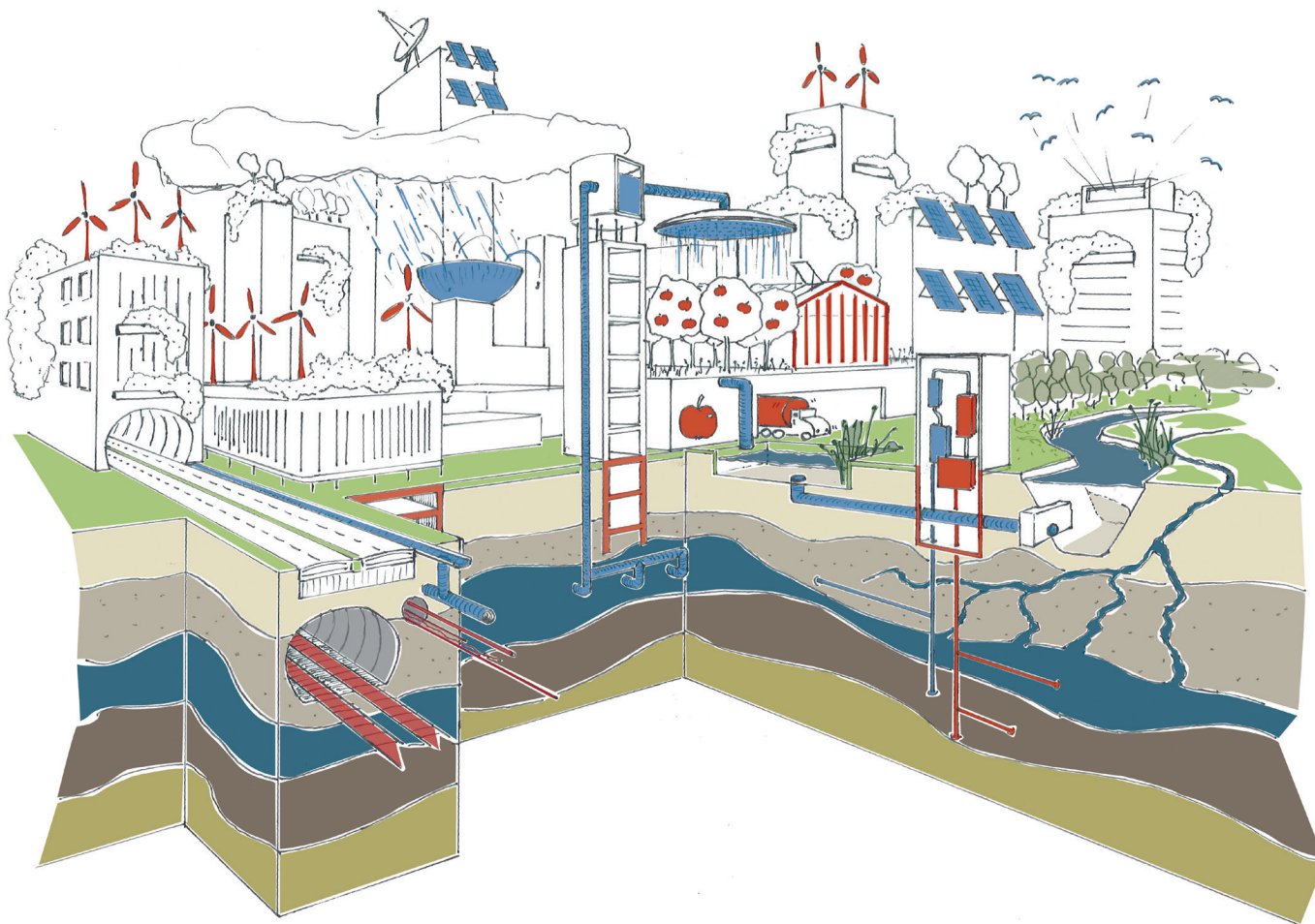
The ground beneath our feet is being used more and more intensively. Several functions are realised underground to make our living environment more attractive, to offer comfort or to prevent nuisances. And yet in development projects the underground is often insufficiently used or protected.

The classic, sectoral and linear approach often leads to a less than optimal use of the soil. The soil is only looked at late in the development process, and this, while important chances for sustainable development can be discovered in an integral and circular approach. Sometimes, soil, energy or sustainability workers draw attention to these chances, but it is difficult to convince developers, planners, area managers and administrators of this.

In a classic redevelopment project, the spatial idea is already determined before even reflecting on the optimization of the soil. Even though one generally starts from the separate plots and principals without agreeing on where you want to go with the entire block. Involving the soil functions makes it possible to pair the various plots, owners and uses. The early involvement of soil aspects within the spatial planning and area development also offers chances to increase the sustainability of soil management and soil decontamination. The earlier the involvement, the greater the influence on sustainability. Since chances and limitations of the soil can be combined with numerous social assignments and ambitions.

The soil is a barrel full of chances

For the Lageweg pilot project, we first mapped out the soil functions. We inventoried all soil facets and examined what ambitions and visions for the future existence for the area. On the basis of this information, it soon became clear what advantages – or ‘quick wins’ – could be gained on a financial level or in terms of sustainability. We then



The soil as opportunity

**‘We see the area as an ecosystem,
a combination of material flows, water,
energy, nature and human activity.
That means thinking in cycles and
short chains.’**

visualized the various soil facets on a map. That led to the insight as to where the challenges and opportunities lay precisely. Lastly, we ordered these chances qualitatively and quantitatively. What are the possible costs and benefits (and who are the losers and beneficiaries) in relation to the assignments and the budget?

To communicate the analysis to the local residents and stakeholders, we took part in the site safari. The tour for local residents and stakeholders provided insight into the redevelopment possibilities. At various places within the area we gave concrete explanations regarding the various soil functions, soil decontamination or leftover contamination, and we shed light on the impact of a possible redevelopment.

The expertise of Witteveen+Bos was also enlisted for the make-up of the financial calculation model. The soil was included in the calculation model early on already as a parameter. The future situation will make optimal use of the present soil functions such as soil energy, closed soil balance, sustainability and circular economy. The financial model takes into account those future functions, with a time span and optimizations of one, five and twenty years, respectively.

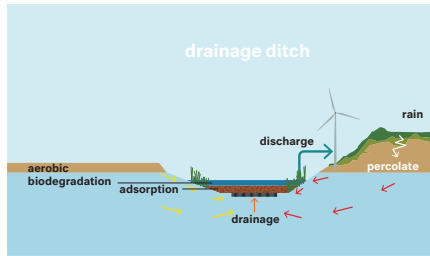
The Lageweg pilot project is unique because, in an early phase already, it focuses the above-ground developments on the possibilities of the subsoil. The approach according to the principles of the circular area development makes it possible to better tune the various functions to one another, both above and below ground. This means that we have to relinquish the classic, linear, economic logic. We must consider the area by contrast as a metabolism of material flows, water, energy, nature and human activity. That means thinking in cycles and short chains both above and below ground.

‘The Lageweg pilot project is unique because, in an early phase already, it focuses the above-ground developments on the possibilities of the subsoil.’



1. Ground currents and construction materials

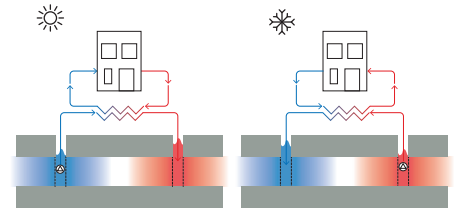
Much profit can be made by striving as much as possible after a closed soil balance and the reuse of construction materials and existing buildings within the block or area. Soil that must be excavated can be used within the area for an embankment, for instance.



