



The City of Oslo: Urban Development

Oslo: The Fjord City – Plans for Urban Development of the Waterfront

The Fjord City plan is the overall strategy towards urban development of parts of the waterfront in Oslo. While decisions of renewal and urban renewal of some of the areas, e.g. Bjørvika, Rådhusplassen, Vestbanen and Aker brygge, was made by the City Council several years ago, the overall strategy was adopted by the City Council in 2000.

The Fjord City strategy includes urban renewal of a string of waterfront properties in the heart of the City, in order to create better connections between the City Centre and the fjord, providing unique physical surroundings for living and leisure. The City of Oslo has started on a most adventurous urban renewal project.

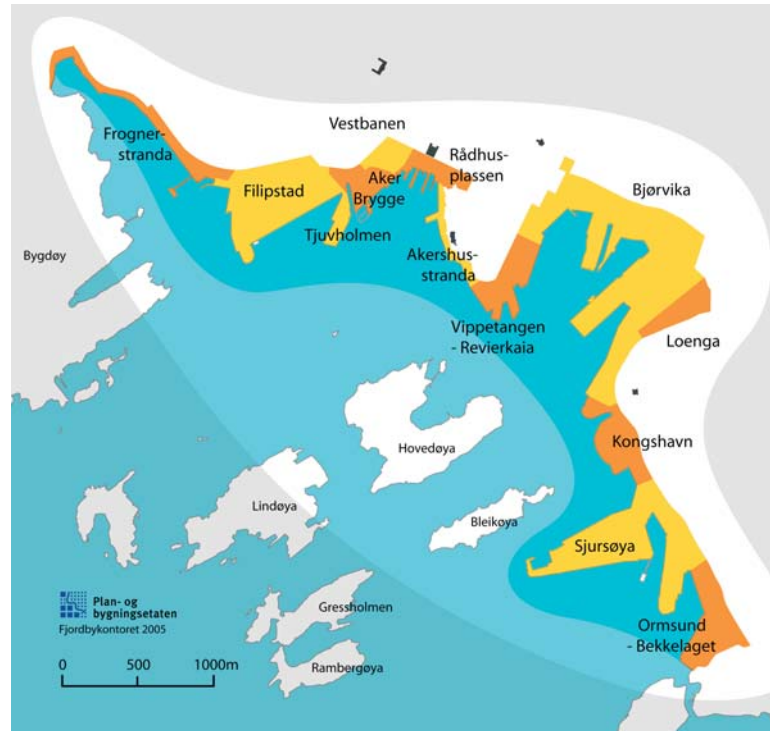
Most of the areas going through urban transformation are or have been used for harbour activities, roads and other traffic purposes, some are also former industrial sites. They will be released for urban development in the years to come.

The City of Oslo's Agency for Planning and Building Services are in charge of the planning process, whilst the daily planning activities are taken care of by **Oslo Waterfront Planning Office**. The Office cooperates closely with municipal and governmental bodies, landowners, property developers and professionals. On behalf of the Agency, the Office shall actively contribute to the realisation of The Fjord City as stated in the acts adopted by the City Council of Oslo. This means to contribute to the development and transformation of areas formerly used for industrial purposes into modern urban living and working space.

The Oslo Waterfront Planning Office describes the aims for the waterfront: "We are thinking in an overall vision. We want to open up the waterfront areas for recreational, cultural, residential and commercial use, with emphasis on public access, public and private transport and sustainable development. In size, these areas are comparable to projects in Hamburg in Germany, Gothenburg and Stockholm in Sweden and Copenhagen in Denmark. Some of the waterfront areas are unique with their proximity to the City Centre and to the main infrastructural provisions."

The 225 hectares of development areas included in the strategy are divided into 14 project areas (see Area Map). They stretch over more than 12 kilometres, mostly south- and west-facing.

Some major construction projects are well under way, the new National Opera House in Bjørvika being one. The National Parliament's decision to build a new, monumental opera house, set scope and pace to the waterfront



Area Map of Oslo Waterfront. Copyright: Oslo Waterfront Planning Office



Vestbanen by night. Illustration by O.M.A./Space Group/MIR Visuals for Statsbygg



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renewal. To reconnect the City with the water in Bjørvika, the existing motorway that runs through the area will be rerouted in an immersed 675 metres long subsea tunnel. Other projects are in the planning phase, among them a lot of new office projects, thousands of new dwellings, and the planning of the new Museum of Culture of the University of Oslo, to mention a few.

Together these individual projects will create a string of new enterprises, housing provisions and cultural activities from the east to the west side of the City Centre, and will open up the waterfront and provide for new and improved living conditions for Oslo's inhabitants.

Below follows a short presentation of some of the major development projects in selected areas of the Fjord City:

Bjørvika has a unique position between the sea and the City's public transport centre (central railway station, airport connection, trams, local and regional bus lines, main underground station). Local development plan was approved by the City Council in August 2003 and stipulates roughly the building of close to 1 million square meter of residential and commercial use on the 69.6 hectares of land. The new National Opera House is currently under construction and expected to open in September 2008. A design competition for another large site of 200.000 square metres building space, the Barcode Project, are accomplished. Construction on one of the buildings plots started in late 2005. In December 2004, an architectural competition for the urban design of seven open spaces, the commons, were carried out, in cooperation between architects, landscape architects and artists. The construction of an immersed road tunnel, a key to the realisation for Bjørvika, started in August 2005. The development of the entire Bjørvika area according to the plans are calculated to require investments of NOK 50 billions over the 15-20 years to come.

The development of **Tjuvholmen** is the result of a special

project competition, in which main investors and developers were invited to create a vision for the peninsula-shaped quay area, including planning concept, budget estimates and costs of construction. The winner is to take full responsibility for the execution of the project. The winning project contains a 9 hectares public park, public access to approximately 2.000 metres of quay, 1.200 dwellings, a hotel, an art museum, a multimedia centre, shops, restaurants and office spaces and a viewing tower, all totalling more than 100.000 square metres of building space, calculated cost close to NOK 1 billion. The project's developers expect residents to start moving in by 2007, and all work is to be completed by 2011.

At **Vestbanen**, plans to recreate the area as an active meeting place is well under way. The old Railway Station buildings of Vestbanen will be preserved, while the closed-down track area will be redeveloped. In June 2005, the Nobel Peace Centre opened its doors to the public in the historical building complex. Plans for the track area, today used as a car park, feature a modern Public Library of the City of Oslo, new premises for a Contemporary Art Museum, and a subterranean Cinema and Conference Centre. In early 2002, Statsbygg (The Directorate of Public Construction and Property) carried out an international project competition for the area where the library is the core of the project. The project also includes several attractive public spaces. It is expected that Statsbygg will sell the plot after the development plan is approved, a development plan that totals a maximum of 107.000 square metres.

Ormsund is the southernmost area of the Fjord City. West-facing with attractive residential neighbourhoods in south and east, a modern container port and car terminal dominate the present situation. The City Council has approved the area for urban development from 2008. Planning has begun to convert the area for residential and commercial use, with several options under consideration.



New National Opera in Bjørvika. Copyright: Snøhetta for Statsbygg.

More information:

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