

Petrol South: Case study on process management and consensus building

1 Introduction

The subject of this paper is the factors of failure and success of process management as an instrument of control in spatial development. The paper gives the conclusions based upon analysing the process of consensus building for Petrol South.

In 2002 the city of Antwerp started a process for the redevelopment of the brownfield called Petrol South. A project-team of city officials was formed, to manage the process of reaching a consensus between the most important involved actors, concerning the future use of the area.

The redevelopment of Petrol South was a task which neither the city, neither the different owners of a part of the area, could accomplish by themselves. Expectations were high: because of the cooperation between these different actors, the process offered the possibility of achieving a result, exceeding the individual interests of the participants. From the very beginning of the process, it became clear that the (conflicts of) interests of the key-actors strongly hypothecated the consensus building.

2 Petrol South

2.1 Location



fig. 1: aerial view of Petrol South, NGI Belgium

Petrol South is an area of approximately 100ha, situated 3km south of the Antwerp City Centre. The area can be reached by water, by rail and by road, and is bordered by a nature reserve, residential urban areas and the international highway surrounding Antwerp.

2.2 History



fig. 2 and 3: historic pictures of Petrol South, city of Antwerp

Because of its past, Petrol South has become an area with complex conditions for redevelopment. In the beginning of the last century Petrol South was created as an industrial area for port activity. The site was equipped with cast iron pipes for the transportation of petroleum, and grew to become one of the most important supply areas for petrol in Belgium and Europe. From the sixties on however, port activities knew a strong expansion in the north of the city. At the end of the eighties, the concessions of most petrol companies ended. The companies left the area and most of the installations were torn down. From that moment on, a large part of the site became a wasteland.

In 1995 the Flemish government decided to change the (juridical) destination of the deserted part of the area into 'park area'. The riverside of the area, where some companies were still active, was given a 'industrial destination'. At the same period, the notion of the different possibilities for the area grew. Numerous vision for the redevelopment were put forward: a soccer stadium, a congress centre, an expo, an energy park, a city forest ... None of these ideas however, were transformed into realisations.

2.3 Existing situation



fig. 4: Petrol South, city of Antwerp

Petrol South today shows a deserted and post-industrial landscape. No more than four active companies remain, all of them situated in the area with the juridical destination for 'industrial activity'. Three of them still use the cast iron pipes for the transport of their products.

The major part of the formerly thriving industrial area is completely deserted. On these wastelands, nature spontaneously developed. Of the centrally located rail embankment, only

a few tracks are still in use. The wastelands and the larger part of the rail embankment have the juridical destination of 'park area'.

To the far northeast of the site, an unused quay area is situated, part of a long stretch of 6km by 100m of deserted quays, which separates the city from its stream. This zone cannot be used for shipping goods, without substantial investments for stabilizing the quay wall. This area has a juridical destination of a 'riverbank with special destination' (either industrial or recreational activities can take place there, as long as they have a relation to the water), and, on the landside of the quay road as an 'area for community equipments and for public use'.

2.4 Key actors

The aim for city of Antwerp (further: City) is the decontamination and redevelopment of the area. As the local government it is her mission to guard over a qualitative, sustainable area-specific and integral city development. Its prime functions, like delivering permits and maintaining public domain, fail short when effectively trying to stimulate redevelopment. The City will therefore act as initiator of a process for redevelopment, involving the main share (and stake-) holders.

There are four large landowners in the area. The Port Authority (further: Port) is the owner of the parcels situated in the 'industrial area' along the river. On these grounds, four active port companies still remain.



fig. 5: juridical destination, *Flemish Government*

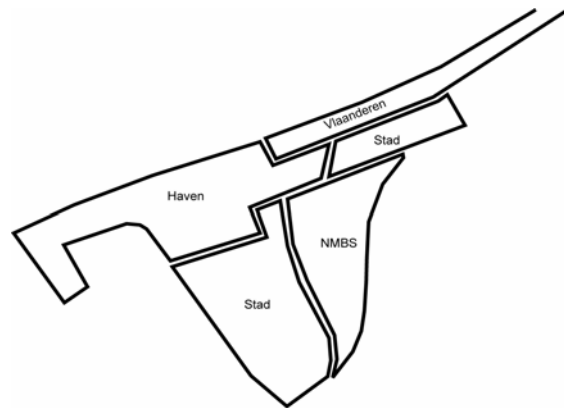


fig. 6: ownership

The Belgian National Railway company (further: NMBS) is the owner of the rail embankment, largely marked as 'park area'. The major part of the rail embankment is no longer in use by the NMBS. A subsidiary company of the NMBS, Euro Immostar (further: EIS), was given the task to participate in the process and to conduct negotiations regarding the development of these NMBS assets.