2. Soil quality

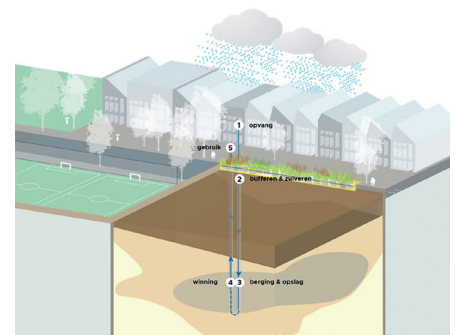
The Lageweg currently has different function types and activities: industry, green zone, leisure and residential zone. These activities demand a specific soil quality. In the area today there are different immobile (e.g. heavy metals) and mobile (e.g. benzene and chlorinated solvents) soil contaminants present. Different decontamination files are already open in the Lageweg with different contamination aspects. The decontamination is integrated in the future redevelopment, taking into account terms of 1, 5 and 20 years.

For the existing groundwater plume of chlorinated hydrocarbons, the principle of the 'natural catch' can be applied (e.g. by digging a ditch in the lower-lying areas).



3. Soil energy

A soil heat-exchanger system makes use of the soil for the supply of heat or cold or possibly to store energy. The cold can be used directly in homes. Using a water pump, heat can be raised to a higher temperature level for heating.



4. Water storage and infiltration ability

Since the area is low-lying, attention is devoted to the soil's ability to store and infiltrate water. The soil has the ability to store water under the surface level in a natural manner. For this, water must be able to infiltrate.

Welcome to the laboratory for the renewal of urban renewal

Michiel Dehaene — Labo S, UGent

Annette Kuhk — Research group Planning and Development, KU Leuven

Exercises in the *halfway city*

Building the twentieth-century outskirts means building a post-suburban future. Today we are witnessing the end of a long cycle of development that was primarily geared to urban expansion and suburbanization. That old development cycle was fuelled economically by the systematic opening of new plots. The laying of (subsidized) infrastructure turned land into buildable plots. Mortgage deductions and other premiums gave private individuals the means to build on these new plots.

That development logic is slowly dying out. It is partly being curbed. We have gone through the supply of areas that, at the time of the drafting of the comprehensive land use plans from the late 60s, were generously zoned for residential development. The rationality of this development logic is decreasing with each new allotment. The latest residential expansions are further and further away from the city, if not on waterlogged lands. Even the suburban housing ideal is taking a beating. It is based on the nuclear family, on traditional gender roles, on a level career. For whoever remains favourably disposed towards that ideal, there are more than enough already existing suburban houses on offer.

Now that the suburbanization logic is losing speed, its consumptive character is more striking than ever. Everything is there, but little has been invested in lasting infrastructures. Creating a city is more than just 'production'. Urbanity revolves to an important degree around the creation of conditions that mean something in their totality or in their interaction: together in the street, together around a square, a fine combination of functions and people. In brief, an urban environment.

In the suburbs, there is only a sort of urbanity by default. What is grouped together there is often quite diverse and surprising, but there is hardly any coherence. It is an urban

landscape of which the housekeeping is not in order, where substantial building production took place, but where not enough thought has been given to reproduction, care, maintenance, supporting functions and services.

It is never too late to get going on it, and then preferably at those places where we are on the threshold of a more urban organization. The renewal of the twentieth-century belt is the place par excellence where, on condition of additional investments, the leap to urbanity can be made. From a historical point of view, a lot of valuable 'material' has already been collected, but the urban organization is young and incomplete.

The area around the Lageweg is a good example of this. It is a sort of 'halfway city'. All chances are there to recycle, intensify and recombine the historical, half-urban material into a full-fledged urban landscape. The Lageweg forms a perfect practice ground to take that leap. Within the first round of Lab XX, the study by BUUR made clear that the Lageweg could become a strategic junction in a condensed public-transport network. 51N4E's eye was caught by this area because of its coarse grain: the area has not (yet) been completely 'parcelled out', as a result of which it lends itself particularly well to tackling the redevelopment of the suburb in a more integrated fashion.

Accumulating land value and preventing leakage

Such exercises in 'densification' and 'renewal' are central in the programmes of Lab XX and Lab XX_Work. To an important degree, this comes down to the smart use of the land as leverage. Densification always generates a greater land value, which, in the right circumstances, can also yield means to invest in a better, renewed city. Lab XX is an invitation of the government to enter into a discussion with the owners about the sharing of advantages and disadvantages of densification and redevelopment.

If we wish to work in a way aimed at execution and wish to propose feasible solutions, then we ought to reflect on techniques to share value added, to mobilize and keep owners on board, to build up support. But before we can talk about the sharing of value added, value must first be jointly created in the first place.

Urban value (added) is, independently from the profits that may or may not be coupled to it, in the first place use value. That is an old insight from the field of urban theory (Lefebvre 1970, Harvey 1973), but it also holds for each project developer that sets to work in the city today. Without any potential use value, there is no sellable product and no land value. At the same time, and this seems somewhat contradictory, that use value, during a process of urban development, is virtual for a long time. It is all about a *future* use value, and in many cases about the latent tension between the current and the future use value, between what is there already and what will be. A tension also between what is promised and what will actually be realised.

The ensuing uncertainty is not only the consequence of badly organized processes, difficult meetings or poor planning, but is specific to the urbanization process. The uncertainty cannot be raised just like that and only really disappears when the plans have been fully established and actually carried out. Planning revolves in that sense to an important degree around the creation of a regulatory framework that ensures that potential value can be treated as a relative certainty and can therefore also be traded.

The process for the Lageweg is a search for certainty. The assumption in this regard is the following: the greater the transparency, the more intensive the involvement; the greater the insight of all parties, the greater the mutual trust. This also increases the chance that in co-production

'The Lageweg is a sort of *halfway city*. All chances are there to recycle, intensify and recombine the historical, half-urban material into a full-fledged urban landscape.'

between the parties, agreement can be reached about the desired development. But the stake is more than the achievement of a consensus. The Lageweg pilot project wishes to demonstrate how constructive co-production also ensures a *better* project, a higher value which benefits both the city and the owners. The financial model shows that value added can be created with a multi-plot approach, but also that value added flows to owners who take part in the process for longer. By bearing risks together, they are rewarded for their patience and, at the end of the ride, they can scoop up a part of the created value.

The conducted process convincingly shows the chances that can be created via collaboration. But at the same time it introduces a new set of uncertainties. The group of owners seems to be very heterogeneous. While one wishes to develop, another is in no rush. While one is thinking of the value of his building land, another is looking to expand his business. And while one is attached to the area, another is speaking from London on behalf of a company in liquidation. Making those differences visible is not insignificant. It possibly brings us a step closer to identifying those owners who can and want to take a next step together.

Such an exercise confirms the necessity of the authorities' managing role. That role must possibly exist in the first instance to keep the process going, to take the next steps and to limit risks. At the same time, we could do with a public risk analysis, which not only tries to secure the value of the project, but also includes the possibility of directing, of supervising quality and of arriving at an actual realisation. By thinking with owners and investors, we can show how value added is created at the start of a process. We can also demonstrate how value leaks out of a project when uncertainty reigns. Conversely, the moment

the authorities try to lift that uncertainty (e.g. by defining clearly but prematurely the function or planning framework), the greater the chance that owners will sell their positions, and thereby skim off part of the value of the project, without much of a guarantee of actual development by the new owners. There are countless projects where this merry-go-round of public-private negotiation results in a sale, before going around once more with new owners, and then again, until we arrive at the partners who really want to develop.

