

European 9 in Norway -Four cities expand the European Laboratory

European Norway enters the 9th session of the European Competitions with 4 cities and sites. European Norway participated for the first time in European 7 with 3 sites, and has managed to get all the winners into the implementation phase on different levels. The total of 11 cities now involved lifts European as an urban laboratory in Norway from a local to a national level.

The board of European Norway consists of representatives from The Norwegian State Housing Bank (Husbanken), the Center for Design, Architecture and Built Environment (Norsk Form), the National Association of Norwegian Architects (Norske Arkitekters Landsforbund) and the three schools of Architecture (Trondheim, Bergen Oslo). The Norwegian State Housing Bank has made European to one of their main tools to investigate the Norwegian contemporary city, is heavily funding the competitions and is also following up the implementation process in each city. This is of great importance for the implementation of the winning projects.

Our fellow competition organizers and the developer organisations have prepared the ground for the competition program since last summer. This was pushed one big step further in Berlin, where European Deutschland hosted The European 9, Forum of Sites. The Norwegian cities were heavily represented. After having observed and discussed the local urban issues in a European perspective, everybody returned with a keen interest for what kind of ideas the competitors might discover and develop. In many ways the understanding of the challenges of the sites has "been on the move" up to the now finished competition programs, and will continue to do so into the phase of realization. All the cities involved have therefore committed themselves to engage the winning teams in study commissions, to ensure the process of lifting the competition ideas into the project phase and to implement them. The four sites involved are located in different topics under the overall umbrella "European urbanity - sustainable city and new public spaces" in the European 9 terminology.

EUROPAN 9 is an open invitation to young European architects to build society.

To engage in the forming of contemporary urban society does not signify to move away from architecture. Although architecture presented rather as an hypothesis rather than a definitive solution, architecture is still increasingly important as a physical tool for shaping social spaces of everyday lives.

What is changing is the range and complexity of what we try to define as the needs of existing and future inhabitants in order for them to manifest a meaningful society. From the early EUROPAN competitions in the mid 1980's, that tended to focus on the built form, to the recent sessions where projects open up discussions on the strategic role of architecture as catalyzing agents for the development of urban environments, architecture is becoming exposed to uncertainty as a new design factor. In a considerable number of EUROPAN competition briefs (and certainly in many of the Norwegian ones) candidates are presented with a gallery of various players, ideas and visions. The competition is an invitation to enter this world and, and enter it from the outside by investigating coherent urban strategies.

This leads to what is maybe the most important role of European Norway; the discovery of engaged professionals with the right competence and commitment for the task. Making professionals from the "outside" meet with up till now unknown colleagues from the "outside" has proven a good strategy for the European 7 and 8 sessions. All eight Norwegian sites from E7 and E8 are in progress for implementation.

The four norwegian European 9 sites are located in Oslo, Lillestrøm, Odda and Trondheim. All the programs has in common the wish to emphasise a sustainable urban development, that is to say, development that does not harm the surroundings, but that facilitates multiple use: both commercial interests (trade and industry), private interests (housing and services), the public space and protection of the environment, greenery, landscape, and the conditions for bringing up the next generation. We wish to promote sustainable development through functional mixing and to facilitate social activities and the public space.

The process of testing out ideas in real life requires committed cities with engaged professionals. Each of the Norwegian EUROPAN 9 sites raises important questions for the city, questions that require strong ideas that can give the right perspective. We need strong ideas and teams that are able to seed and develop these ideas in close dialogue with local players.

European Norway welcomes participants from abroad and at home to take part in this national investigation of the Norwegian contemporary city. The European Competition is searching for young talent from all over Europe. European Norway and the partner cities will be deeply committed to all strong ideas and explorations that is put forward, and to see that they are implemented.

A sincere welcome

Knut Eirik Dahl
President of European Norway
Member of European Executive Comitee

European 9:

1. Topic
2. The town of Odda – historical development in brief
3. Study area
4. Site
5. European 9 Programmatic questions

Multimodality

Spatial management of cars

Sustainability

Functional mix

Novelty of public spaces

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Town: Odda
Location: Almerket
Population: 7300
Study area: 22 hectares
Site area: 5.5 hectares

1. Topic

Programmatic intentions:

- A new landmark for residents and visitors of Odda
- Reclaiming the original town centre and reconnecting to the fjord
- Public spaces, new cultural institutions and hotel(s) related to tourism and industrial heritage
- Dwellings to attract new groups of residents

The important industrial and architectural heritage of the site is an important resource for the development of a new urban identity, and efforts are being made to have Odda included in the UNESCO World Heritage List.