The quays are owned by the Flemish government, but were given to the City and the Port following a long term concession agreement.

The Flemish government is however, the government who has the legal power to change the juridical destination of Petrol South (from 'park area' to ...) which will be necessary to redevelop the site. Therefore, Flemish politicians and numerous Flemish officials are key actors who will have to be involved in the redevelopment at one time or another.

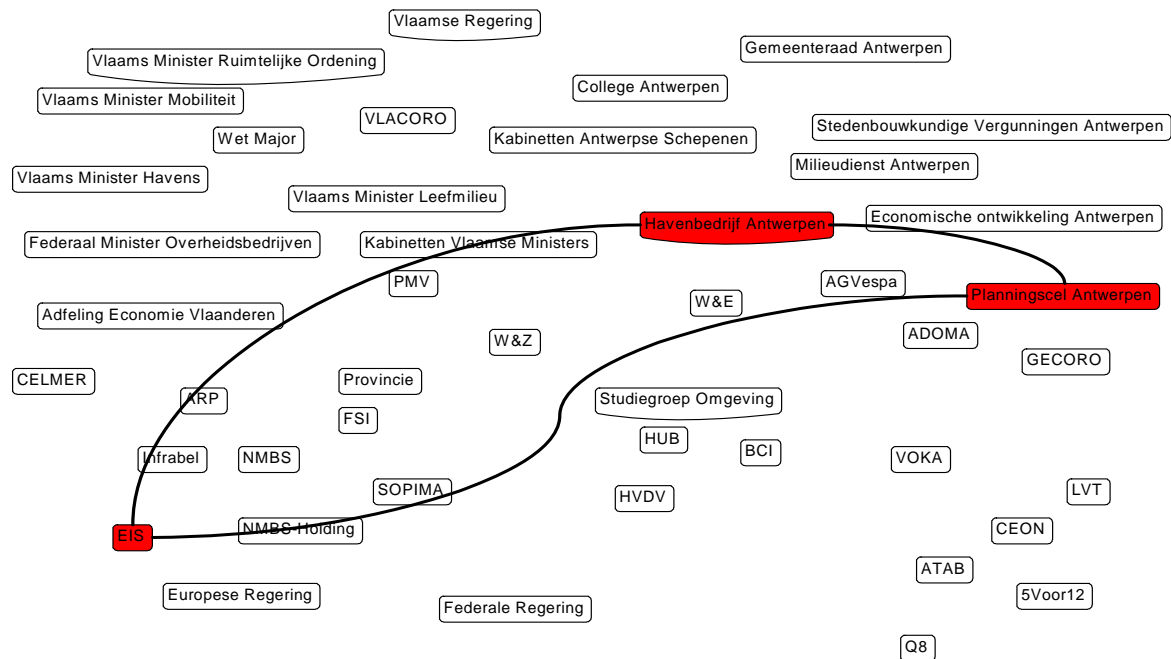


fig. 7: involved actors in the process of Petrol South

The City itself is the owner of the wastelands marked as ‘park area’ and of the ‘area for community equipments and for public use’ along the quay road. A local government such as the city of Antwerp is in reality an amalgam of different entities working together in a network like structure to form ‘the City’. In the urban organisation there are several players who will (try to) influence the decision-making. Within the city administration, the ‘Planningscel’ is responsible for developing visions and elaborating strategic and area-specific planning for major city development projects. Other involved city administrations are the administrations for building and environmental permits, administration for public domain, etc...

Different political parties and different aldermen in the city council are the players at a political level. The subsidiary company of the City for real-estate development, AGVespa, will negotiate the valorisation the City’s real-estate assets on its behalf with the other owners. Last but not least, the Port Authority is another subsidiary company of the City. In the city council the interests of the Port are defended by an alderman for the Port. The relationship between the City and the Port is formed by the political balance within the city council. Often, this balance has been a decisive factor in the process.

Finally, different other actors have an interest at stake in relation to the result of the process, such as the nature sector, the companies, the general population, etc...

2.5 Key issues

Although there was no lack of ideas for a new use of Petrol South, no one ever succeeded in transforming these visions into reality. The reasons for this are a number of key issues which form obstacles for the redevelopment.