Preventing value from leaking out in this way is part of the stake of the pilot project. But it is not enough to simply demonstrate the shared interest of owners and authorities. The interests of the authorities and of the owners never fully coincide. And especially: the parties change constantly, as a result of which it is also desirable as an authority not to tie the public fate of a project entirely to the changing coalitions of owners.

Minimal frameworks for the *halfway city*?

In the process description of the Lageweg, the logic employed in the project is set out against the classic master plan: a co-creative process opposite the linear make-up of a blueprint. This contradiction helps the search for new plan forms, how they traditionally come into being and how they were mobilized over the past 20 years in urban renewal, but is at the same time a caricature of what a classical master plan can achieve. The question is perhaps not whether a master plan is necessary, but rather what type of master plan. What can a master plan enable? What are the risks of a master plan? When does the establishment of outlines create the necessary movement? When do outlines stand in the way of a development precisely?

Important steps have already been taken in the development of the Lageweg. However, it is difficult to make a

‘The process has reached a critical point, where a simple – that is, *old-fashioned* – master plan might after all be useful and might provide a breakthrough.’

precise assessment of where the development process is at today. It was explicitly decided not to start out from a master plan. That is a courageous choice that has already had a mobilizing effect. In the meantime the process seems to have reached a critical point, where a simple – that is, ‘old-fashioned’ – master plan might after all be useful and might provide a breakthrough. The content of such a master plan has already been explored by means of very simple sketches, the so-called *throwaway master plans*.

The *throwaway master plans* explore the transitional situation of the *halfway city*. The need for an organizing framework to be able to take another step forward with the coalition of owners is a direct consequence of the current situation: some properties are located on an equipped road, others not; some properties have been delimited as ready-made building plots, while others can as yet only be destined as a monofunctional industrial zone. The exercises hold fast to the coarse grain, which undeniably forms an opportunity. They organize large building fields on which integrated projects can be realized. The catalogue with references of residential typologies show especially – albeit not exclusively – the possibilities of this coarse-grained register. They reveal an urbanity that emerges out of the combination of a series of well-made ensembles.

The throwaway master plans investigate the necessary, minimal infrastructure and public space that are needed to enable the interaction between the large ensembles. They outline a simple framework that leaves a lot of freedom to refine even further the public or shared spaces in the realization of the different building fields. The throwaway master plans, however, do more than determine the mere spatial principles. The investigation ensures an elementary frame of reference, necessary to facilitate consultation among owners, to clarify the positions and to redistribute the plots depending on the distinct projects. They can then

be realized on clearly delineated building fields and put on the market. Without the throwaway master plans, without an elementary framework, it would not have been possible to make up a financial model or to determine the potential value of the development as a whole. Without this elementary framework neither would it be possible to involve the partners in a communal project, let alone arrange meetings with the prospect of a possible lifting or distribution of advantages and disadvantages.

How these throwaway master plans for the *halfway city* can be converted into robust master plans with the necessary legal framework is still a tough job. We have arrived indirectly at the question as to how and when we will ever have to or be able to make up an allocation plan (RUP). What will we determine at that moment? How do we prevent owners with whom negotiations have been ongoing from simply selling their property at that time? More importantly, how do we ensure that the land positions arrive at developing parties and investments are really made in the area?

The throwaway master plans suggest a step-by-step method. A flexible allocation plan in a first phase, a refinement in a following phase, as the result of a further negotiation with the actual project developers. A first step as a sort of coarse division in lots, to which coarse financial ratios and objectives are attached, where the land value is established in the main lines, but still depends on a detailed master plan for the execution. The great difficulty remains of course to determine meaningful financial ratios without detailed research by design.

Consultation with new players

The urban renewal projects of the past 25 years were laboratories for public-private development. We gained a lot of experience from them with regard to urban management

in project development. We have also gained innovative project developers from them. However, urban development largely remains organized around a consultation with 'builders'. The above post-suburban perspective demands a broadening of this consultation. We must seek out new partners for a new generation of urban projects that shifts the attention from production to reproduction: from building to management, from houses to housing, from having to using, from developing to caring. We need partners who not only exploit land value, but also produce value through use and through the economic activity they engage in. We need new providers of urbanity who can better contextualize the building of the city. Care providers, smart suppliers of innovative mobility solutions such as car-sharing options for the association of owners, managers of collective parking infrastructure, managers of collective energy systems, agents of multiple usage, managers of collective gardens, managers of flex workplaces, etc. Partners who not only promise value added to future owners, but who also take permanent care of things, who as it were ensure the 'after-sales service'. Partners who also name this value and help reflect not only on the land value, but also on the quality for the end users, on the full cost of ownership or on the full life-cycle of a project.

Here too the Lageweg pilot project takes interesting steps. The talks with the owners were broadened to other parties: landowners engaged in dialogue with parties that are developing economic activities in the area, with inhabitants, with schools. Owners talked to city makers of other urban projects, with the aim of bringing experience into the conversation and broadening the prospect. The city – and Lab XX in general – is explicitly taking into account the social responsibility of owners and project developers. The research by design and the conversations with the developers enable an estimation not only of the value added

that can be achieved, but also of the social costs, in terms of shortages of public space and facilities that will surface during that densification.

But how many of these costs can we take into account in building the city? How many of these costs can be taken into account within the contours of the project? How do we prepare an intelligent spatial accounting system that makes it possible to map out and calculate the spatial needs both within a project and beyond? We are familiar with parking funds, but what about school funds, park funds, etc.? Does it make sense to negotiate these needs one project at a time, or should we rather achieve the right balance by means of a general value added tax for project development? These are big questions to which no clear answer can be given within the contours of a project. However, these are questions that become very concrete through this type of project. Questions which we will also have to answer in a more general sense to be able to offer a clear framework for urban redevelopment in the twentieth-century belt.

Via brave attempts to broaden the conversation, the Lageweg pilot project also exposes the limitations of the current urban public private, negotiated development model. There are limits to what aspects of development we can attach to the moment at which negotiations about land positions are ongoing and building projects are being prepared. At that moment, essential partners are missing that can really enter into the necessary engagements. Why are we negotiating in detail with landowners about what is going to be realised on their land if all they want is to sell? Why can we not talk more directly about the value of their land? Why are we talking in detail with developers about the mix of activities that must go somewhere, when ultimately other partners will have to make this mix economically possible?

The Lageweg has the merit – and it is no small one – of having opened up this discussion about this field of tension, but nevertheless raises as many questions as it answers. How can we work more directly with the end users? How do we use not only the spatial setting but also time? What about temporary use? What about the potential users who are not there yet, but who can gather gradually at a place? How do we pair users to the existing built patrimony? How do we pair inhabitants to places to live? Here too we need new players, new ‘agents’ who can provide the right mix between housing for sale and for rent, between short- and long-term living, between different income groups, between traditional family forms, singles and other, more collective models of cohabitation. The suburban status quo of the owners’ market has here reached its limits and does not offer the variety of possibilities which a contemporary urban milieu needs today.