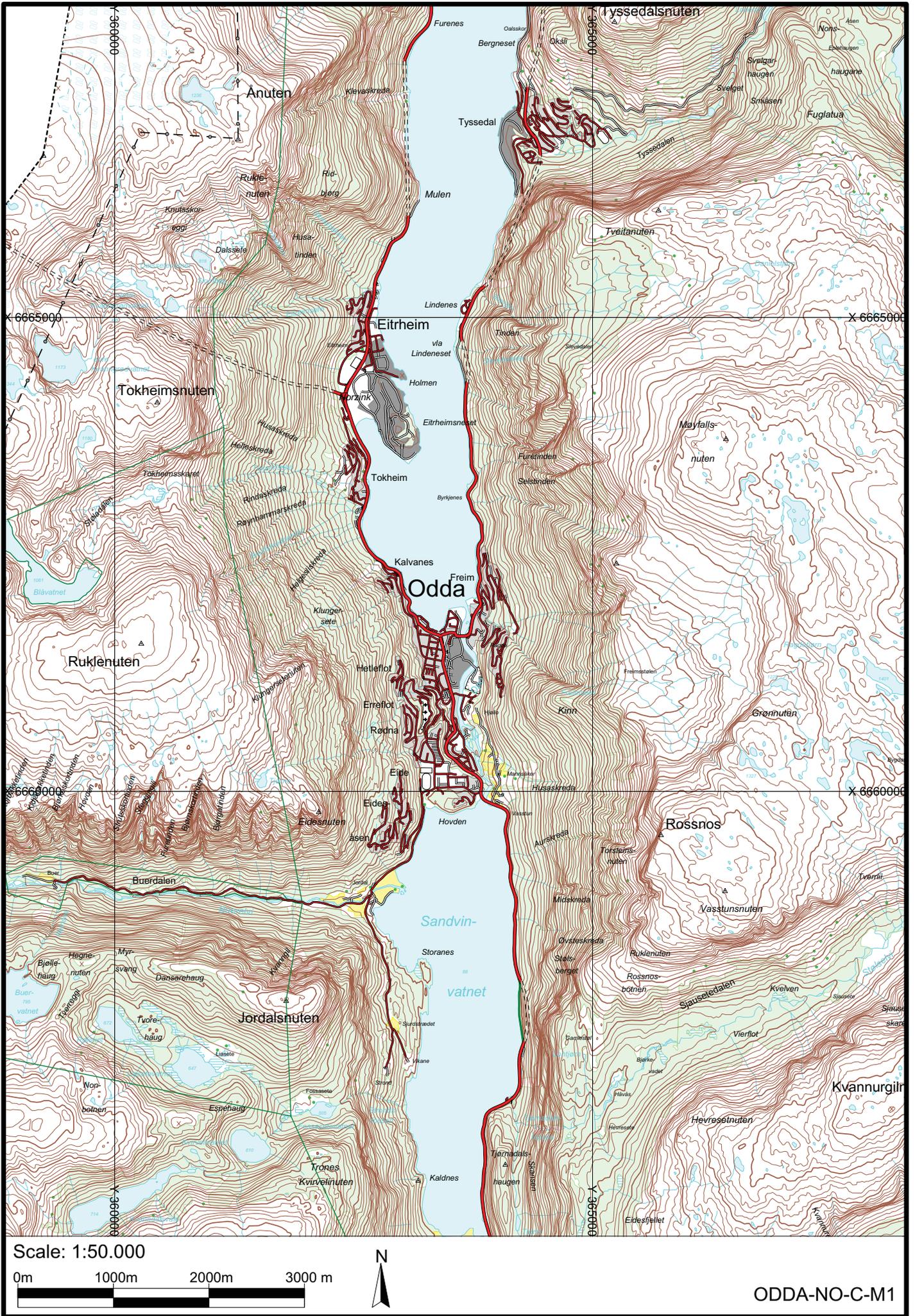
A key element in Odda's **Municipal Strategy Plan** is "Urban development – Aesthetic Odda". The objective here is to develop the town of Odda into an attractive and vital urban centre, with shopping, services, business, housing and culture. "Odda must be made more attractive both functionally and aesthetically. The urban core of Odda must become an integrated centre of which Almerket (the original public space) and Smelteverkstomta (the site of the former Smeltworks) are natural components. This will be best achieved by creating activity

in the urban spaces, and by developing the building stock and infrastructure. Further development shall be based on aesthetics, security and environment; the physical and cultural environment shall be safeguarded for and accessible to everyone."

It is also stated in the **Municipal Strategy Plan** that **attention in the period will be directed towards the following:**

- We must, by means of planning and profiling, facilitate activities and projects that help to create a new and vital neighbourhood.
- Public squares, parks and streets shall be developed so as to become beautiful and safe for all user groups. Children's play opportunities shall be secured.
- We will prioritise high quality with consistent design profile, lighting and street furniture in the centre. We will prioritise measures to improve the town's landscaping.

European participation is admirably suited to the phase in which we now find ourselves, namely developing strategies and work to **realise the objectives** defined in the Municipal Strategy Plan. The work on the municipal sector plan for Odda town and the Centre Plan was initiated in 2007. We regard European as input, knowledge and ideas for the planning and further urban development of the whole of Odda town centre. It is a clear priority to turn proposals from the competition into concrete plans or projects.



2. The town of Odda – historical development in brief

Odda is also the name of the municipality. The town of Odda is the 'capital' of the inner Hardanger region in southwestern Norway. Bergen is the nearest city, about two and a half hours' drive, this means that the town is self sufficient when it comes to many areas of services, shopping and culture, including hospital, cinema and golf course.

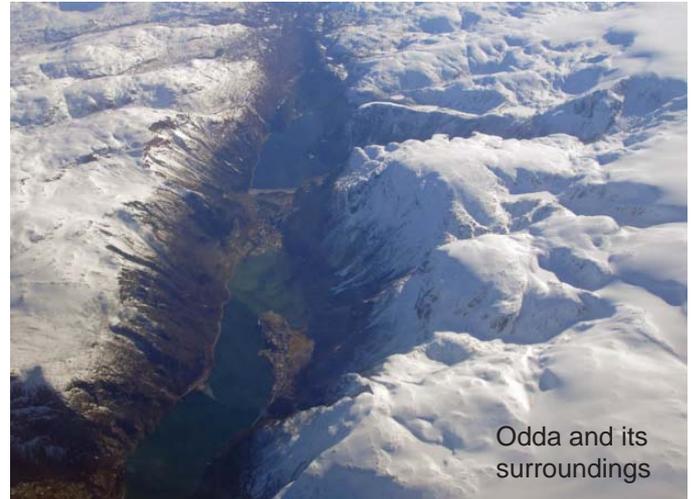
Odda is situated below a major glacier, where the fjord penetrates deeply into the mountain ranges. The municipality is flanked by two national parks: Folgefonna glacier to the west and Hardangervidda mountain plateau to the east. The total area of the municipality is 1648 km², of which a large proportion is bare mountain or even glacier; in fact, 90% of the area is over 600 metres above sea level.

Odda has a pleasant climate all year round, with moderate winter temperature and a minimum of snow. Summer temperature is above Norwegian average and rainfall and wind is also moderate. Downtown catches the winter sun due to the valley opening towards the south. Røldal is a popular winter sport resort close to Odda.

Since 1993, the population of Odda Municipality has been falling by an average of 0.8% per year. This is one trend we want to see reversed! And we see architecture and town planning as important instruments for creating the potential for new growth.

There is no general pressure on the Odda housing market, but the Municipality sees the offer of other modes of urban living as a tool to secure new settlement and immigration.

Odda is an important industrial community. The Municipality and the town are also in a restructuring phase, in which the transformation of the town is a key strategy, with Almerket and Smelteverkstomta as important resources. The new "cornerstones" in which we intend to invest are – besides industry and business generally – culture and tourism. We are concerned to have diversity in activities and experiences,



for both residents of Odda and visitors, and it is important that the interests of both groups are taken into account at the same time.