First of all, there is the pollution of the soil and the run down infrastructure, which label the site as a Brownfield and a black point. These issues represent a high cost and mainly a unpredictable risk for any investment in redevelopment.

Other main obstacles are the divided ownership and the fact that the decision power was divided between both the local and the regional government. Former proposals for the area were often based on a loose idea, but never thoroughly examined on feasibility. None of

these projects ever made it past an idea on paper, due to both lack of substantive founding and lack of support.

Finally, consensus building was made extremely difficult due to the local political situation. From 1994 Antwerp is governed by a 'rainbow coalition'. A political formation where liberals, socialists, catholic democrats and the ecological party joined together in the city council was the only possibility of governing the city without participation of the extreme right wing party.

These key issues make it necessary to have a well founded and broadly supported vision, before proceeding with the redevelopment.

3 Process management

3.1 *Petrol South requires a process like approach*

The redevelopment of Petrol South clearly requires the approach of process management. The 'problem' answers to the two essential features of a process like problemⁱ.

First of all, the problem of Petrol South can be defined as unstructured or "wicked". The way in which different actors define the problem, the stakes and the desired development varies. Each actor looks at the problem from the point of its own role or background. The City wishes to realize a sustainable and qualitative urban development, while the EIS strives to maximize the value of their assets which are now marked as (unprofitable) park area. Within the city council, the ecologist party wishes to realize an ecological corridor over the site, while other aldermen focus on the creation of new space for companies and employment opportunities. The alderman for the Port mainly wants to secure the future of the remaining oil companies.

Secondly, stakeholders are structured by what can be described as 'a network of inter dependencies'. Each player strongly depends on others to achieve a solution. The City depends on collaboration of the other owners. The owners of 'park area' depend on the Flemish government for changing the destination of their grounds, and thus adding value to their assets. The Flemish government in its turn will only proceed with this change of juridical destination when there is a well founded vision for the redevelopment, supported by the city council. The Port cannot prolong any of the concession agreements with the oil companies without authorisation from the city council. Within the city council, different political fractions depend upon each other for the realization of their own goals for the project.

This means that there exists a network like typology of power when it comes to decision making. None of the actors possesses sufficient power, knowledge or resources to cope with the problem of redevelopment on their own. The different players are destined to cooperate to find a solution.

Actors in networks behave strategically: they will adjust their behaviour towards others in order to serve their own interests. In this situation, a government has to engage in an interactive process of policy making with other actors. The goal of the process is to achieve a solution, negotiated between different parties, in which the government profiles itself as an equal partner in the decision making process.

3.2 *Basic rules for sound process management*

Process management is all about creating the right context where negotiations become possible. Rules are necessary to avoid complete chaos in the decision making process and to temper the behaviour based upon the individual interests of the players. In literatureⁱⁱ, four main principles for successful process management are put forward: openness, protection of core values, progress and content.

Openness. The most important stakeholders are invited to participate in a process and can add issues to the agenda. These parties must be convinced that their interests will be taken into account as much as possible.

Protection of core values. Openness can be threatening for participants. Once joined, parties can be forced in a specific direction, without being able to leave the process. That is the reason why it is most important to create a 'safe environment' for actors and to protect their core values.

Progress. Principles of openness and protection of core values make it necessary to integrate guarantees for progress of a process. In a worst case scenario there will be numerous actors, with a variety of issues, making the process hard to control and increasing the possibility of delay and even failure.

Content. There is a risk that the decision making process can become the goal itself, instead of a means to achieve a substantial solution for a problem at hand. At times where a process drifts to far away from the content it becomes vulnerable and will defy its own purpose.

4 Evaluation of the Petrol south Process

Keeping in mind the basic principles for a successful process management, this chapter will focus on the process of petrol South as conducted in the period from 2002 to 2004. This period is subdivided into two phases: forming of a vision and the study on feasibility.

4.1 Forming of a vision

The formal start for the process was an 'exploration report' in the spring of 2002 by the Planningscel of the City, taking on the leading role in the process, first as the architect of the process rules, and later as the manager of the process.

This period comes to a close in the summer of 2003, in achieving an agreement between the different involved parties on a vision concerning the future of the oil companies and the decision to have a feasibility study for the redevelopment made up.

Open and transparent process organisation

It is clear that the process is an open participative process: almost all stakeholders were invited and the degree of participation was high. It was also perceived as a safe environment: actors only had to give a commitment to participating in the process, but not to the result of the process.

