

# Graduation Plan Zuba Adham

Master of Science Architecture, Urbanism & Building Sciences

Real Estate & Housing

Title: Bridging the gap between policies  
and sustainable urban development  
projects

A recommendation for public planners to steer on sustainable urban  
development projects

## Colofon

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MBE Graduation Laboratory	: Sustainable Private Sector-led Urban area development



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## Choice of graduation lab

The field of property and urban area development has been an interest of mine since I have started my master Real Estate & Housing, although I do not know very much about it. I wanted to take the opportunity during my graduation to learn more about property and urban area development.

I think our planet has not been treated well over the last decades, leading to environmental issues. The last few years the attention for and knowledge about environmental sustainability has increased, luckily. However, implementation of sustainability happens in small steps.

I hope my generation can expand and increase the implementation of environmental sustainability measurements to make our planet a healthier place to live, for us and generations to come. This may sound as a big dream, and it is. But one should dream big and work hard.

With this research I hope I can provide insights for public parties to be able to steer the implementation of their sustainable development policies. If public and private parties understand each other, they can cooperate better together in delivering sustainable developments.

This graduation research is my opportunity to increase my knowledge and use this knowledge to give recommendations to practice.

## Problem statement

On several governmental levels there is a demand to deliver sustainable urban area development. This need does not only originate from a climate point of view, but is also included in regulation and sustainable urban policies of the public sector.

Often policies (in general) are not implemented or not implemented correctly (Gerston, 2010), which in this case leads to an implementation gap between sustainable urban policies and sustainable urban development projects. Changing State-Market relations, where the public sector role is decreasing, might make it even more difficult to avoid or reduce implementation gaps.

The public planner is positioned as a market actor according to Adams & Tiesdell (2010) and has planning tools to influence the decision space of private actors, in this case developers in sustainable urban area development projects. The planning tools should be applied in such a way that objectives deduced from policies are reached, thus reducing the implementation gap.

The implementation gap between sustainable urban policies and sustainable urban area development projects is the central problem of this research. The research studies, by conducting case studies, why such a gap is formed and how the implementation gap could be reduced with the effective deployment of planning tools.

## Aim of the research

As mentioned in the problem statement the implementation gap between sustainable urban policies and sustainable urban area development projects is the central problem of this research. This has led to the following main research question:

How can public planners use planning tools to bridge the implementation gap between sustainable urban policies and sustainable urban development projects?

To be able to answer the main question, several sub-questions will be answered first:

1. What are the aspects of sustainable urban development projects?
2. What are current obstacles for stakeholders to commit to sustainable urban development?
3. What are reasons for sustainable urban policy failure?
4. Which planning tools can a public planner use to influence the decisions by developers on sustainable urban development projects and reduce implementation gaps?
5. How can the use of the planning tools reduce the implementation gap of a project?

The goal of this research is to give recommendations for public planners on the effective use of planning tools to better implement sustainable urban policies and so steer on delivering sustainable urban development projects. This goal will be reached by providing academic knowledge and the empirical exploration of reasons for implementation gaps between sustainable urban policies and SUDPs.

The perspective of the public planner is chosen for this research, because of its role 'to assess the short-term and long-term social, environmental, and economic impacts of development proposals in the context of the immediate locality and within the wider geographical area, and to advise on their suitability' (Dair & Williams, 2006, p. 1356). The planner has a wide area of responsibility and also a large potential to influence on sustainability, because of their direct impact on matters such as design, materials and the implementation of local policies (Dair & Williams, 2006).

## Process

To explain the research approach we will first look at the research questions. The central problem is to bridge the gap between sustainable urban policies and sustainable urban development projects (SUDPs) by using planning tools. Therefore the main question is:

### **How can public planners use planning tools to bridge the implementation gap between sustainable urban policies and sustainable urban development projects?**

To be able to answer the main question, several sub-questions will be answered first. The relation between the several sub-questions and their aims and research methods are shown in the table below (table 1). They provide the theoretical background for the case studies, where the variables content, reason and reduction will be researched.