Odda is a nexus of communications, distributing traffic to and from the Hardanger region, which creates opportunities for the town to strengthen its position in tourism and culture, as a knowledge centre, and in services, trade and industry.

Early in the 19th century Odda (the name means 'the headland') was a small coastal settlement with a scattered agricultural population, a handful of local artisans and a coaching inn. The road over the mountains from Røldal to the south passed scattered farms and a mediaeval stone church to end on the quay at the point of the headland – which is the relevant site in European. Tourist traffic brought the development of hotels and businesses. Towards the end of the century this new growth began to resemble a town, as roads became streets, and a formal public square developed in front of the church, flanked by the two hotels Grand and Hardanger. Tourists were now describing Odda as a village, and in 1896 the population was estimated at around 300 souls.

About 100 years ago, Odda was a world centre of the tourist trade, one of the most important and best-visited locations in Norway. Emperors, princes, sheikhs and ordinary European millionaires flocked to get a look at our local attractions. In the course of the summer months, around 80 tourist ships would moor or berth at Odda, and the horse-cabriolets would be constantly shuttling between the quay, the hotels and the tourist attractions. The largest of the eleven hotels was called Hotel Hardanger, on the water's edges where the Almerket Park now is. At the time it was Scandinavia's biggest wooden building. Unfortunately, after long



Hotel Hardanger

service as Odda's town hall and meeting-place, the building was demolished in the middle of the 1970s.

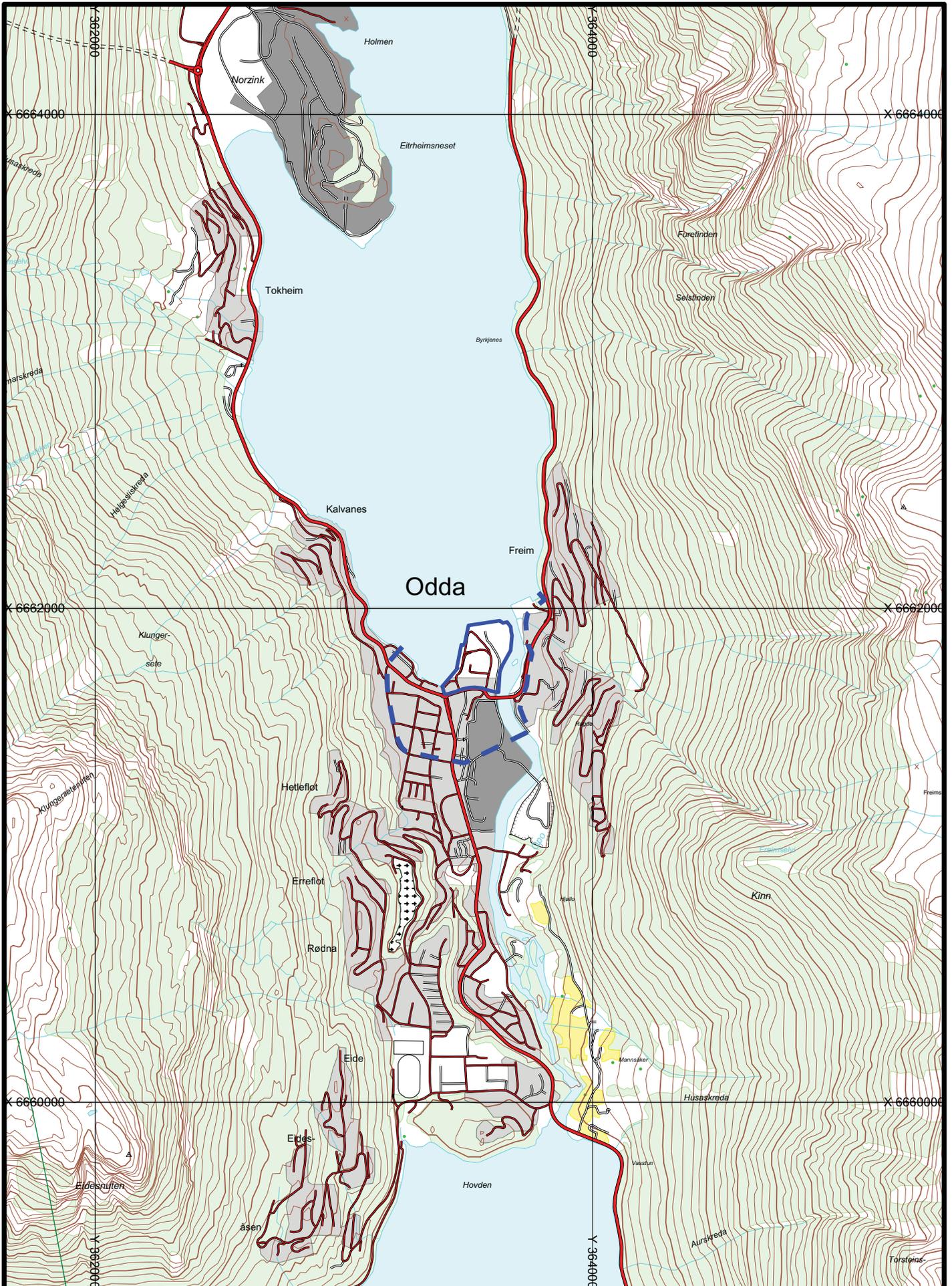
The exploitation of hydroelectric power at the beginning of the 20th century transformed the place into a bustling international industrial town.

Odda Municipality is richly equipped with natural resources, which have created a solid basis for business activity. The Odda region produces 5000 GwH of hydropower annually. The dominant power-intensive industrial companies in the municipality, Boliden Odda AS and Tinfos Titan & Iron, are vital to local employment, and a large number of businesses live by supplying them with goods and services. Odda's long industrial traditions have given the municipality a solid industrial culture and expertise, not least in processing industry and ecology. This will be the bedrock of future industrial development in the municipality.