Furthermore, participation in the negotiations promised the realisation of 'gains' for the different actors. Whatever the result of the process would be, it would mean a higher value for the contaminated grounds of the NMBS which are now marked as 'park area'. The Port would be confronted with either gains or losses: the future of the remaining oil companies where at stake. From a strategic point of view it would however be better to be involved in the process of decision making, since the city council was set on taking this decision as a result of the process.

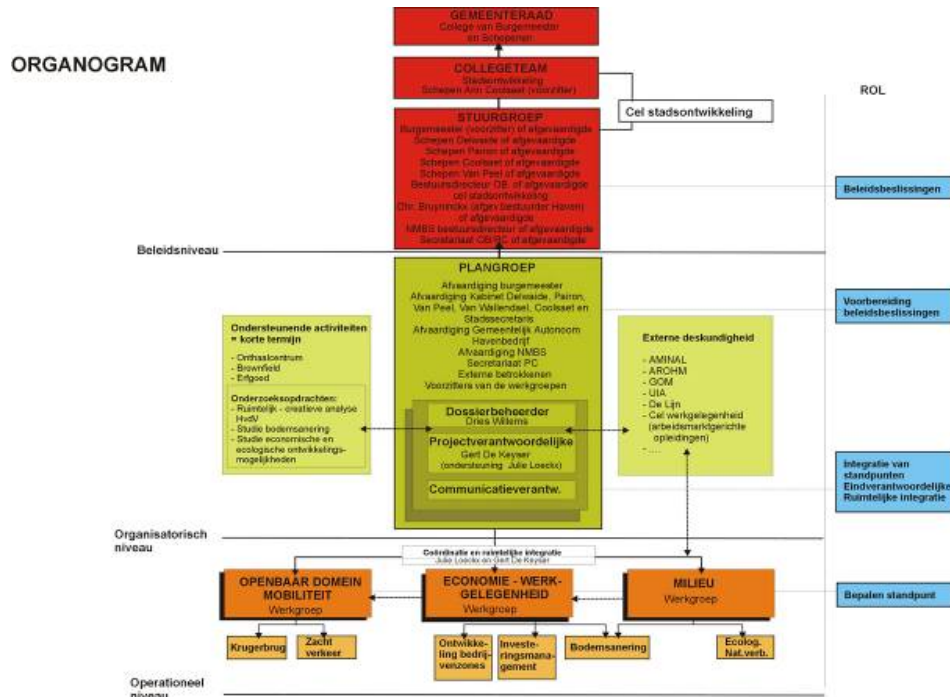


fig. 8: process organisation, city of Antwerp

For the duration of the process, an organisation was put together with debating-groups at different levels. Balancing content and support was the guideline for defining the tasks and composing these groups: room was created for both expertise on content and for strategic behaviour. During the process expertise and passed trough bottom-up, while strategic behaviour was integrated top-down.

At the 'bottom' of the process organisation several thematic working-groups were assigned to handle the substantive and factual aspects of specific thematic problems. For this reason, working-groups were populated by technicians of the different parties, selected on their ability to contribute to the formation of knowledge. At the 'top' of the process organisation stood the steering-committee: a platform where board members of the different parties could debate on the issues. With the installation of the steering-committee, room was given to the players to exhibit their strategic behaviour. The steering-committee was populated by 'heavy' personal such as different aldermen and board members of both Port and NMBS. At an intermediate level, the planning-group had been charged with the preparation and coordination of the different debating-groups.

Open agenda

The agenda was less transparent than the process organisation. The agenda of the City was unclear from the very beginning of the process. Within the city council there was no consensus on a vision for Petrol South. There was discussion whether or not to maintain the port activities, and two very different visions on the future for the site: either as zone for companies, either as a green area such as a forest.

Financial means for organising the process were made available as subsidies within the European Urban 2 program. The application for the subsidy was put together by the City, without much research or without taking the interests of other involved parties into account. As a compromise between the different aldermen, preconditions formulated in the application were an equal mix of industrial activity and nature development. However, since receiving the subsidy was linked to achieving a result within the boundaries of these preconditions, the application itself became a very strict framework, hypothesizing further consensus building.