All these aspects cannot simply be brought back to a residual land value at the start of the process. We need a process of gradual refinement, whereby the involved partners must evolve or change gradually. The value added yielded by these partners is different and must be treated as such. Sometimes it can be expressed in cash, sometimes we must especially keep it out of the sum and protect it from the one-sided ‘monetization’ of urban development. If, for instance, we wish to keep the manufacturing industry in the area, we know that this means a reduced land value. That is simply a decision not to opt for the maximization of the land value. Perhaps that is simply then how it must be treated, as a claim made in advance on the overall value of the project, just as park space, infrastructure or facilities must also be deducted

Such reductions in value can perhaps be compensated in part by higher profits elsewhere, but first and foremost this demands an exercise in public arithmetic that cannot

be put to the owners. This is about choices and priorities and searching for the right balance between public and private interests, between costs and benefits in the short and long term.

Continuity

One of the most important merits of the Lageweg pilot project is that it opens up space for an ongoing conversation. Themes that were put on the agenda within Lab XX are elaborated here in concrete terms. Chances and opportunities become visible. Things are learned, new steps can always be made. The process is not over and demands to be continued: concrete follow-up steps in the development of the area, but also in the learning process of the renewal of urban renewal. The recognition of the project among the Pilotproject Terug in Omloop offers a lot of opportunities. But the city’s leadership within the URBACT network (*Suburban.Reinventing the fringe*) also creates a context for the burgeoning city debate about the future of the twentieth-century belt.

‘If we wish to keep the manufacturing industry in the area, this means a decision not to opt for the maximization of the land value. Perhaps that is simply then how it must be treated, as a claim made in advance on the overall value of the project, just as park space, infrastructure or facilities must also be deducted.’

Pilootproject Terug in Omloop

Ellen Luyten & Walter Tempst
— Openbare Vlaamse
Afvalstoffenmaatschappij (OVAM)

OVAM got on board the 'exploratory process' of the Lageweg in mid 2015 because of the soil contamination in the area. Within the project area there are a number of soil decontamination cases that have been dragging on for far too long. Some owners are not assuming their decontamination duties. The pilot project offered the opportunity to get things moving in a positive manner and to break through the status quo.

By taking a multi-plot approach, new opportunities and chances emerge for the decontamination and redevelopment of the area. When people collaborate, a lot more can get done than when people think within the limits of their own plot. You can tackle the decontamination more effectively and more sustainably. More effectively because with instruments such as a land bank you can share the advantages and disadvantages of the decontamination. More sustainably because thanks to a comprehensive vision you can offer overall solutions tailored to the area.

Most urban renewal projects involve a master plan followed by an allocation plan, and only subsequently is the soil decontaminated according to that plan. With the Lageweg, OVAM was engaged in the process from the start. There is no master plan yet. That makes it possible to take a reverse approach: we can tune the occupation of the plots and the programme of the redevelopment to the condition and qualities of the soil.

By preserving an asphalted surface on a place where the soil is slightly contaminated, for instance, you can reduce decontamination and earth-moving costs. A square or a sports field can then be laid out there, for example. With a 'hard decontamination', where the contaminated soil has to be dug up, you can provide for an underground function that will benefit the redevelopment, such as a bike shed, a mushroom farm or a studio.

Attention for sustainable soil management is also important. You can choose to leave room within the project area for the natural infiltration of rainwater – think of wadis – so that less expensive drainage systems are required. Moreover, that attention for infiltration and accompanying greenery ensures cooling in the city. These are so-called natural advantages, which are often better and cheaper than the solutions which humankind itself thinks up.

The budget made available thanks to collaboration and integrated soil management can be invested in other matters, such as a public park that will benefit everyone. If the profits are skimmed off by a developer with no connection to the area, then the capital will flow out of the area for good.

Back in Circulation

Now that the exploratory phase has been completed, the Lageweg has been selected as one of the five projects in the *Pilootproject Terug in Omloop*. That is a joint initiative of OVAM, Ruimte Vlaanderen, Team Vlaams Bouwmeester, VLAIO and Agentschap voor Binnenlands Bestuur, Stedenbeleid, Inburgering en Integratie. The process seeks to study and test the spatial development potential of contaminated plots and also wishes to apply to the space the principles of ‘circularity’, familiar from the circular economy. The Pilot Projects strive after three ambitions: 1) reoccupying underused and contaminated plots; 2) maintaining and bringing back industry into the city; 3) making the change to a sustainable materials management and a circular economy.

1) Reoccupying underused and contaminated plots

Putting ‘back in circulation’ or reusing contaminated plots is already a form of circular thinking. Like materials and raw materials, the available space is also a rare commodity which we need to handle carefully. For years already OVAM has been advocating the efficient reuse of contaminated plots. This will help safeguard open space from new constructions. The question is: how do we put a stop to the ongoing opening up of the open space? How do we bring already used and neglected land ‘back in circulation’? It is a challenge that holds for the whole of Flanders. In the inner city and the twentieth-century belt the need for reuse is even more urgent, given that the space there is even scarcer.

To get the Lageweg site ‘back in circulation’, we do not have to wait for a definitive master plan. We can already start now, while the plans are slowly taking shape. By means of the *temporary occupation* of the underused lands and the abandoned industrial buildings, we can bring the site back in circulation *more rapidly* and reconnect it with the neighbourhood. Temporary use can moreover easily be combined with alternative and phased forms of decontamination. We could experiment on the Lageweg with so-called soft decontamination, which employs nature to tackle the pollution. For example, we could sow certain types of plants to clean up the contamination or to reinforce the self-cleansing ability of the water bottom.

In reality, the make-up of a master plan and a legal framework for its implementation can easily take more than ten years. In the meantime, with a soft, phased decontamination approach and temporary use of the underused space, a first impulse could already be launched for the redevelopment, as a result of which the site could already acquire a new place in the area today.

‘An economy that is embedded in the urban fabric offers chances to organize the materials and energy flows in the city more efficiently. The manufacturing city is a condition of the circular city.’

2) *Maintaining and bringing industry back into the city*

There was a worrying tendency in the urban renewal projects of the past decades: industry, manufacturing and logistics were systematically 'cleared away' from the city to make room for residential projects, shops and offices. The city became a site of consumption without any production.

The awareness is growing that a city also needs manufacturing, industry and logistics to be able to function properly. A city needs plumbers, bakers, butchers and mechanics; the city is always abuzz with construction and demolition work; people need care, safety; cleaning is required; a logistical apparatus must supply our shops and deliver our orders, etc. Today we are pushing all these essential functions towards industrial zones on the edge of the city, where they do not in fact belong. An efficient and sustainable economy is after all established on the place where its employees live and at the place of the potential market. This cuts out extra commutes and reduces congestion. An urban manufacturing economy can moreover manage to bridge social oppositions by creating jobs that meet the training level and the skills of the population. Last but not least, an economy that is embedded in the urban fabric offers chances to organize the materials and energy flows in the city more efficiently. The manufacturing city is a condition of the circular city. We will return to this in a moment.

Antwerp, and especially the twentieth-century belt of the city, still has a lot of places where industry is still prominently present. The Lageweg is a good example. Some companies are still active on the site, while other company buildings are empty. That presence forms an important asset. The challenge of the *Pilootproject Terug in Omloop* consists in maintaining the still active sites on the spot and to bring the abandoned industrial infrastructure 'back in circulation'. A greater challenge still will be to reconcile the

urban industry and logistics with the mixed character of the area. In other words, how can we let work and housing coexist? We will therefore have to study what sorts and forms of industry and logistics are possible within the urban fabric, and how we can shape the coexistence of work and housing. An important assignment is reserved for design in this matter.

