

# Graduation Plan

Master of Science Architecture, Urbanism & Building Sciences



## Graduation Plan: All tracks

Submit your Graduation Plan to the Board of Examiners ([Examencommissie-BK@tudelft.nl](mailto:Examencommissie-BK@tudelft.nl)), Mentors and Delegate of the Board of Examiners one week before P2 at the latest.

The graduation plan consists of at least the following data/segments:

Personal information	
Name	Stein Ceesjan Verhoeven
Student number	5887526

Studio		
Name / Theme	Theme 4 - Gamechangers	
Main mentor	Gerard van Bortel	Housing Management
Second mentor	Yawei Chen	Urban Development Management
Argumentation of choice of the studio	I aspire to create living environments that are socially sustainable. This requires a fundamental shift in how developers approach seeing participation not as a formality, but as a strategic tool to realise more inclusive, socially and environmentally sustainable urban transformations.	

Graduation project	
Title of the graduation project	From Ideal to Implementation Embedding Citizen Input in Urban Redevelopment for Social Sustainability
Goal	
Location:	Rotterdam
The posed problem,	While there is growing acknowledgement of the importance of social sustainability and increasing evidence that public participation can contribute positively to it, participatory processes in urban development remain flawed in practice. This limits their transformative potential and hinders the creation of socially sustainable urban environments. A fundamental change is needed in how developers and other actors translate participatory input into concrete decisions, designs, and development strategies.

research questions and	<p>Main research question: How can local governments and developers enhance the integration of citizen participation outcomes into planning and decision-making to promote social sustainability? (in urban redevelopment projects)</p> <p>Sub questions</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. How can the integration of participation outcomes into planning and decision-making processes be assessed?</li> <li>2. To what extent were participation outcomes actually integrated in the selected cases?</li> <li>3. What were the barriers and enablers for integrating participation outcomes in urban redevelopment projects?</li> <li>4. Which mechanisms facilitate the integration of citizen input in ways that promote social sustainability?</li> </ol>
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**Process**

**Method description**

This research adopts a qualitative, multiple case study approach to explore how participatory input is translated into urban development outcomes. The selected cases will include both publicly and privately initiated participation processes. Document analysis of participation reports, urban plans, project records, and design outcomes will be conducted to examine how participation was organised and what results it yielded. Semi-structured interviews with key stakeholders—such as developers, municipal officials, designers, and citizen representatives—will provide in-depth insights into perceptions, intentions, and barriers within the participation process. Finally, a focus group will be conducted to reflect on the findings and collaboratively formulate actionable improvements to the design of participation processes, with the aim of strengthening their contribution to social sustainability.

**Literature and general practical references**

The theoretical foundation of this research builds on key literature in the field of social sustainability, including the conceptual frameworks developed by Vallance et al. (2011), Dempsey et al. (2011), and Eizenberg and Jabareen (2017). To operationalise social sustainability in the context of urban development, I will draw on the indicator framework proposed by Janssen and Basta (2024). Public participation will be examined through both classic and contemporary perspectives, including Arnstein’s (1969) ladder of citizen participation and the more recent exploration of privately organised participation processes by Verheul et al. (2021). Furthermore, the objectives and design dimensions of participation will be studied using the framework developed by Uittenbroek et al. (2019), which offers insights into the effectiveness and intentionality of participatory processes in planning practice.

## Reflection

1. What is the relation between your graduation (project) topic, the studio topic (if applicable), your master track (A,U,BT,LA,MBE), and your master programme (MSc AUBS)?

My graduation topic explores how participatory input can be more effectively translated into urban development practice to promote social sustainability. This aligns with the MBE track's focus on managing complex processes in the built environment. Within the Gamechangers studio, my research aims to understand how existing routines in planning and development can be challenged by embedding participatory outcomes in decision-making. By focusing on the implementation gap, I contribute to the studio's ambition to identify conditions that enable systemic change and support more socially sustainable urban transformations.

2. What is the relevance of your graduation work in the larger social, professional and scientific framework.

**Societally**, participation aims to improve the quality of decisions, strengthen democratic legitimacy, and enhance trust between stakeholders (Kennisknooppunt Participatie). By focusing on the translation of input into outcomes, this project also seeks to reduce participation fatigue caused by tokenistic practices.

**Professionally**, the research supports developers and planners in meeting public requirements, avoiding costly delays, and gaining political and community support. It also offers strategies to generate valuable local knowledge, enrich design outcomes, and build a positive public image through inclusive processes.

**Scientifically**, the project addresses gaps in the evaluation of participation processes. As noted by Brown & Chin (2013), the lack of appropriate evaluation criteria has hindered progress, while Uittenbroek et al. (2019) stress the need for empirical insight into participation design. This research contributes to a more evidence-based understanding of how participation can support socially sustainable urban development.