Room for content and strategy

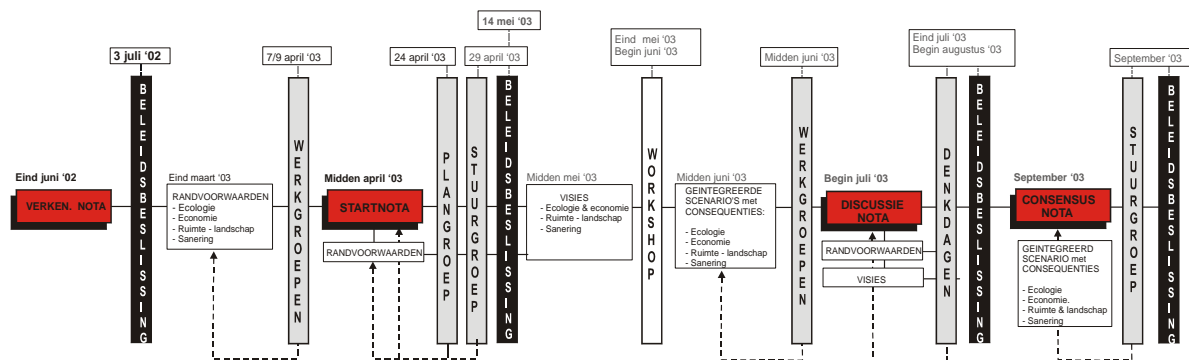


fig. 9: plan of action, city of Antwerp

The plan of action foresaw a gradual building of knowledge, in order to achieve a gradually growing insight of the actors in the different aspects of the problem. A number of parallel study assignments were tendered, to feed the debate and to generate content needed to make well founded decisions: an ecological research into the nature values, an economic study into the present and future economic activity, a study on mobility, a research to map out the pollution and its consequences, and finally, exploratory design.

Mainly the economic research and the study on pollution have been determinative in the decision-making. Arguments put forward by the economic study were used in discussions about the oil-companies. The cost for the decontamination in the different scenarios for redevelopment proved to be very decisive: the estimate varied between 26 mio euros (industrial use) and 87 mio euros (park).

In the first phase the studies supplied a thorough analysis of the (thematic) sub problems. By integrating the results, multiple integrated scenarios could be deduced, offering integral and well founded solutions for redevelopment. Starting from this variety of solutions, a gradual selection could take place, based on both substantive and strategic decisions. By focussing on content in the beginning of the process, there would be a guarantee that the final result would be well founded. Towards the end, the process anticipated the strategic behaviour of the actors, to guarantee a broadly supported result.

Integration of expertise

Conducting the researches parallel (at the same time) gives the advantage that each research can be conducted creatively, generating a wide array of possible solutions, without any preconditions of others research-domains limiting possibilities. This positively influences the number of possible solutions and will result in a better founded result.

A risk however, is in the integration of the research results: integrating presumes choosing. These choices often will necessarily be of strategic nature, thus favouring interests of one party above another.

From the very first meetings, discussions arise concerning strategic choices within the research, or choices made by integrating the results: for example whether or not to make a scenario relocating the oil-companies, whether or not to put the focus on ecology ... Because that many representatives anticipate the importance their board will grant the results of the studies, strategic negotiations already start in the working-groups.

After a discussion about whether or not to tender the assignment for the integration of the research results, the Planningscel decided to take on this task: findings, including scenario's for redevelopment were synthesised in a 'start report'. The 'start report' was however, rejected by the planning-group. A critical number of actors no longer experienced the process-environment as safe: they felt threatened by the possible result of a purely 'technical' approach, where they couldn't interfere in a strategic manner.

Decisions towards the end of the process

Actors insisted on making decisions, rather than pursuing the procedural approach of the process. The planning-group decided that the time had come for strategic negotiations between the main stakeholders, based upon the results the studies produced so far. Every actor was asked to put forward their own vision on Petrol South.

The text representing the vision of the City would be prepared by the different cabinets of the aldermen, using authority based upon the 'primacy' of politics. The administration, as the process manager, only was allowed to observe the meetings. In the end the vision of the City for Petrol South would be stipulated by the political balance between the Port and the City. In this case the scale clearly tipped over towards the Port. It was the cabinet of the alderman of the Port who wrote the vision, without much counterweight of the rest of the city government.

Flemish administration decided not to draw up a vision, contenting in reacting to the text that would result from the negotiations between the other actors. The EIS thought her interest best served in forming a coalition with the Port, and thus supported the points of view of the Port in her vision-text, while taking into account the weaker positions of both city and regional administrations.

This resulted in closely similar strategic visions of City, Port and EIS:

- conservation of the oil-companies;
- developing an area for companies in a green environment;
- investigating the feasibility of a logistic platform with transshipment accessibility by road, rail and water.