3) *Making the change to a sustainable materials management and a circular economy*

For a long time already OVAM has been dealing with more than just waste or contamination. We prefer to no longer use the word 'waste', and to talk rather of materials and raw materials. And today raw materials are scarce and precious. That is why we are trying to integrate these materials and raw materials as much as possible in a 'circular logic'. That is to say that we must organize the materials and energy flows in such a way that there is as little loss as possible.

In the Lageweg project area you can look in very concrete terms for synergies between the different companies on the site, so that we can use and reuse materials and energy flows. A company specializing in recycling, for instance, could help with the demolition and construction of the projects. We wish to examine whether demolition material and slightly contaminated soil can be stored and processed on the site into secondary raw materials. None of these things can happen if the plots are developed individually.

What is remarkable is that this circular way of thinking today is an almost spontaneous occurrence in many companies. That happens through the valorization of materials and pragmatic economic thought. But circularity then emerges at most on a corporate level. If you really want to make the difference, you have to find a way in which the

'It is that complexity that makes the Lageweg so interesting as a pilot project: if it is possible on the Lageweg, then it is possible elsewhere in Flanders.'

most diverse businesses can respond to one another from a circular perspective. That can take different forms. One company's waste, for instance, can be another's raw material. Businesses can also make joint use of specific services or products, share machines and transport. To bring about this synergy and exchange between flows and to create chains, proper collaboration between companies tuned to another is necessary.

To bring about the circularity, the area's relation to its surroundings is also important. The nearby industrial zone Blue Gate Antwerp is staking everything on the principles of circularity and 'cradle to cradle'. That makes it necessary to establish the link between both processes in the development of the Lageweg. We must examine what leftover flows can be exchanged between both locations.

We can even take a step further and view the area of the Lageweg in relation to the city as a whole. A city is comparable to a metabolism or a dynamic system consisting of various flows: water, materials, raw materials, mobility, people, biota, etc. These flows are connected to one another and influence one another. A study is currently ongoing that maps the metabolism of Antwerp and formulates recommendations to render the city more circular. We are curious as to the results of this study and hope to connect them with the Lageweg, which forms an important link in the urban metabolism of Antwerp.

Step by step

The first, exploratory phase of the pilot project was important to set the process in motion and to break through the status quo. The exploratory phase appears to have been a success in that respect. Thanks to the intensive process, minds have ripened and there is a great willingness, both among the landowners and the various stakeholders, to see the project through to the end. The *Pilootproject Terug*

in Omloop wishes to pursue this process further. It is our explicit ambition to achieve concrete results in a very short term in the fields of decontamination, (temporary) occupation, urban development, economy and circularity.

What is particular to the pilot project is that today we do not yet know where it will end. It is a constantly evolving process, which must always find new points of attachment with the ambitions and interests of the involved (and sometimes varying) parties, and which must constantly play on and anticipate the chances that present themselves (often unexpectedly). That is why it is important to preserve the continuity of the process, as it was given shape in the exploratory phase.

There is therefore no road map or step-by-step plan for the Lageweg. Every step we take is the result of previous achievements. Every following step is always seen depending on what was possible until then and what new opportunities present themselves. A redevelopment is not a one-off operation, but something that will always be ongoing. And that certainly holds for such a complex site as the Lageweg. It is that complexity that makes the Lageweg so interesting as a pilot project: if it is possible on the Lageweg, then it is possible elsewhere in Flanders.

Temporary use as leverage for urban development

Veva Roesems — city of Antwerp

We do not have to wait for the realization of an all-embracing master plan to occupy a site like the Lageweg. That can happen today already. After all, a lot of places and buildings are underused or empty. That makes the Lageweg an ideally suited place to experiment with temporary use. The temporary activity of unused or underused plots or buildings in the Lageweg can act as an important source of leverage to bring the disconnected neighbourhood and its highly diverse population groups closer together. In other words, temporary use can break through the status quo. It sets a place in motion.

A temporary occupation of a building or a location can take many forms: for instance, a free meeting place for a variety of communities, a platform for cultural groups or sociocultural events, places for local entrepreneurship or food production. Temporary users are spatial pioneers and spatial entrepreneurs. The impact that they can have on the qualitative development of an area is often underestimated. Temporary use grows from the bottom up and ensures support among the population for the programme to be realized.

The role of the authorities

The authorities can play two types of roles in the emergence of temporary use. They can choose to give money or provide support to temporary initiatives that develop spontaneously among the population. In this case, the authorities perform a *non-controlling* role. The authorities can also assume a *controlling* role. They then formulate the conditions under which a spatial dynamic can emerge. The authorities sound out the needs and wishes of the local population and actively go in search of initiatives.

But in this case too it is important that local actors are stimulated to initiate the temporary use themselves. It is only in this way that support can emerge for further devel-

opment. Temporary use is most powerful when it comes from the inhabitants and local residents themselves. An important question, however, is the following: how can you initiate temporary use on a difficult site like the Lageweg?

We suppose that the authorities will have to assume rather a *controlling role* on the Lageweg. After all, there are few common interests on and around the site of the Lageweg. Among the community itself, the momentum is still lacking that is necessary to organize temporary activities. These are generally developed from the bottom up by the higher educated and the creatives. These are people whose basic needs such as accommodation, employment and training have been fulfilled. They often commit themselves to organizing temporary activities centred on the shaping of a community out of a need to generate meaning. The population on and around the Lageweg has a very different profile. Most inhabitants and locals are busy surviving, looking for work and getting through school.

It is quite a challenge to bring these two elements together: a population that is mainly focused on life's elementary aspects, and the felt need to form a community. The combination of both can lead to an entangling of interests and needs on one space. Perhaps the answer lies therefore in temporary functions that answer life's elementary aspects, such as the production of healthy and affordable food or the creation of space for leisure, relaxation and sport.

Temporary use as research

From the perspective of the authorities, temporary activities can serve various purposes. In some cases, the authorities will organize temporary activities with an eye toward the branding of the project area. The temporary function will give the area new impulses. The neighbourhood becomes trendy again, the area is put back on the map,

the price of land increases, etc. At the end of the project, the authorities determine what will happen on that site. In this case the finality of the temporary activity is therefore the profitable development of an area.

A temporary function can also be a way of reflecting on the future of an area or region. It is an investigation into the proper function of a site and the future users. In this case, temporary use supports the planning process and the search for an appropriate or desirable programme. Initiating and experimenting with temporary use is therefore an instrument used to sharpen the still uncertain future of the Lageweg.

In the follow-up process we will write out a commission for the design of a master plan. On the basis of the successful factors of the temporary process, we can further refine the programme of requirements and adjust it. The programme of requirements will therefore be supported more broadly by the various layers of the population.

‘Temporary use can break through the status quo. It sets a place in motion.’

The Lageweg as broad learning environment

Koen Bastiaens — city of Antwerp

‘Thanks to the ambition to maintain and reinforce industrial activity on the site, an exchange can emerge between employment and training.’

What can education mean for the future of the Lageweg? Thanks to the presence of three schools on the Lageweg, there are a lot of opportunities to be seized. The challenge consists in using that presence optimally and integrating it in the overall concept. This implies that the schools have to be involved in the process from the start.

A few years ago the city authorities approved a mission statement about the 'broad learning environment'. The city authorities argued that a school must be much more than just a school. In a broad learning environment, a school is firmly rooted in the local environment. Thanks to an intensive collaboration with the surroundings – i.e. parents, friends, organizations, sports clubs, businesses, etc. – optimal development opportunities are created for children and youths.

