

Dialogue Methods

– An Idea Manual

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Initial Definitions

To be able to discuss what is meant by dialogue, a few of the concepts that will be discussed in this manual will be defined by way of introduction. Defining concepts facilitates understanding as well as the ability to put knowledge rationally into practice. Certain lines of reasoning can seem somewhat theoretical, but if the basic meaning is understood it becomes possible to apply the approach in practice, and perhaps even modify how a method is used.

INFORMATION refers to such things as messages, notifications, briefings, data and news, conveyed via some form of information channel. It concerns the transference of a message from a sender to a recipient for the purpose of increasing the latter's knowledge.

COMMUNICATION indicates that contact has been made in one way or another. It entails a transfer of information, thoughts and feelings so that they can be assimilated; in other words, it means making contact. Communication presumes that there is a sender and a receiver and that the receiver has the chance to react to the message transmitted. Communication can be a two-way reciprocal dialogue between sender and receiver.

DIALOGUE refers to the mutual exchange of experience, ideas and opinions between two or more parties; i.e., a conversation. Dialogue is two-way or multi-way communication. It presumes the opportunity to reply on several occasions in order to enhance a line of reasoning. The dialogue concept contains a dimension of simultaneity and direct contact, either physical or via technical aids. In order to

achieve genuine civic participation, there must be some form of dialogue between citizens and those in positions of power.

CONSULTATION is a concept that in everyday language is closely associated with decision-making situations. We consult one another about what we should do prior to making decisions. Consultation is the concept used in the Swedish Planning and Building Act (PBL) to establish how all those concerned shall be guaranteed the opportunity to have a real influence on plan designs and implementation (civic participation and rule of law). Consultation shall also contribute to having matters attended to as quickly and easily as possible. The description of the procedure for drawing up city plans and district regulations is relatively detailed in PBL and consultation is formally regulated. This formalisation of the concept of consultation helps eliminate some of the original loaded meaning of the word. Public consultations afford citizens an opportunity to present their opinions (often in writing) on draft plans that are exhibited "anonymously". Following this, politicians make decisions subsequent to having read through reports from the consultations prepared by official employees. Anyone who has taken part in a consultation is entitled to submit an appeal against a decision.



Dialogue is Based on Reciprocity and Response

There is a great difference between providing information and conducting a dialogue. In a dialogue, everyone taking part must be given the chance to study the other parties' suggestions and opinions, contemplate them and respond. Providing information is, on the other hand, a one-way channel for delivering subject matter and can be done more or less conscientiously. It could be used as an initial activity for generating a dialogue.

In other words, the concept of dialogue has a somewhat deeper implication than information and communication. A dialogue presumes that the parties involved can communicate and that the information available can be utilised by all concerned.

Dialogue must be nurtured, just like all democratic activities. If when trying to apply a method the theory does not seem to work in practice, the primary purpose of dialogue must be kept in mind: the reciprocal exchange of opinions and experience. Characteristic of dialogue is that there is always the opportunity to return time and again with questions and answers knowing that there will be a response. Dialogue also demands a sense of reflection on the part of all concerned.

Through its element of reciprocity, dialogue leads naturally to cooperation. People cooperate through the dialogue, which can result in continued contact, facilitating negotiations over a longer period of time.

It is a major undertaking for a project manager to create the conditions for continuous dialogue – a chain of dialogues – during an extended

planning process, and to record what has been said throughout an entire project. The project manager could need assistance to be able to cope. Engaging a dialogue coordinator to handle the practical aspects during a limited time period could then be a way to manage the dialogue with the general public. It is essential, however that the dialogue coordinator and the project manager work very closely together, and the dialogue must be carefully incorporated into the project time schedule from the very beginning.

The fact that dialogue is defined by reciprocity entails a demand for action as well. Those taking part cannot be left in the lurch once the dialogue is finished. A sustainable society involving grass-roots democracy means that those taking part in public consultations have a right to a response in the form of action. Otherwise, if civic participation is experienced as non-rewarding there is a risk that people will not bother to become involved in the future.