This agreement was formalized by the steering committee and approved by the city council. In a very short period the process had made great progress. This very positive effect had however negative consequences. Some 'golden' management rules were broken:

- the 'gain' of one of the actors was paid too soon in the process: after the decision to conserve the oil-companies was taken, participating in the process no longer was essential for the Port, who will eventually withdraw from further negotiations;
- a strategic choice for a well defined scenario at an early stage in the process, means a less substantially founded choice; this fact will turn on the City, once new partners have to be sought for the implementation, and have to be convinced of the choice made.

End of the process management

The project team of the Planningscel, being process manager, was in contact, not only with the owners, but also with other involved actors who would play an important role in implementing the vision, later in the process for redevelopment. The Planningscel witnessed that within the process, strategic political, insufficiently founded decisions were taken. The Planningscel took many efforts to balance the final decisions, taking into account interest of other actors, but also in making exploratory design exercises. The result of these activities is that the position of the process manager himself was compromised. The process manager had acted not only as expert by integrating the scenario's himself, and now even the independence of the process manager was questioned.

4.2 Study on the feasibility

Closed process

Determining a mutual vision changed the level of commitment of the different actors. So far actors had only given commitment to participate in the process. Now EIS and Port were willing to go further in their commitment by co-financing a study on feasibility. For both parties the vision meant an opportunity for added value. Mainly for the Port this was something unexpected that had occurred during the process itself: the added value could be created by participating in the construction and exploitation of a logistic platform.

The decision-making process in the following period mainly involves the landowners (or their real-estate subsidiaries): AGVespa, EIS and the Port. The financial commitment of the three parties for drawing up an economic and financial feasibility study for the development of a logistic platform on Petrol South was written down in a formal 'agreement of cooperation'. When the study would show the development to be feasible, these parties agreed to join forces for the implementation of the project.

Process management in this period is all but open. Apart from the landowners, none of the important stakeholders were involved. Steering committee and the planning-group ceased to come together. The feasibility study was coordinated by a small working-committee. Process management resides with AGVespa, who designed a new set of rules for the further process development.

Thanks to the 'agreement of cooperation' the process was experienced by the landowners as a very safe environment: they had been able to define the agenda and made sure that the necessary exit-options were available. The only formal commitment was the making of the feasibility study, after which they were obliged to reveal their plans for investment in the phase of implementation, but not for actual participation in the development.

The only party that was 'threatened' by the turn of events was the former process manager. While the Planningscel was unable to weigh on the decision-making, this city administration would have to commit to the result of the process.

Mixing content and strategy

Over a period of one year the feasibility study was made up. The process excels in the fact that strategic interests overruled substantive arguments. The study focuses on the constructing of a feasible solution that maximizes the realization of the interests of the landowners, rather than on founding a sound scenario for redevelopment.

In contrast to the process-design of the phase of the forming of a vision, where room was given for both substantive and strategic behaviour, this phase was dominated by a far reaching intertwining of content and strategy. This is underlined by the fact that the (tendered) experts, who made up the feasibility study, actively participate in the working-committee.

Only a limited number of people were involved in drawing up the feasibility study: representatives of AGVespa, EIS and the Port, and one observer from the Planningscel. The intense cooperation between the members of this small group created the conditions through which this small group of people could influence to a great extent the decision-making.

All this proved to be positive for the progress of the decision-making: substantive solutions which weren't supported didn't have to be taken into account. The lack of 'heavy' personal in the process organisation however proved to be a mistake, when, at the end of the process, the result appeared to have no support.

The involvement of other parties was done only by means of interviews, done by the bureau making the feasibility study. Only those actors were interviewed who would be essential in the implementation, such as a number of Flemish administrations. It is however not transparent how the interests of these parties actually are integrated in the result, taking into account that the interviews were taken and reported from the point of view of the strategic interests of the landowners.