A learning process never unfolds linearly, but by 'zapping' between different sources of information and experience, but especially also in networks. A better balance must emerge between the 'school learning process' and 'natural learning', where passions grow by doing. There is therefore a need for meeting places where children and youths can work on their personal development. We must invest in a mix of training methods so that training can occur in various ways and at various places: together and individually, in supervised sessions and autonomously, at home and at school, on- and offline, and both during school and non-school moments of the day and week.

To bring about a broad learning environment we had best start out from what is already available. The context of the Lageweg lends itself well to the creation of a broad learning environment. Not only are there three schools already, but the site also offers opportunities to build up additional educational infrastructure. The introduction of a large school building with professional courses on the other side of the railway – and therefore de facto outside

the project area – must be taken into account in the overall concept.

But there is more. The current industrial buildings can be assigned a new function as a learning environment. They offer shelter and invite creativity. The open space on the site and the new public spaces can also contribute to a pleasant and broad school environment. By extension, we can consider the entire site (and the neighbourhood) as a broad learning environment, where the various functions on the Lageweg can blend into one another. The site offers children and youths the chance to withdraw in small groups or individually, to hang around, to sit or to work. Play areas, galleries and passages offer opportunities to learn, exhibit, move, meet, etc.

Important points of attention in this regard are the sharing and multiple use of space and infrastructure. Classrooms and studios can, for instance, also be used by businesses, employees or youth workers. The sports infrastructure, the playground, the classrooms and the studios of the schools do not need to be empty after school, but can be used by associations and private individuals.

The presence of industry offers an important potential. Thanks to the ambition to maintain and reinforce industrial activity on the site, an exchange can emerge between employment and training. Businesses can open up their industrial spaces to the students and offer internships. In this way they can make use of the local manpower and they can jointly answer for the training of the youths. They can, when their training is completed, flow through to the work market more easily.

Learning points of the process

Isabelle Verhaert — city of Antwerp

In the Lageweg pilot project we have searched for alternative processes to achieve the development of an area. The most important difference with other urban development projects is that we did not start out from the spatial ambitions or plans of (one of) the partners, but that we first worked to bring about a coalition among all of the project's actors, the so-called coalition-building.

Why look for a different process?

During the research process of Lab XX, the four design teams formulated clear and convincing visions about how we could transform the twentieth-century belt. The research by design revealed that there is enough space available to receive many new inhabitants, extra jobs and facilities in a qualitative manner. But the question that kept recurring was how to approach this. This is the issue of process.

Today it is a lot easier, quicker and cheaper to convert an unbuilt space – a greenfield – into a residential or mixed area than to transform and densify an already built space. In and around the city of Antwerp, new plots are still regularly opened up. In the future, however, we will have to rely more on the reuse of space. This meets the ambitions of the Flanders Spatial Policy Plan, which seeks to achieve the infamous *betonstop* ('no more concrete') by 2040.

However, transforming an already built space is a lot more complex than developing a greenfield, since the land has already been fragmented, privatized and inhabited or occupied. This means that a large number of stakeholders are involved in the development process. That makes the process a lot more complex and increases the risk of delays. In addition, the conversion of (agricultural) land into built land immediately triggers a rise in the value of the land. This financial breathing space does not exist in the conversion of a built environment, and in many cases there is even a decrease of the land value.

The spatial design is also more complex when transforming a built space. After all, there are a lot more preconditions (existing buildings, existing industry, existing road system, actors who do not wish to cooperate, etc.). It is also the case that legal instruments are often tailor-made for greenfield developments. We therefore need a flexible process that is open to changes and opportunities, in contrast to a process that defines in advance where the project will end 15 years later.⁴

Seven points of interest for another process

1

Creating a transition arena

We approached the Lageweg pilot project as an experiment. The specificity of an experiment is that it can fail. There is nothing inherently wrong with that, as long as we learn from it. That is why we devoted a lot of our attention to the learning process.

We discussed this basic principle very clearly beforehand with the authorities. Experimenting was necessary because we would not succeed by traditional means. The Lageweg is in a so-called deadlock situation, where the private actors alone could not arrive at a solution. That is why it was wise to invest so much time and energy in the experiment. What is important is that we do not prejudice or drive off the existing businesses, which are still active today.

Some have argued that with this public experiment we have increased the risk attached to the development project and that extra risk costs money. It is indeed important to communicate the experimental character properly. That demands extra care, expertise and means. I am convinced that we have found a proper balance in this respect. Proof hereof is the renewed interest that the world of real estate is currently showing for the area.

2

Delimiting the project area means deciding who gets to sit at the table

Delimiting the project area appears in hindsight to be one of the most decisive decisions in the process. The contours of the area help determine who gets to sit at the table. That decision was the subject of much discussion. In traditional brownfield projects, one is often looking at empty or undeveloped plots. In a block project in the city centre, the contours often coincide with the block. In the Lageweg area we opted for an 'extended block'.

A project like the Lageweg has an important impact on the broader surroundings. This impact must be taken into account in the process. That is why we chose to sit down with all types of actors around the table: working businesses, empty businesses, businesses for sale, the owners of undeveloped plots, the existing schools, etc.

We involved the inhabitants in another manner. Since this group could not be delegated and it was not possible to involve hundreds of inhabitants in the process, we organized an interactive residents' meeting. A lot of people responded to this and collaborated constructively.

We initially tried to involve in the process the property managers of the towers, but they were not interested. That is certainly a point of interest for future transformation processes. Inhabitants must be better represented via a professional delegation. Property managers could be the right contact person for this, but in Belgium their mission is often limited to a minimum. That is a missed opportunity.

⁴ See T. Bergevoet and M. Van Tuijl: *The Flexible City. Sustainable Solutions for a Europe in Transition*, NAI-010, Amsterdam (2016)

'We approached the Lageweg pilot project as an experiment. The specificity of an experiment is that it can fail.'

The project team must be thick-skinned

The Lageweg is a project with a high level of risk for all parties involved. On the one hand, one can earn a lot of money with a successful project; on the other, a lot can be lost. For instance, one of the owners explained that from the moment the city launched the pilot project, his expansion negotiations were undermined. He is – rightly – wary of the fact that a future housing project will see his business as a hindrance so that his activities will have to disappear in the long run. Other companies too run a similar risk. It is therefore also understandable that mistrust can emerge, as a result of which every word is weighed carefully. This puts the project team under pressure from all sides.

It seems obvious, but it is all the more difficult to bring about: the project team must work as a single, indivisible team. The larger and more diverse the team, the more potential there is, but the more difficult it is also to maintain that unity. At a certain point in the process we briefly incorporated the city council and the alderman in the project team. It was necessary for the alderman to give formal confirmation for all the parties involved of specific starting points of the city, such as maintaining the existing activity. At the request of the project team, the alderman personally carried out certain negotiations. That requires intensive feedback and involvement at the political level.

Some claims were exaggerated or taken out of context. This generated tensions that are not to be underestimated. We were lucky to work with a project team consisting of the design office 51N4E, the transition managers of Connect&Transform and the project managers of the city. They formed a team founded on respect, expertise and trust. After a while we too were seen by all the parties involved as a single team. While in the beginning questions were

raised as to whether an external partner could contact the stakeholders on behalf of the city, this no longer mattered after a while. A proper collaboration is a key factor in the success of such a sensitive project.

This is an important point of interest for the future. Now that we are launching a follow-up project in the context of the Pilotproject Terug in Omloop, new parties are being involved in the process. That is absolutely positive. Nevertheless we must ensure that the respect and trust continue to exist in this expanded project team.