A third company went into liquidation in 2003. This was the carbide plant, Odda Smelteverk, which was founded in 1908 as the world's biggest carbide and cyanamide factory. It was sited right in the middle of Odda, and the site left by the plant is included as part of the study area for the competition. The situation with regard to this site is still rather unclear, because it is controlled by estate administrators. The Municipality wishes to take charge of the area, so that it can be cleaned up and made ready for new activity. This process will take time, because of the uncertain property title and the heavy costs of the clean-up.

The town is on the look-out for new investments, and good reasons for these investments to come to Odda.





Scale: 1:20.000



--- Study area
 — Site

ODDA-NO-C-M2



3. Study area

Odda, “the factory town”, is located in a spectacular landscape, squeezed between two national parks – between fjord, mountain and glacier.

Location is Odda’s greatest asset. The town is framed by the mountainsides and the fjord, and by the ‘lip’ of the Sandviksvannet Lake. The terraced fall of the plateaux down towards the fjord creates variation in the urban fabric and the street plan. The fjord has always played a decisive role in the town, both functionally and as an experiential element, and the visual contact with the length of the Sørfjorden Fjord continues to be a unique feature of Odda as a town. The street plan in the town centre is a characteristic combination of topographically determined routes and a more formalised urban plan; that is, the streets in the old wooden town describe the slopes.

Odda has retained much of its original street-plan. It is Almerket that has undergone the most radical changes; the hotels are gone, and the church is surrounded by traffic and transport facilities. The freight and bus terminal is a free-standing building, not part of the urban fabric, neither is the area related to the structure of the rest of the town. This disjoint is emphasised by the car-park and the Almerket Park; only at one point has the original shoreline been preserved. The waterfront has been straightened, the quays taken over by cars, and new ventures like the Sørfjord Shopping Centre, shuts off the town from the fjord. This means that Odda has lost a lot of its *raison d’être*, the reason why the town grew up precisely here, and one of its prime qualities throughout the subsequent years – contact with the water.





Apart from some clearances and infill buildings on the demolition sites, much of the wooden housing in the old centre has been preserved, mainly along the old street lines. Missing, however, are buildings from the town's heyday as a tourist destination – although it has recently been proposed to rebuild the characteristic and statuesque Hotel Hardanger.

As a town, Odda is a mixture of happenstance and planning. A land use plan from 1963 reveals how the urban planning was dictated by traffic; Almerket is divided into two quarters, divorced from the town by the new east-west link. This is reinforced by the 1979 measures; the road out to Almerket is moved westwards, as there is enough space after the demolition of Hotel Hardanger. A new eastern road is also proposed, along the Opo river. Almerket has now lost contact with the rest of the town, it is fair game for mainly vehicle-based functions such as a freight terminal and car-park. The moving of the Town Hall and the construction of the Domus shopping centre shifts the town's centre of gravity south and west.

It is natural to define Odda Town Centre as the area delimited by Opheimsgata, the eastern side of Røldalsvegen road, the Opo river and the fjord. The centre can in turn be subdivided into five "neighbourhoods":

The oldest Odda (1), where we find most of the town's shops. The properties are by large

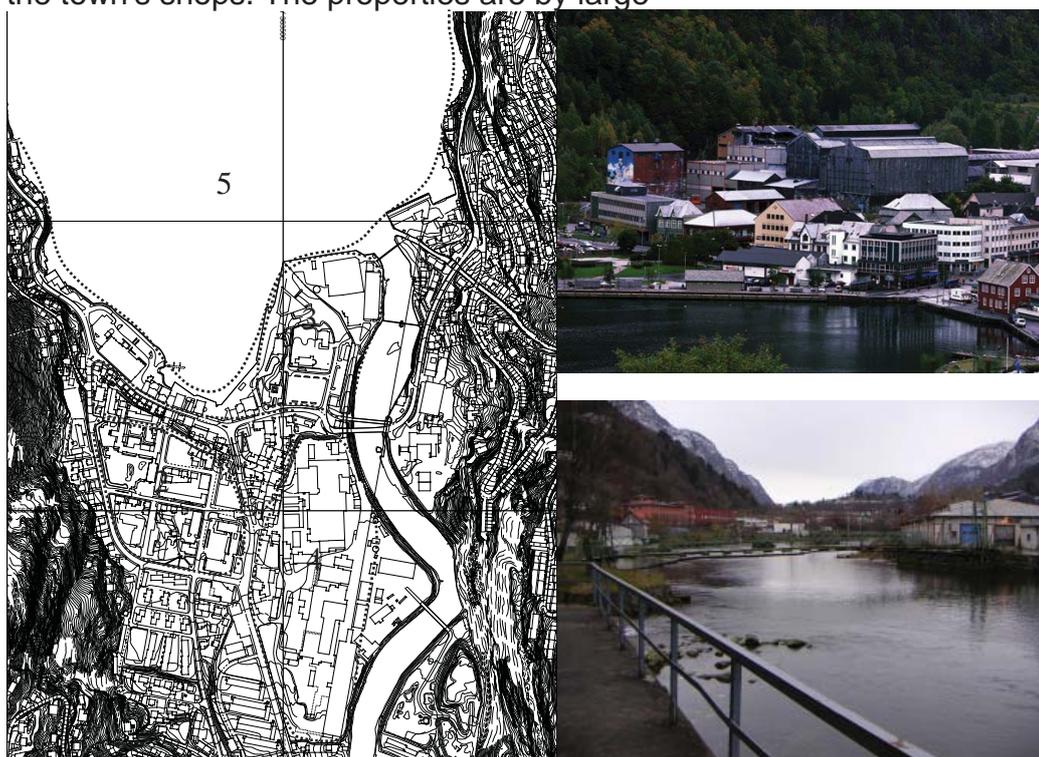
in private hands; the area is delimited by two distinct plateaux and has a street structure that goes back to the last century.

The town around the Bokko complex (2) has retained the street grid laid down in 1907; here we find what is left of the big old masonry buildings with a mixture of public institutions and housing.

Almerket (3) was originally a part of the oldest town, but is now a separate area. Both functionally and with its scattered development, Almerket is now markedly different from the adjoining urban structure.

The Smeltworks (4) is visually dominant. The Fjord (5) is also a part of Odda; in fact, it is still used by boat traffic to and from the town. The most important thing is the fjord's function as a recreation area and the fact that it forms a large "urban space" that is surrounded by the rest of the town centre and with which we have visual contact from elsewhere in the town.