No support

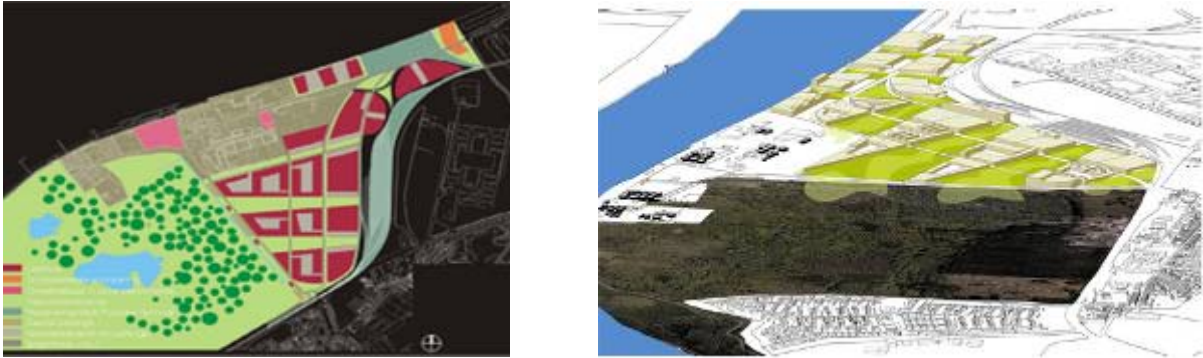


fig. 10 and 11: proposal for Petrol South, *Hub*

The final report of the feasibility study was presented in September 2004. The report showed the financial and economic feasibility of the development of a mixed industrial area in a green environment, for logistic and production companies using a logistic platform with transshipment accessibility by road, rail and water.

The feasibility study showed a solution for the redevelopment of Petrol South, which is the result of negotiations between representatives of AGVespa, EIS and the Port. The ultimate test for the support of this solution was the ratification by the different boards of the NMBS and the Port, and by the city council.

Although the city council was internally divided on the matter, the council approves of the conclusions of the study. The aldermen choose for progress, and for a political compromise, rather than losing momentum in the process. The City had to deliver results and start with the decontamination of the area before the end of legislation in 2006; otherwise the City might lose the European Urban 2 funding.

In the city council a discussion started during the debate on the logistic platform. The alderman of the Port wished that the City would identify the Port as partner for the exploitation of the logistic terminal. The city council refused because they wished to develop the quays of Petrol South for inland shipping, rather than for trans-national shipping. Shortly after this decision, the board of directors of the Port would formally refrain from further cooperation in the development of Petrol South.

Also the NMBS, when asked for further cooperation, clearly stated not to be interested in the participation of the implementation of a logistic platform. Apparently the support for this issue in the scenario of the feasibility study was misjudged by its subsidiary EIS.

Another problem emerged. By the end of 2004 structural changes were implemented in the internal organisation of the NMBS. As a result, the ground, or assets, on Petrol South were assigned to another subsidiary of the NMBS. The EIS, who had played an important part in negotiating the consensus with City and Port, was taken out of the picture, leaving the city with a vision to be negotiated from scratch with an entirely new actor. This new actor, with

other interests than the EIS, linked a solution for Petrol South to other (problematic) interests in the city of Antwerp. To this day negotiations haven't resolved this new problem.

Consequently, inertia entered the process. At a slow pace the Planningscel and AGVespa started preparations for the implementation of the city councils decision. A decision of which few people believed that true support exists within the city council.

A new round of consensus building

The fact that no support existed for this decision, became clear only after the elections of 2006. The new city council will decide upon a new internal consensus regarding the desired redevelopment of Petrol South. The decision to conserve the oil-companies is withdrawn.

The main explanation for this change of course is the shift in political responsibilities after the election. Most important is a shift in the political balance between City and Port as a result of which the issue of the oil-companies weighs less on the agenda.

The second aspect is that spatial quality for Petrol South is put high on the agenda by the new city council, most likely inspired by the exploratory design for the site, recently presented by the chambers of commerce.

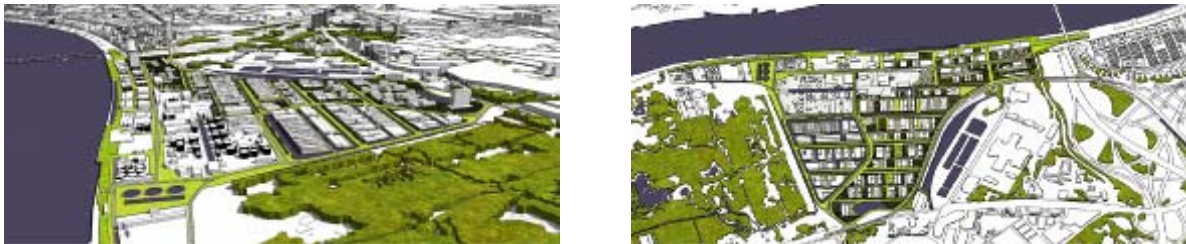


fig. 12 and 13: exploratory design, *Henry Van de Velde Instituut for the Chamber of Commerce*

5 Conclusion

The case of Petrol South is an example where the supported consensus was never realized, in spite of all the efforts for managing a process. The case emphasizes the risks and laws who are inherently connected with spatial projects that ask for a process like approach. The basic characteristics of these projects, wicked problems and a network of inter dependencies imply that the results of the process are unpredictable. The process has no control, but is subject to, external factors which contribute more to failure or success of the process than the process management itself.