4

First the people, then the buildings

We literally postponed the master plan. Firstly a coalition is formed, and only then is it spatially crystallized in a master plan. That seems simple, but is absolutely not. For what do you talk about with local residents or owners if you do not have a plan for an area? 51N4E developed all sorts of instruments to still be able to talk about the contents of the area without already making a spatial claim or taking decisions. This can come across as artificially putting off a plan, but it was certainly useful in the process.

Firstly it ensured that we could include in a future project the current sticking points but also the plans for the future of the users and inhabitants. We cannot expect inhabitants and users to just sit and wait for our questions about the future of their neighbourhood or company. Many inhabitants are busy taking care of their basic needs. They need the time to think about this and to formulate a stand-point. With some owners and companies we were able to guide the vision of the future, something which taught us a lot about the activity of a company and about the area itself. The school community also needed time to be able to imagine a different future for itself. If, by contrast, you start with a plan, there is the risk that different partners

‘When external experts were invited to the sessions, their first reaction was always that the collaboration was going nowhere. Yet the very opposite was true.’

do not yet know what they want and later think that a lot has already been decided. After the coalition phase, all our partners know what direction they want to go in. This will save us a lot of time in the next step of the process.

Secondly we formulated some clear ambitions: we wanted to create a mixed area with housing and industry; we wanted to offer various new facilities and in doing so serve the surrounding residential zones and involve them in the new area; and we wanted to create a new community of inhabitants. If we draw these new facilities, businesses and communities on the design table and develop the spaces for this, there is a big chance that these spaces will fail to sell or be rented and that the communities, associations or businesses will never establish themselves there. On the other hand, these businesses, facilities and communities already exist today in the area, and it is our task to track them down, to support and stimulate them to arrive at a future qualitative and mixed area. This is the goal of the coalition-building. It is not just about the multi-plot collaboration between the current owners, but about creating the mixed area of the future.

We also have to keep working on this coalition-building in the follow-up process. The coalition-building is not a closed phase. We have taken a first step, but we must continue to invest in it in order to be able to create a mixed area and a future community.

5

Discussion and conflict are constructive

The 'design tables' are consultation sessions with the ten owners. These consultation sessions were always carefully prepared. The questions, suggestions and learning needs of the attendees were taken into account. The consultation sessions were not organized to convince people, but they did ensure that discussion was possible. Discussions and

conflicts were used to create transparency and to share information. In the beginning, organizing these sessions was challenging and stressful. When external experts were invited to the sessions, their first reaction was always that the collaboration was going nowhere. Yet the very opposite was true. Conflicts need to be talked over, but the discussions can keep going. It is unrealistic to think that a group of people with such diverse interests can agree from the start on a future development. The discussions and conversations enable us precisely to look at what stakeholders do have in common and how we can build a consensus.

Thanks to the experiences of the design tables, we turned our attention to other consultation moments. As project managers we often have the tendency to deflect possible reactions by pulling out detailed plans and thorough analyses or by resorting to professional jargon. We anticipate in this way on possible remarks, limiting reactions to a minimum. That is generally what we call 'a successful meeting'. But this simply means that the people keep their remarks and objections to themselves; it does not make these objections disappear. If you have the luxury of organizing feedback sessions with stakeholders during a project, a respectful discussion can contribute a lot of input to the plans precisely.

6

Get to know your stakeholders

A 'stakeholder mapping' is the basis of every process and traditionally takes place at the start of a project. But it is not that simple and static, and you only get to know your stakeholders slowly. In the first year of the pilot project we invested a lot of time in discovering who was the right representative of each plot. It is only at the signing of the statement of engagement that everyone was confronted with the question as to who could sign such a document.

In larger businesses it is only at that moment that the effort is made to inform the foreign boards of directors, that families come together and feedback is provided on the project. You have to organize such moments early on in the process.

On the other hand, you also really have to get to know your stakeholders. The owners have various forms of knowledge. Some are property or project-development consultants, others have a company on site, but there were also owners with an entirely different background. The design tables were set up to learn together how a complex project can be developed. In the beginning we tried to use the knowledge of one partner to instruct another, but this proved not to be possible at that moment. That is why we introduced external experts who gave information on, for instance, soil decontamination or the financial aspects of a development.

7

The various roles of the project manager

The project team and the city services had to assume various roles during the project. Firstly there is the role of facilitator that brings people together, prepares the contents of the consultation sessions, invites experts, drafts a statement of engagement or partnership agreement, etc. At the same time, the authorities continue to have a role as regulator. A core task of the authorities is to preserve the general interest, especially in projects that are going to benefit from so much public money. This means in the first place searching for what this general interest can mean in a specific area.

These two roles sometimes contradict one another and were occasionally split during consultation sessions between various people. In the process, the project manager had a third task, namely stimulator of possibilities.

That was done in many ways, during the mind opening dialogues (at the start of the process), during the safari trip (where views of the future in one, five and twenty years had to serve as a source of inspiration and let people look at their business or space differently), during the discussions of the ambition groups (where one continuously worked with stimulating reference projects), during the discussion of reference projects, or during the preparation of the throwaway master plans.

This coaching will continue in the future process of the Pilotproject Terug in Omloop, where the emphasis is laid on temporary use. The temporary use should also be used to expand the stimulating role from the ten owners to the area's residents and local organizations.

‘As project managers we often have the tendency to deflect possible reactions by pulling out detailed plans and thorough analyses or by resorting to professional jargon. We anticipate in this way on possible remarks, limiting reactions to a minimum. That is generally what we call a *successful meeting*.’

The landowners have their say

Kjell Swartelé — lawyer, liquidator of EDS, the former site of the Hayez-Lemmers factory

‘As liquidator I am accountable to the shareholders. At the start of the pilot project it was unclear to me whether it would be in the interest of the shareholders in the long term. So I attended the meetings rather reluctantly.’

‘Today I remain prudent. I have the feeling that the scenario of an expropriation has not been completely ruled out. It is as though the city were saying: if you don’t cooperate, then we’ll opt for expropriation. That creates a difficult field of tension.’

‘I have been seduced by the city’s transparency. They do not behave childishly with the figures. During the meetings we work with the necessary openness. That is in fact quite refreshing.’

‘I remember that at the start of the process, the discourse was often rather woolly. That is of no use to anyone. We have to get to the core of the matter without selling too much romance.’

Wilfried Wellens — manager, Sany Logistics

‘In the beginning I was open to the project, but the more it progressed, the more unfavourable I became. You see, we want to expand our company. I had already signed an agreement with two landowners, but that fell through because of the pilot project. The pilot project is restricting me in my expansion possibilities. I also fear that the project will emphasize housing, and that’s difficult to combine with my 44-ton lorries.’

‘Why does the entire Lageweg per se have to be involved? If you look at the project area, you will see that on one side, the industry has left the site. That side can therefore be completely residential. The side we are on is in fact industry. Why don’t we connect that side of the Lageweg to Blue Gate Antwerp? We could then redevelop the other side. I think that that would be a better solution.’

Lars Van Santvoort — primary school director, De Schakel

‘At the beginning of the year I received an invitation from the city to join the reflection on the future of the Lageweg. Great, because it doesn’t always happen that all parties are listened to. The possibilities of the site are huge. The location right next to the Scheldt is logistically interesting. Suppliers can deliver goods by ship and by rail to future warehouses, retail shops and small workplaces. You can then tune the educational offer to that reality. Consider, for instance, a bicycle workshop where the students of the technical school could gather practical experience.’