The old wooden town is dense and compressed, and is the most important meeting-place. There is a wide spectrum of services in a small area, but the neighbourhood is afflicted with considerable traffic, as two national highways, the Rv 550 (serving the western shore of the fjord) and the Rv 13 (serving the eastern), meet at the Town Hall.



According to the current land use plan for the town centre, traffic from the east on Rv 13 is routed along the Smelteverkstangenten road. Planning collaboration with the National Public Roads Administration has led to agreement on a major highway rerouting so that Rv 13 will pass east of the centre. Rv 13 carries 2800 cars per day (Projected to rise to 7200 after the completion of the Hardanger Bridge in 2020). The route of Rv 550 will be clarified through work on the land use plan for the southern section of the Smeltworks site. The competition participants are invited to propose highway solutions.

Odda's urban and street spaces have been somewhat upgraded. Steinparken and Torget (the Square) have been renovated as meeting-places in recent years.

It is crucial that European and future planning ensure that the town of Odda can offer public, accessible urban spaces with various qualities for both formal and informal meetings. Younger people in particular seek out different places,

and tend to make use of the town and its spaces in untraditional ways. Observation shows that the people of Odda prefer to visit the lower parts, the wooden town, and (weather permitting) the quay. The Almerket Park is little used, probably because it is located in an area that is not integrated with the rest of the town.

Odda is visually dominated by road traffic, and most urban spaces have been hijacked by cars, buses and container trucks. As a result, this traffic flow is reducing the town's environmental and visual qualities. The national highways running through the centre are all important parts of the town centre's street plan, and the concentration of through traffic on these roads has a dampening effect on urban life. The traffic emphasises and reinforces an unfortunate partitioning of the town's shopping area. These problems are concentrated at the crossroads by the Torget square, and here we see also how the standardised requirements for national highways' width and turning radii create lines that are alien to the town's street plan.





Two new car-parks have been proposed for Odda, an underground facility at Almerket and a facility on the Smeltworks property.

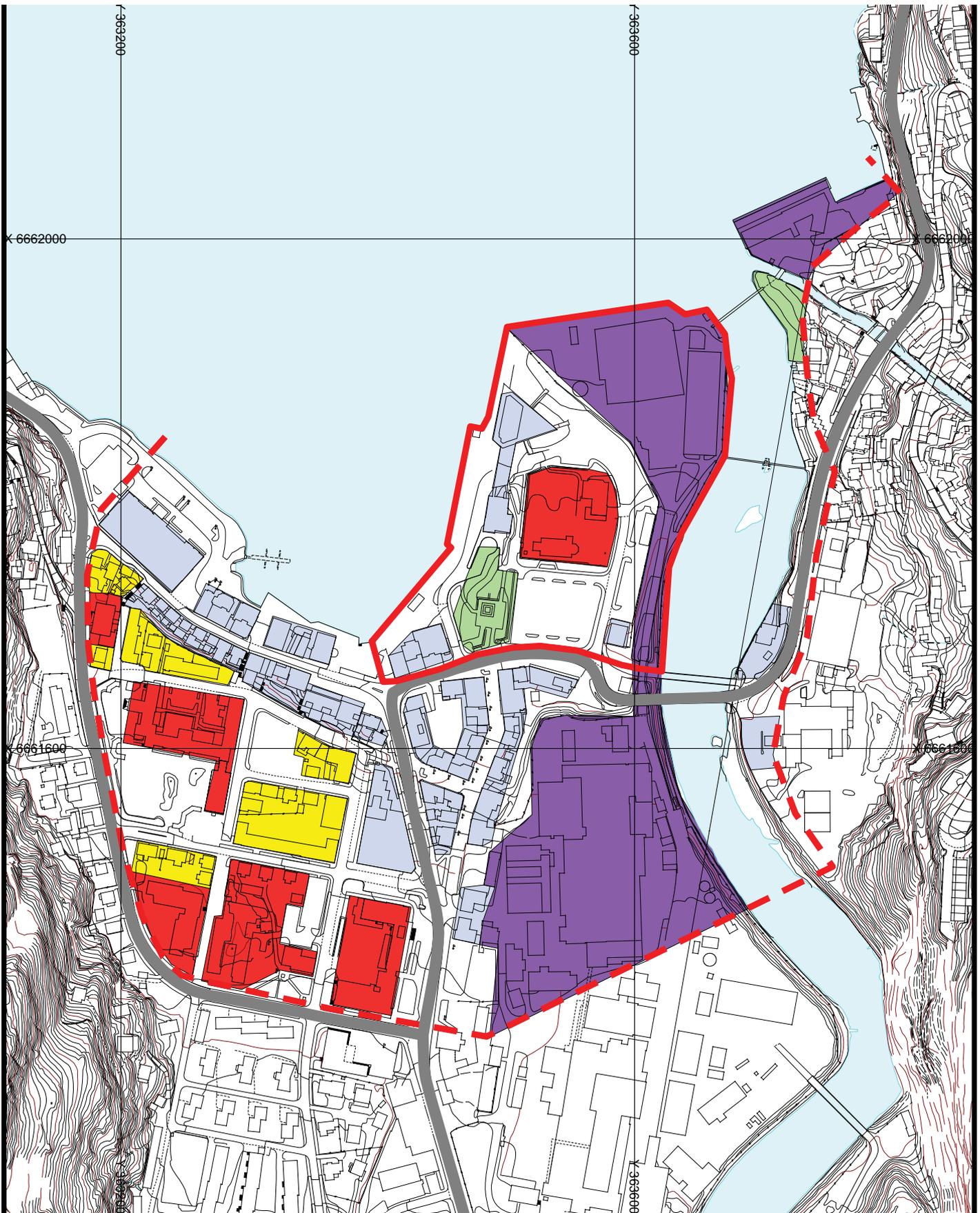
The town has preserved relatively many examples of the “popular” wooden houses from the very earliest period and also has good specimens from 1910–20. The church (built 1871) with its churchyard is a good example of its time, and the characteristic and looming bulk of the Smeltworks, which is virtually the symbol of Odda also represents an important period in the towns history. Other important urban landmarks are: Odda primary school from 1912 the Town Hall (a fine example of post-war Functionalism), the fire station, Odda Hospital, dormitory for nursing students and Odda secondary school (all four are examples of 1950’s Functionalism). There are also many examples of well-designed wooden houses from the 1960s and 1970s.