Table 1. Overview of sub-questions and relation with the case studies

Literature review	Question	1. What are the aspects of sustainable urban development projects?	2. What are current obstacles for stakeholders to commit to sustainable urban development?	3. What are reasons for sustainable urban policy failure?	4. Which planning tools can a public planner use to influence the decisions by developers on sustainable urban development projects and reduce implementation gaps?
	Aim	To know what SUDPs are and what its objectives are	To know why SUDPs are barely realised, from the stakeholder perspective	To know why there is a implementation gap of sustainable urban policies	To know what the planning tools are, how they influence developers' decisions and how they can reduce implementation gaps in SUDPs
		Content	Reason		Reduction
Case study	Question	How are planning tools used in practice to bridge sustainable urban policies and sustainable urban development projects?  <i>Case study question 1: What does the implementation gap between the objectives and the project result consist of and why did the implementation gap develop? (Content and reason)</i>  <i>Case study question 2: How can the use of the planning tools reduce the implementation gap of the project? (Reduction)</i>			
	Aim	To have empirical data about the effectiveness of planning tools in SUDPs and to be able to make a recommendation for future use of planning tools			

## Research design

Figure 1 shows the research design which consists of three main parts. The first part provides the theory background and the methodology, resulting in a conceptual model and an analytical case study model. These models are used to conduct the case studies. The variable 'content' is put beneath theory and conceptual model, because the SUDP aspects in this research are used to establish the gap. After the case studies are conducted the conclusion can be made which will form the basis for the recommendation.

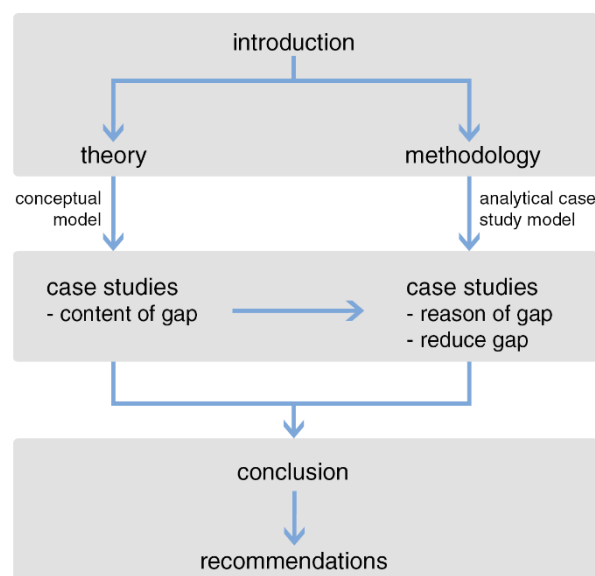


Figure 1. research design

## Research techniques

To collect data in the case studies, several research techniques will be used. In qualitative research it is common to use data collection techniques such as document reviews and interviews (Miles & Huberman, 1994).

In the case studies conducted for this research, documents such as contracts and notes of a project will be examined (document reviews). Furthermore, semi-structured interviews will be held with key persons within the projects. These research techniques will be used to construct an overview of the implementation gap and the applied planning tools.

## Relevance

The economic and financial crisis of 2008 has revealed flaws in the spatial planning of the Netherlands; outdated legislation, modernistic planning and architecture, high administrative densities and an illusion of manageability. Since these flaws have been revealed, it meant the end for urban area development that was only focused on developing and selling the highest amount of square meters possible on a location. The focus has shifted more towards sustainable urban development which asks for a transition in the spatial planning domain (Buiter & Verschoor, 2014).

In the academic spatial planning domains there is a lot of attention towards sustainable development (e.g. Dempsey et al., 2012; Jenks & Jones, 2010; Rydin, 2010; Pearson et al., 2014; in Heurkens, 2016), but this is mainly about sustainable development on real estate level. On sustainability on an urban area level there is little academic content and there are few sustainable urban development projects (SUDPs) delivered (Heurkens, 2016). Sustainable development is imposed via legislation and steered upon via policies (BRON). However, policies are often not implemented or not implemented correctly (Gerston, 2010). This is known as the policy-implementation gap.

The gap or bridge between policy and its implementation should be closed to deliver SUDPs. There are planning tools for public planners (Adams et al., 2005; Adams & Tiesdell, 2013) to influence market decision-making, despite of a changing State-Market relation where the public sector has a decreasing role (Heurkens, 2012). From an empirical viewpoint the effectiveness of planning tools to bridge sustainable urban policies and SUDPs is barely researched. Therefore this research will conduct two in-depth case studies where the implementation gap between sustainable objectives and SUDPs will be established and the reasons behind it. Then a different use of the planning tools will be proposed which might have reduced the implementation gap.