‘All parties have prepared a sketch with their ideal occupation of the plot. My sketch was light and open, with a lot of space for green. The children in my school come from underprivileged families and live in small apartments. They don’t get out much, which means they are often stressed. Children have to be able to play outside and horse around. I even drew a swimming pool, because the Sorghvlied pool is often very busy.’

‘I don’t have the same desires as the landowners. They want everything to become building land, so that they can sell it at the highest price. I think it is the city’s duty not to leave the development to a private company. The city has to try to buy up land wherever possible. This is the only way there will be enough green space. That might bring in less money, but it is an investment that this area urgently needs.’

Nico Van Hoofstadt – manager, NV Krugerbrug

‘The Lageweg today is an eyesore. People from Hoboken can only applaud the pilot project. Something is happening at last. I am absolutely sympathetic to the project. If the conditions are acceptable, it can also yield advantages for my company.’

‘At the start of the project people too often spoke in *hieroglyphics*. We didn’t always understand the language of the process managers. As far as I’m concerned they beat about the bush too much. We’re businessmen. We’re used to assessing a problem and then tackling it. We had to wait a year for things to start moving. This is actually a pity, because we lost a lot of time that way. Perhaps it would have been better if there had been a concrete master plan on the table at the start of the process, which set out a direction on the basis of which we could then discuss. That would have led to more openness.’

‘The city has chosen to work with this set group of owners. The atmosphere is good and the owners are more or less on the same wavelength. But you could object that a different group of owners might have worked better. There are a lot of differences among the owners. We can still take a decision here in Antwerp, but there are also international companies that are involved and that are less connected to the place. Another business has gone into liquidation and is represented by a curator. That doesn’t simplify things.’

Serge Temmerman — manager, Depannage 2000

‘In the beginning I was a bit reluctant regarding the pilot project because I believed that our business would have to move one way or another because of the nuisance we would cause for a new housing project. Later we better understood that it is the intention to keep economic activity in the area. So then you can only be positive towards it and hope that we can contribute something. I find it very positive that we are actively involved in the consultation. This project can grow into a textbook example of urban renewal.’

‘We’d like to remain on the site. That means of course that we will have to convert our tow company into something that fits better in the new housing fabric. We will have to diversify our activities, perhaps specialize in other affairs. We haven’t yet decided how to do so, but we are

being well supported by the city. So we have some more obstacles to overcome, but I think we'll make it.'

'Not all parties have shown the same level of involvement. Some parties don't always attend the negotiations or don't speak their mind. A number of owners haven't made clear yet what they want exactly. They are waiting to see which way the wind blows. Others are stubbornly sticking to their standpoint, while others want to have their cake and eat it. That's all rather problematic for the project. If this was cleared up, if all this uncertainty was lifted, it would be a big incentive for the project. I think that in this regard the city and the process managers have to get more personal. So far, negotiations have mainly taken place collectively. Some parties should be accompanied more individually to convince them to get on board. A more personal approach can reassure them and win them over.'

Hardwin De Wever — director, AG VESPA

'AG VESPA is involved in the Lageweg pilot project in the first instance as the owner of a small but centrally located plot in a fragmented field of plots and properties. It is precisely because of the available expertise in our company that the city's expectations with regard to AG VESPA were initially higher than what we ourselves were willing to assume. We were asked to perform actively as experts in the arena of the other owners.'

'From the start, however, it was a deliberate choice to take a rather *receptive* role as a pure landowner. Our motives for this were twofold. Firstly, in terms of content, the project was already being led by the city's team with the support of the consortium composed of 51N4E and Connect & Transform. Secondly, we deliberately chose to assume, in this (initially at least rather tentative and experimental) process, the same, equivalent role as the other

owners, namely our neighbours.'

'Being both judge (in the perception of 'property arbiter') and judged (financial stakeholder as landowner) could damage the trust in the process and come up against the mistrust and suspicion of the other owners. We could be accused of confusing business interests or people could believe that we were in league with the city. To successfully build a multi-plot coalition, the development of mutual trust is just as crucial for AG VESPA as for every other landowner. That is also why, from the start, we wanted to outsource the make-up of the financial model to an external and independent consultancy, without any financial interest in the project.'

'In the course of the process, the city and the other owners wanted AG VESPA to assume its role as a property expert. Once the exploratory phase of the pilot project came to an end, this led to the concrete question of preparing a methodology to determine the start values of each owner in the multi-plot development. The valuations that AG VESPA made in the context of this estimation exercise are mainly based on the principle that all properties have to be compared with one another in an equivalent and fair manner. A rather mathematical composition was then made of the estimation method, based on the current situation and the average market prices in Hoboken and the surroundings. Individual estimations of everyone's property were deliberately avoided, all the more since this was not relevant in the context of a multi-plot approach.'

'The estimation method was preceded by bilateral discussions with all owners as well as a visit on site to each property. Our experience is that this strengthened the bond of trust among the owners, all the more since information was exchanged among owners. The approach was in other words completely transparent and open to all parties around the table.'

Glossary

Agentschap voor Binnenlands Bestuur, Stedenbeleid, Inburgering en Integratie.
Agency for Interior Administration, Urban Policy, Naturalization and Integration

Gemeenschapsonderwijs
State school system in the Flemish Community

Kenniscentrum Vlaamse Steden
Knowledge Centre for Flemish Cities

Openbare Vlaamse Afvalstoffenmaatschappij (OVAM)
Public Waste Agency of Flanders

Pilootproject Terug in Omloop
Pilot project Back in Circulation

Ruimte Vlaanderen
Spatial Department Flanders

Stadsontwikkeling
Business Unit Urban Development

Team Stedenbeleid
Team Urban Policy

Team Vlaams Bouwmeester
Team Flemish Government Architect

Vlaams Agentschap voor Innoveren en Ondernemen (VLAIO)
Flanders Innovation and Entrepreneurship

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Lageweg pilot project.

**Partners and stakeholders
of the exploratory phase
(January 2015 until December 2015)**

Landowners, businesses and education groups
AG VESPA, Belmedis NV, Crown Packaging NV, Depannage2000 NV, Gemeenschapsonderwijs (GO!), Krugerbrug NV, Sany Logistics NV, bvba EDS in vereffening door bvba Kjell Swartelé and bvba Vanhoucke-Verkest, Zon Immo NV, the Vits, Schunzelaar, Borms, Ballon, De Rem, Janssens families.

Inhabitants and local residents, neighbourhood associations, users of lands on the project area

Commissioner

- City of Antwerp
The council of the city of Antwerp, competent alderman for urban development in consultation with the aldermen (inter-cabinet), business unit Stadsontwikkeling (department of space, department of mobility, department of permits, department of environment), business unit Ondernemen en Stadsmarketing (department of business and innovation), business unit Samenleven (department of social planning and urban neighbourhood consultation), business unit Stadsbeheer (department of spatial management), business unit Cultuur, Sport, Jeugd en Onderwijs (department of Sporting A), district committee of Hoboken.
- OVAM (Openbare Vlaamse Afvalstoffen-maatschappij)
- Kenniscentrum Vlaamse Steden

Design, consultancy and transition offices
51N4E, Connect & Transform

Experts

Revive, Febelfin, experts from the financial sector (KBC, Belfius, TRIODOS, VDK Spaarbank, Microstart), Verstandige Klap vzw, RebelGroup, Witteveen+Bos, Agentschap Ondernemen (brownfield covenant expert), AG VESPA.

Advisory group

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