By the end of the 1960s, the town development spilled beyond the basin of Odda and new

housing projects started climbing up the surrounding mountainside.

What can help to enhance Odda’s qualities as a town? Here we do not mean solely visual qualities, the most important of all is that Odda becomes a better place for people to live and move around in. This means securing for the inhabitants and visitors better access to all parts of town, opportunities to enter into varied social relationships, a wide range of shops and services, recreational opportunities and attractive dwellings.

Almerket is no longer an integrated part of the town centre, leading to the isolation of the church, as a half-forgotten relic of what Odda used to be. The wooden town is practically just a shopping district. The concentration of shops is an undisputable strength, but at the same time leads to the area being deserted after business hours. New dwellings in the central zone could change that.



Existing use of area:

- | | |
|---|---|
| Housing | Park |
| Public | Industry (abandoned) |
| Retail/office | |

Main roads

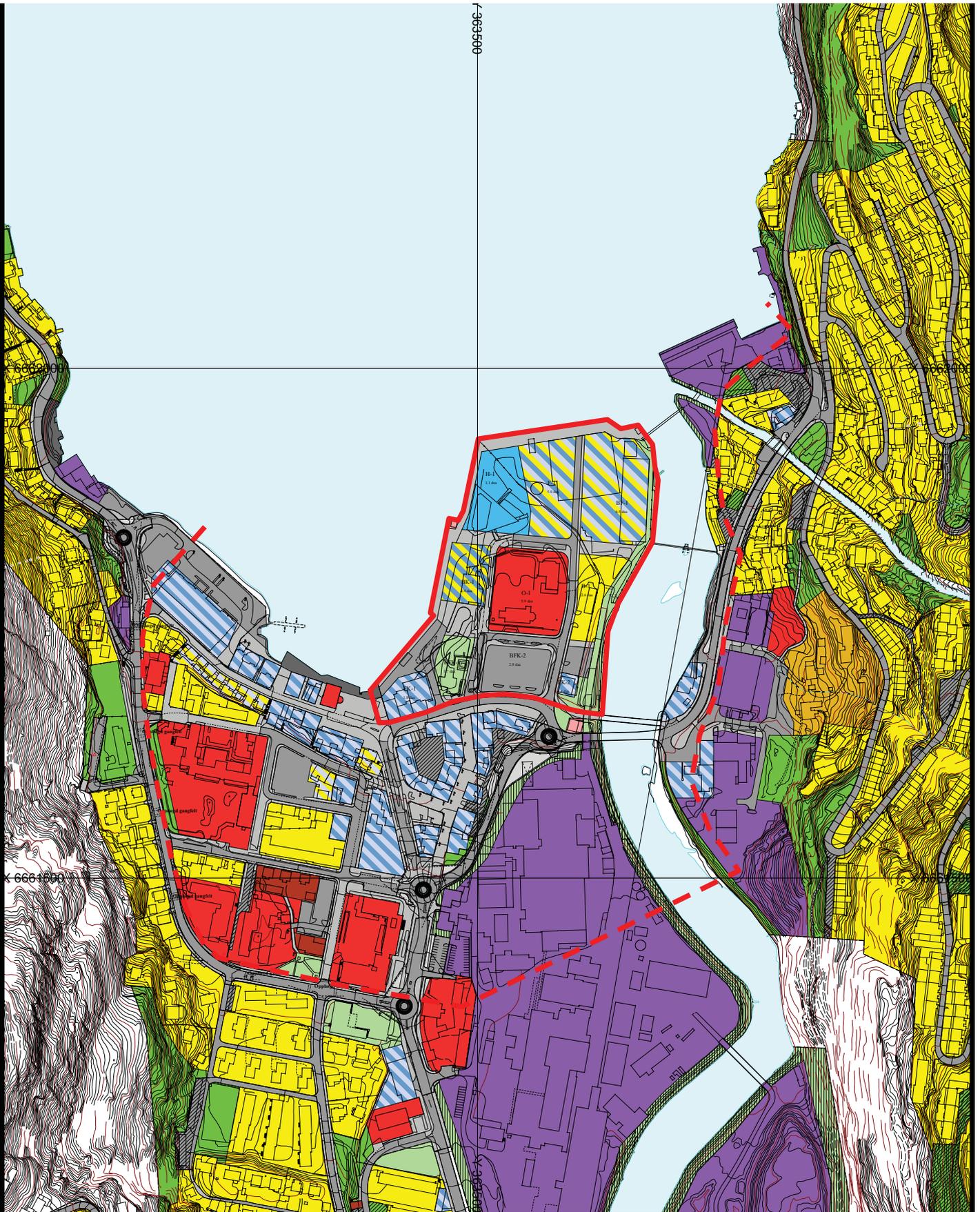
Scale: 1:4000



Study area

Site

ODDA-NO-SA-M2



Zoning:

	Housing		Industry		Park
	Public		Retail/office		Roads
	Retail		Retail/housing		Path/Sidewalk

Scale: 1:5000



 Study area
 Site

ODDA-NO-SA-M1



4. Site

Almerket is the urban area at the edge of the fjord, north of the present national highway. The area currently functions as a traffic, warehousing and service area for the whole of Odda. The church is isolated from the rest of the town, and the Park is also poorly integrated. In other words, Almerket is an urban vacuum.

Almerket is the historical name of the area north of Odda church, delimited by the fjord (Oddapollen Bay) and the sandbars of the Opo River. In modern times the area has been augmented by reclamation of the sandbars in the river and the extension into the sea of the quays in the north and west.

The name testifies to “a right of commons in a restricted area” and points in the direction of a market, a landing-place for boats (for the farmers coming to Sunday service) and transport of animals across the fjord (to and from the summer pastures in the Oddadalen and Røldalen valleys). The area represents the first urban agglomeration in Odda.

Almerket is an old neighbourhood that used to boast two hotels, a steamship quay, small businesses and houses. All that is left today is the church and one old warehouse; at the end of the 1970s everything was torn down, and a new freight terminal and new quays built.