Finally, it is of utmost importance that the complexity of the consultation or dialogue is kept on a level relative to the importance or degree of urgency of the plan or issue at hand. Quite simply, the consultation process may not become so protracted that at worst it might take even longer or entail greater expense than the implementation itself. In other words, good common sense must be exercised when assessing what must be done in connection with a road project or city plan in excess of the consultation prescribed by law.

Consultation and Planned Communication Beneficial to the Process

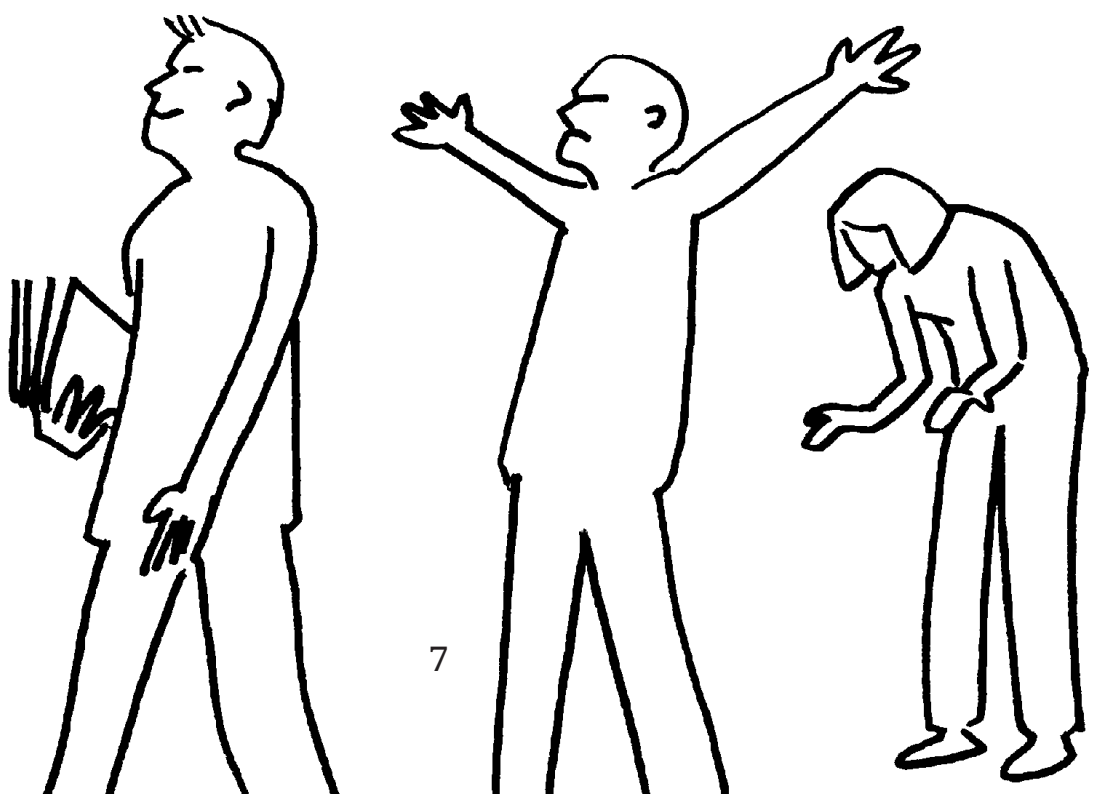
In all planning contexts it is important to take advantage of the knowledge possessed by road users, local residents or other relevant players. Once those concerned have contributed what they know from experience, an investigation can focus on the questions raised through the consultation. This minimises the risk of an appeal being lodged against a decision and the consequential waste of time. Time devoted during the initial stages of a project when investments are still relatively limited is well rewarded in the final stages when much has been invested and changes have major repercussions. Consultation in the form of a dialogue can help develop democracy with firm local support. When a dialogue is conducted with road users while the planning process is underway, they, along with local residents can be continuously informed about the material being analysed and present their views on the various alternatives. This provides a broader perspective at no extra cost. Through the dialogue, knowledge is dispersed to all those involved: road users, planners and road designers. Discovering problems and gathering viewpoints from road users and local residents early on in a project makes it possible to find solutions that are better adapted to their needs and conditions. Through becoming involved in

the process at an early stage, a person whose property is affected has more time to study the information, take a stand on the point at issue and even influence the result. In consequence, the implementation of planned land acquisition measures can run more smoothly in the final stages.