In spite of the above, this author would like to put forward that conducting process management while taking into account the basic principles for successful process management, does improve the chances for success of the local 'steering' of these city-projects. Although process management was deliberately used as a means for consensus-building, the case provides no indications that failure was the result of the (mis-)use of this management style.

Process management may not have had a direct influence on the result, analysing the case from the point of view of process management does increase the insight in all of the factors that did influence the result. All these factors can be put into perspective, and the network of dependencies can be pictured. To a certain level, the decision-making itself, and mainly the strategic behaviour of certain actors can even be predicted, using the model of process management.

As a conclusion some recommendations are deduced from the analysis of the case of Petrol South:

Invest in a good preparation

In the first place it is essential to evaluate if the project requires a process like approach. Not every spatial project qualifies for process management. Investigate all other means for steering the desired spatial development. Secondly the importance of a thorough stakeholder-analysis cannot be sufficiently underlined. Often interests and dependencies, and even, strategic behaviour of involved actors can be predicted.

These two evaluations should provide enough insight for the initiator of a process to decide if opening the process will prove worth while.

Open Agenda

The most important principle for a healthy process is an open agenda and transparency in communication concerning interests and key issues. In a network of dependencies, hidden agendas will prove to be counterproductive in the long run.

Create a safe process environment

Participants should commit to the process and not to the (unpredictable) result of it. Each participants role, core value and strategic interests should be noted in the process agreements, as specific and as open as possible. Include exit-options in the process rules, but link the use of these exit-options to the obligation of motivating the reasons for exercising this right.

Work on a broad and formalized mandate for the process manager, supported by all parties involved. This means that the process manager should be able to have a large degree of independency, even towards the initiator. As a consequence, the process manager should refrain from taking on other responsibilities or roles within the process, such as expert or as defender of strategic interests. A local government can resolve this by appointing different parties within her internal organisation to play different roles.

Open and stratified process organisation

The process organisation should be as small and light as possible to guarantee progress, but at the same time expanded enough to create sufficient support. The process organisation should be structured in layers, permitting both substantive and strategic behaviour to take place. Make sure the participants in the process organisation are balanced: include both representatives who can contribute to the building of substantive knowledge and 'heavy' personal which is authorized to involve in strategic negotiation. During the process substantive arguments are passed bottom-up, strategic arguments top-down.

Create room for content and strategy

A good process works towards substantive decisions which are supported by all involved actors. To achieve this, as little as possible preconditions are to be stated at the beginning of the process. In stead of using preconditions, room for creativity can be created in using 'points of crystallization' such as exploratory design.

To avoid that strategic behaviour will confine the decision-making process from the start, it will is necessary to agree how decisions will be made during the process. A gradual transition from a substantive variety to a strategic selection should be included in te process approach.

Use experts and research assignments in the process to build a substantive founded solution, but maintain 'zero tolerance' for the intertwining of experts and interested parties. Carefully consider the benefits and downsides of sequential or parallel execution of studies, considering that integrating different studies often requires a strategic choice.

Possibility for collecting gain at the end of the process

Anticipate the typical start-end dynamic which characterises processes of decision-making. The golden rule is to never let parties collect their gain before the end of the process. Only the end of the process holds the promise to realise gain, but it can be made dependent on intermediate decisions. This doesn't mean that these decisions have to be binding. It is important to leave room for manoeuvrability of actors during the process. A point of no return won't be reached until the end of the process: "nothing is decided, until everything is decided".

Forget the idiom that after a process of consensus-building it is better to implement whatever the result might be, than to have no development at all. Evaluate the result in terms of profit and loss for society. Implementation should not be an option, If a sufficiently ambitious critical value is not reached. The process is in the end a mean and not a goal.

ⁱ Coppens T. (2006): *Proces- versus projectmanagement in stadsprojecten*, in *Inzet/Voorzet/Opzet*, p.216-225, Antwerpen: Garant ISBN 90-441-1978-8

ⁱⁱ De Bruijn H., ten Heuvelhof E., in 't Veld R. (2002) *Procesmanagement, Over procesontwerp en besluitvorming*, Schoonhoven, Nederland: Academic Service ISBN 90-5261-397-4