We regard European as an input into the planning and urban development of the whole centre of Odda; in this process from **land use plan to detailed plan**, participation in European can give us new knowledge and ideas.

The Municipality owns almost the entire area, apart from a little 'slice' in the hands of the estate administrators of the Smeltworks. However, this will probably be purchased or expropriated in the near future.

Nobody lives in the area today. The area currently includes:

- v a taxi dispatcher
- v a bus stop with waiting-room
- v a pizzeria
- v a hostel for alcoholics and drug addicts (low threshold)
- v a park
- v a car-park, the town centre's main parking facility

- v a freight terminal (which would have to be closed)

In June 2006 the Municipality adopted a new land use plan for the area, which envisages:

- v a hotel
- v retail and office space
- v a park
- v housing
- v parking facilities
- v public purposes (the church and adjoining offices)
- v a public transport terminal (bus, taxi, boat)

Odda is interested in density, through a combination of or alternation between open outdoor space, dense buildings and the surrounding landscape. The Municipality envisions the creation of parks, open spaces, playgrounds and other greenery. Public spaces must be developed in connection with



active functions such as shops, cultural and recreational facilities, bus stations and so forth.

Smelteverkstomta (the former Smeltworks) starts south of this area. It comprises approx. 42 acres and contains an estimated 40,000 m² of buildings. The site takes up more than half of the central district. The work on the land use plan for the site is now under way, and is expected to be completed in September 2007. This plan and the European contribution to Almerket will represent important aspects in the development of an overall Center Plan for Odda. Participants should consider the practical and aesthetic connections between the two areas

It is a question of great challenges and great opportunities, and it is important that the competition participants demonstrate a careful approach to the potentials and difficulties due

to the very special situation and circumstances of the. The proposal should consider phasing of the plan.

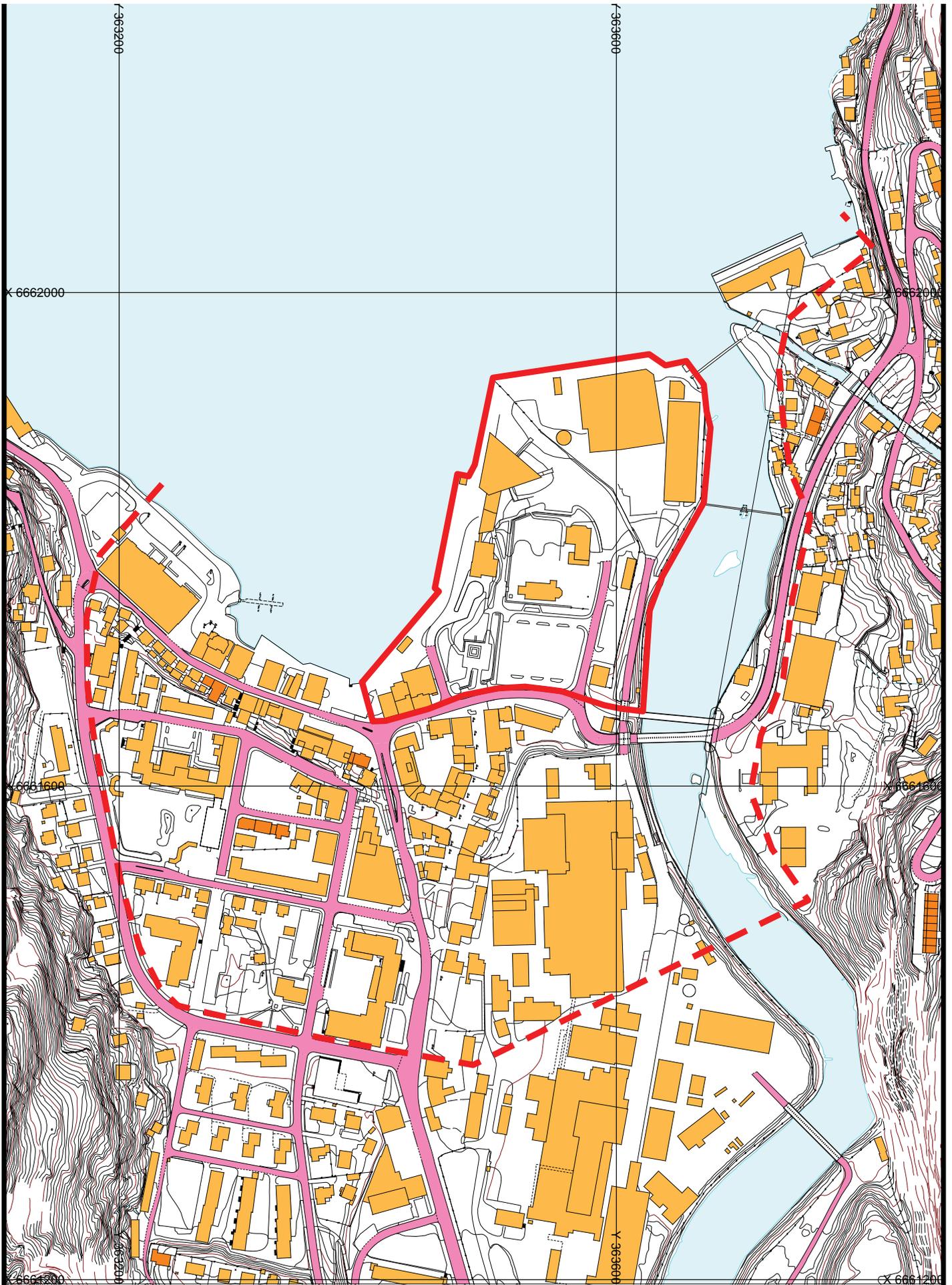
Proposals should comprise the possibility of a new ship/express-boat terminal for passengers. The participants must also show whether, and if so how, the former warehouse "Blueslageret" can be preserved. This building from 1907 is used for a variety of concerts and cultural events. There is a conservation zone along the river, which includes a recreational path.

The churchyard can be employed as a public space, but new structures here cannot penetrate the ground around the church due to archeological concerns.

The key axis between the pedestrian shopping street and Almerket should be made attractive for pedestrians and functionally reinforced.