A dialogue with those concerned can reveal the real nature of a conflict and thereby provide experts with an opportunity to investigate and process this or the key issues at hand. False conflicts, in other words, misunderstandings, can be pinpointed and solved through dialogue and need not encumber the design and investigation process.

Through planning how to communicate with the outside world in a project, and by weaving communication planning into time schedules from the outset, it is possible to consciously steer results. Communication planning should be conducted at the beginning of a project and then be reviewed ahead of every new phase along the lines of the information policy within an organisation.

The communication with the outside world necessary to achieve project objectives can be organised through communication plans.



A Communication Plan Comprises the Following:

- **Purpose** – What process should the communication support? What concrete organisational objectives should the communication support?
- **Communication objectives**
What concrete communication objectives should be achieved?
These are formulated in terms of what the targeted recipients should have experienced, understood or learned, or how they should act.
- **Strategy** – What is the main emphasis during the different parts of the project information or dialogue? What methods should be used? What should the main message of the communication be and in what "spirit" should the communication take place?
- **Target groups** – What groups of people should we communicate with in order to achieve the objectives? What is their background knowledge and attitude towards both the question at issue and the sender?
- **Channels** – How do we reach the recipients? What other information providers can be activated in support of the project?
- **Activities and time schedule** – What activities should be conducted and when should this occur? Are there any "free/opportune occasions" to take advantage of to reach the target groups? Who is responsible for what in the implementation of each particular activity? What does each particular activity cost?
- **Critical success factors** – What is required of us to succeed in the communication?
- **Evaluation of the communication**
– How and when should the communication be evaluated? Who is responsible for the evaluation?

In other words, communication planning applies to the project as a whole and there can be a number of different forms of dialogue at various stages of the project in combination with several different types of information input. As the project progresses, it could be discovered that input other than what was foreseen at the beginning is needed. The communication planning should therefore be reviewed and revised at regular intervals. The time schedule for each specific dialogue is always incorporated in the communication plan.

Planning Process Promoted through Dialogue

Characteristic of the planning process is that new ways to solve a problem are examined continuously to achieve a good final product. The planning process is defined through the consultations and evaluations conducted throughout in order to advance. Learning more about the problem to be solved makes it possible to come closer to an acceptable solution.

'It should be made possible to conduct a dialogue with the general public throughout the entire planning process, not just during certain short hectic periods. It is often emphasised in theoretical planning discussions that it is most important to consult the public at the early planning stages when it is still possible to influence major decisions. On the other hand, when it concerns a tangible road alignment that has a considerable impact on local residents, there is no reason to be content with public consultation at the early stages alone. This is a case where those concerned should also have the chance to express their opinion about the final proposals, not only through the consultation prescribed by law but preferably also through dialogue.