Sustainable urban developments are beneficial for society, because they are economic-viable, social-responsible and environmental-friendly urban places with great potential to face socio-environmental challenges (Heurkens, 2016 based on Williams & Dair, 2007) such as good public transportation, air pollution, facilities in walking distance and local entrepreneurship.

## Planning

Figure 2 below shows a rough planning for the rest of the graduation. During the summer holiday some actions will be made, to start with the case studies after the summer in MSc 4. A buffer is planned in week 46 for optional delays with the case studies. Then the results will be analysed and finally the report will be finalised.

Two free elective courses have been followed in Q4 of 2015-2016. The final presentation of AR0551 is on 27/6 and a report for AR0069 should be handed in 7/7.

weeknr.	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26
onderwijsweek	Krokus intro	3.1	3.2	3.3	3.4	3.5	3.6	3.7	3.8	3.9	3.10	4.1	4.2	4.3	4.4	4.5	4.6	4.7	4.8	4.9	4.10	4.11
maandag	1	8	15	22	29	7	14	21	2e Paas dag	4	11	18	25	2	9	2e Pinksterd.	23	30	6	13	20	27
dinsdag	2	9	16	23	1	8	15	22	29	5	12	19	26	3	10	17	24	31	7	14	21	28
woensdag	3	10	17	24	2	9	16	23	30	6	13	20	Koningsdag	4	11	18	25	1	8	15	22	29
donderdag	4	11	18	25	3	10	17	24	31	7	14	21	28	Bevrijdingdag, Hemelvaart	12	19	26	2	9	16	23	30
vrijdag	5	12	19	26	4	11	18	Goede Vrijdag	1	8	15	22	29	6	13	20	27	3	10	17	24	31
zaterdag	6/02	13/02	20/02	27/02	5/03	12/03	19/03	26/03	2/04	9/04	16/04	23/04	30/04	7/05	14/05	21/05	28/05	4/06	11/06	18/06	25/06	2/07
zondag	7/02	14/02	21/02	28/02	6/03	13/03	20/03	27/03	3/04	10/04	17/04	24/04	1/05	8/05	15/05	22/05	29/05	5/06	12/06	19/06	26/06	3/07

P2  
Presentation AR0551

After 21/6 and during summer holiday:  
7/7 deadline report AR0069  
establish 2nd case for case study,  
apply for graduation internship,  
contact key persons for case studies.

weeknr.	36	37	38	39	40	41	42	43	44	45	46	47	48	49	50	51	52	1	2	3	4	5
onderwijsweek	1.1	1.2	1.3	1.4	1.5	1.6	1.7	1.8	1.9	1.10	2.1	2.2	2.3	2.4	2.5	2.6	Kerst week1	Kerst week2	2.7	2.8	2.9	2.10
maandag	Open. acad. jaar	12	19	26	3	10	17	24	31	7	14	21	28	5	12	19	26	2	9	16	23	30
dinsdag	6	13	20	27	4	11	18	25	1	8	15	22	29	6	13	20	27	3	10	17	24	31
woensdag	7	14	21	28	5	12	19	26	2	9	16	23	30	7	14	21	28	4	11	18	25	1
donderdag	8	15	22	29	6	13	20	27	3	10	17	24	1	8	15	22	29	5	12	19	26	2
vrijdag	9	16	23	30	7	14	21	28	4	11	18	25	2	9	16	23	30	6	13	20	27	3
zaterdag	10/09	17/09	24/09	1/10	8/10	15/10	22/10	29/10	5/11	12/11	19/11	26/11	3/12	10/12	17/12	24/12	31/12	7/01	14/01	21/01	28/01	4/02
zondag	11/09	18/09	25/09	2/10	9/10	16/10	23/10	30/10	6/11	13/11	20/11	27/11	4/12	11/12	18/12	25/12	1/01	8/01	15/01	22/01	29/01	5/02

1st case study      2nd case study      analyse results      finalise report

P3      P4      P5

Figure 2. Planning

## Literature used for P2

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