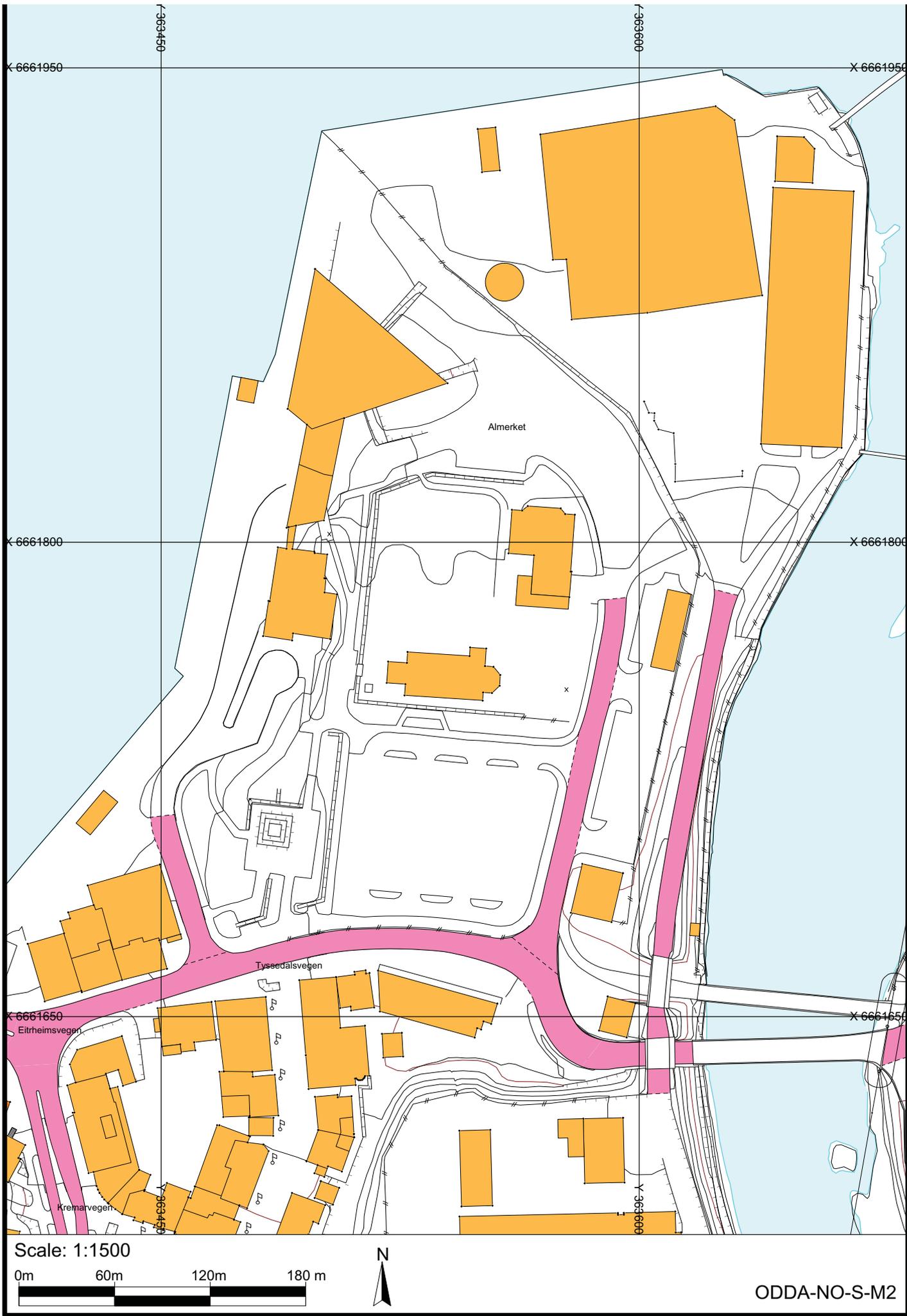


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- - - - - Study area
- Site

ODDA-NO-S-M2



5. European 9 Programmatic Questions

It is desirable that the winner of the competition should be included in the further development of the plan and/or in a specific study.

Sustainability

The town is looking for a turning-point, a strategy for converting heavy industry into a tourist attraction, and an attractive living environment. Existing local resources and qualities must be used to unleash a new economy in a sustainable manner.

We wish to emphasise a sustainable urban development that facilitates functional mixing and multiple use: commercial interests (trade and industry), private interests (housing and services), the public space and protection of the environment, greenery, landscape, and the conditions for bringing up the next generation.

Multimodality

Renewed tourism based on Geotourism should utilise the central location of the site as an intermodal exchange. Geotourism is defined as tourism that sustains or enhances the geographical character of a place – its environment, culture, aesthetics, heritage, and the well-being of its residents.

National scenic routes are unique drives through the most spectacular countryside Norway has to offer. Hardanger is especially known for its fjords, glaciers and waterfalls. The journey to Hardanger takes you from mountain plateau to fjord, through the town of Odda, into the garden of Norway with its fragrant blossoms and delicious fruit. Quintessentially Norwegian, Hardanger is the home of the Hardanger fiddle, colourful folk costumes, glaciers, traditional architecture and plenty of activities and attractions, including the industrial heritage of Odda.

Functional mix

Multi-functionality is the basis of a new public character for the site. Urban qualities supplement the landscape as tourist attractors.

Novelty of public spaces

Development of new public spaces is crucial to reintegrating landscape qualities into the urban fabric – providing for tourists and at the same time accommodating the changing lifestyles of the population.

Spatial management of cars

Urban housing must be combined with sustainable forms of tourism to combine a new urban model that reduces the amount of ground-level space devoted to the car.

6. List of illustrations and documents

1. Odda-NO-Program Competition program with illustrations (the document you are reading now.)
 Odda-NO-C-M1.pdf
 Odda-NO-C-M2.pdf
 Odda-NO-SS-M1.pdf
 Odda-NO-SS-M2.pdf
 Odda-NO-SS-M3.pdf
 Odda-NO-SS-P1.jpg
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Odda-NO-SP-P9.jpg

Odda-NO-SP-P10.jpg

Odda-NO-SP-P11.jpg

Odda-NO-SP-P12.jpg

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2. Tyssedal and Odda, Norway, a report by Stuart B. Smith OBE FMA MSc, January 2005
3. www.design.ncsu.edu/cud/about_ud/udprinciples.htm (design for all)

