2 Streets 2 Furious: Evaluating the Potential for Trial Street Space Reallocation Projects to Break Political Deadlock

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Cycling politics in Trondheim

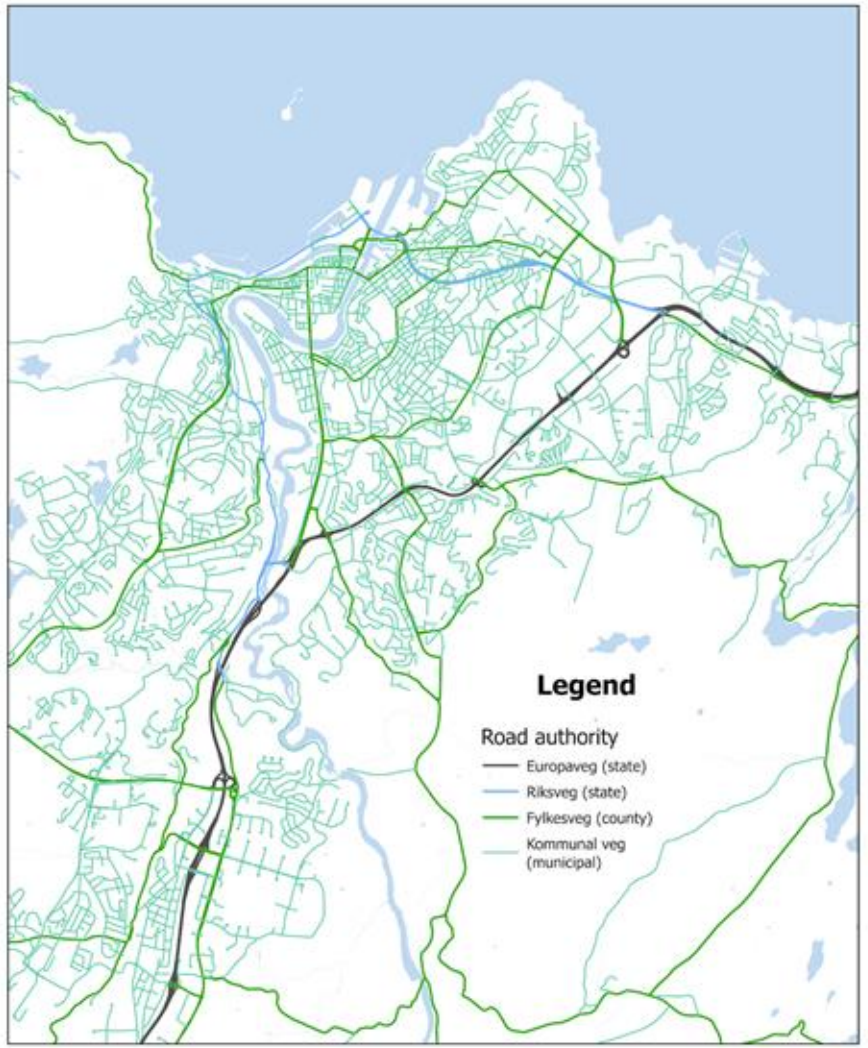
Transport policy in the Trondheim region is led by a series of Urban Growth Agreements (*byvekstavtaler*) working towards the Zero-Growth Goal (*nullvekstmålet*) for limiting growth in car transport as urban populations .

Agreement signed between:

- State (Norwegian Public Roads Administration)
- County (Trøndelag fylkeskommune)
- Municipalities (including Trondheim kommune)

Each owns, controls and maintains a part of the road network, with **contrasting views on how to use them**!

But… projects funded through the UGA must **have consensus between all three levels** of government…



Case Study Streets

Olav Tryggvasons gate

- Important shopping street in Trondheim city centre.
- Positioned as **public transport and bike street** pre-2010 in line with new bus system (from 2019).
- *Nordre avlastningsvei* completed in 2010 to reduce through-traffic in city centre.
- Main interests: business (associations), municipality, county.

Innherredsveien

- Direct link from east to city centre.
- Bypassed by Strindheim tunnel (opened 2016).
- Discussed as 'miljøgate' (lit. 'environment street'): local vision for a **permeable neighbourhood street**
- Main interests: local residents, state, municipality, county.



Olav Tryggvasons gate, 2014





Innherredsveien, 2014

Pre-Pilot: Innherredsveien 2002

Substantive conflicts: who should be prioritised through the redesign? On what scale?

- Within the Labour party, between municipality and county (county's position supported by the state), and between government & residents.

Procedural conflicts:

- Collaboration in UGA circles, lack of institutional capacity for reaching agreement.

Relational conflicts: distrust around intentions of authorities.

- County politicians viewed as unsympathetic about local issues.
- Municipal politicians viewed as distended from neighbourhood (class divide)

Trial with two-lanes and no car through-traffic approved in 2017.



Conflict typology from Wolf (2021) via Vitale Brovarone et al. (2023)

Pre-Pilot: Olav Tryggvasons gate

Substantive conflicts: who should be prioritised through the redesign? On what scale?

- Between parties, between municipality and county (county's position supported by the state), and between business interests.
- More complex network of interests.
- ZGG but parking garage proposed? Delayed process.

Procedural conflicts: bypassing traditional planning & consultation processes?

- Timing sped up with new bus system needing infrastructural changes.
- Businesses feel not adequately consulted.

Relational conflicts: distrust around technical capacity and intentions of authorities.

- Municipality given project leadership. Politicians u-turning late in the game about car access. Suddenly more users competing for space…

2002

Fakta Nordre avlastningsvei

Publisert: 13. august 2002 kl. 07:40 Oppdatert: 23. april 2012 kl. 15:48

Adresseavisen NYHETSSTUDIO NYHETER SPORT KULTUR D JS

Stenger ikke Prinsens gate – foreløpig

Et flertall i bystyret går inn for at Prinsenkrysset blir nytt knutepunkt for kollektivtrafikk, men vil avvente stenging av Prinsens gate til 2009.

KARI HOVDE

Publisert: 14. juni 2007 kl. 18:20
Oppdatert: 18. april 2012 kl. 01:12

Andre tiltak som er vedtatt er at Torvet blir stengt for trafikk, gågatene blir forlenget og Olav Tryggvasons gate blir kollektivgate som også tilrettelegges for syklister. I Sandgata blir det etablert en kanalpark for gående og syklister.

"Olav Tryggvasons gate will become a public transport street also facilitating for cyclists"

Miljøgate med biler i kjelleren

Om to år skal Olav Tryggvasons gate graves opp og stenges, og det vil trolig medføre store trafikkproblemer i sentrum. Stengningen kan bli langvarig.

"Miljøgate with cars in the basement"

2017

Adresseavisen NYHETSSTUDIO NYHETER SPORT KULTUR D JS

Kjedekollisjon på E6 i Trondheim

FINN ÅLDSTEDT

Publisert: 8. august 2008 kl. 06:13
Oppdatert: 17. april 2012 kl. 15:05

Heftig debatt om bilfrie gater i Midtbyen på sosiale medier

Forslaget om å stenge Prinsenkrysset og Olav Tryggvasons gate for biltrafikk fra 2018 har utløst heftig debatt på sosiale medier.

"Fierce debate about car-free streets in the city centre on social media"

Pilot







Olav Tryggvasons gate
(2018)
- Two road lanes
- Street furniture
- Painted bike lanes

(2019)
- Three road lanes
- Bus priority
- No more outdoor dining
- Alternative bike route proposed at ‘end’ of pilot period



Innherredsveien
(2017-2023)
- Few changes made, some addition to junctions in response to bike/car conflict.
- «Far more are walking and cycling, the green street is a success»



Langt flere sykler og går, miljøgata er en suksess

Post-Pilot

Innherredsveien

- Zoning plan completed and accepted in 2019. Established mandate made process quicker.
- Building process began 2023, nearing completion in 2026.
- Changes made during building process, **lost transparency**. Moved from two-way to one-way communication once **decisions made internally** in the county.

Olav Tryggvasons gate

- No change since end of pilot, **politically untouchable**. Little desire, functional as a bus street, not much else.
- Did lead to quick building of alternative east-west cycle route on parallel street. **Lessons learned** from pilot, changed process.





Innherredsveien, June 2026

Lessons

1. Establishing groundwork for success should be done before changing anything physical.
2. Must be realistic about what questions are possible to answer through a pilot.
3. Pilots can add extra complexity and new arenas for disagreement.
4. Timing: how does the project fit with other local developments?
5. Strong, consistent leadership across multiple stages is necessary to prevent critical u-turns.
6. Should have a plan for how to apply lessons from the pilot – what worked? What needs further attention?
7. Collaborative nature of a pilot can easily dissipate on return to the status quo, leads to less transparency & accountability.

Conclusions

- Paradoxes with Norwegian road transport planning & Zero Growth Goal.
  - No consequences for not reaching ZGG, individual politicians/parties able to act against it.
- Norwegian Urban Growth Agreements necessitate collaboration by design, but don't provide adequate conditions for reaching a common vision.
- Conflicts that go unsolved before/during the pilot can easily return and derail discussions again later.
- Pilots add additional complexity to planning processes but provide clear mandate for the post-pilot transition. Compromises can give stronger support for alternatives.
- Transparency is necessary when critical details are easily changeable/reversible.



Continuous bike path with traffic signals for cyclists on Innherredsveien, 2026



Alternative east-west cycle route on Fjordgata, 2025

References & Further Reading

- Alm, J. & Koglin, T. (2022) (In)capacity to implement measures for increased cycling? Experiences and perspectives from cycling planners in Sweden, *Journal of Urban Mobility* 2: 100029.
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- Vitale Brovarone, E., Staricco, L. & Verlinghieri, E. (2023) Whose is this street? Actors and conflicts in the governance of pedestrianisation processes, *Journal of Transport Geography* 107: 103528.
- Wolf, E. (2021) How policy institutions filter conflict: the (De)escalation of policy conflict through closing down or opening up the space for contestation, *Built Environ*. 47(1): 56–74.