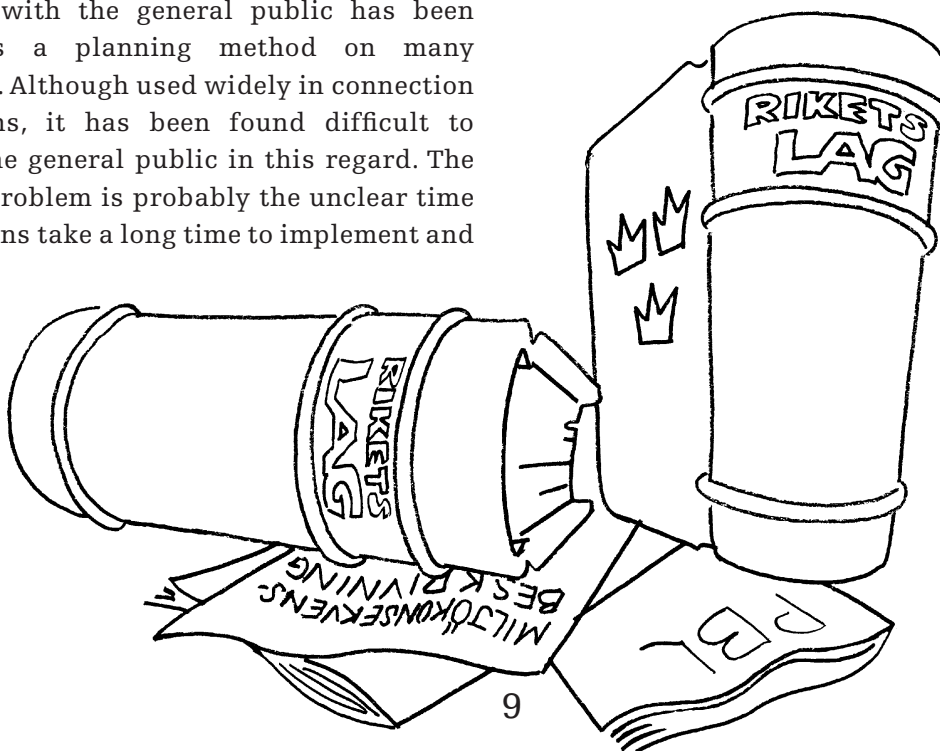
Dialogue with the general public has been tested as a planning method on many occasions. Although used widely in connection with plans, it has been found difficult to consult the general public in this regard. The greatest problem is probably the unclear time frame. Plans take a long time to implement and

people quite simply tire of the questions at issue when "nothing happens". Experience has also shown that it is difficult to get people to discuss complicated planning questions; this mostly ends up in different pressure groups asserting their own standpoint in opposition to someone else's.

Nonetheless, certain projects have proven more successful. Characteristic of these is that a smaller group assembles on several occasions to learn more about the questions at issue through some form of pedagogical process, with qualitative consultation being the result.

The planning process and the project are not finished until the road is built and it can be evaluated by its users. It can be found during the evaluation that the design was not optimal and that it must be changed. In which case, dialogue might be necessary again ...

Sometimes it can be a matter of a chain of dialogues that results in a workable solution. This gives a good picture of how to regard public dialogue from the long-term perspective that planning always entails.



Minutes of Meeting, Documentation

It is very important to keep minutes from consultation and dialogue meetings, as it is virtually impossible to remember later what was said and how the discussions went. The consultation also has more status if what was brought up is recorded in black and white. It is easier to capture questions that might have got lost in the administration if all meetings are recorded, as this provides the chance to go back and find them in earlier documents.

The person keeping the minutes of meeting therefore plays an important part in all consultation situations. As recording the minutes at public meetings demands full attention, the person assigned should not have any other simultaneous task to perform. For these minutes to function as intended in a dialogue project they must be written up and distributed to all those taking part as soon as possible. This provides everyone with updated information well in advance of the next meeting. In order to incorporate public opinion into the more technical analyses, information recorded in the minutes must be made available immediately.

It is also important to compile the results of a dialogue that may have continued over a longer period of time. This compilation need not be very detailed. The checklist given at the end of this manual can be used for quick

assistance. The dialogue coordinator assigned this specific time-limited task must ensure that his/her compilation of the results of the dialogue can benefit the project as a whole. While this type of compilation shares certain similarities with the formal accounts of official consultation, the very fact that it is not formal allows greater freedom to describe the line of action and course of events and assess whether the aims and objectives have been accomplished.

Once a dialogue has been conducted in several projects, the compilation of the results of these dialogues can then serve as a basis for evaluating both dialogue methods and processes. This also provides grounds on which to assess the sustainability and effects of civic participation. As there are no dialogue routines today apart from the consultation required by law, we are tentatively finding our way, and there is always a risk of making a mistake at any time. This means that documentation and evaluation are of the utmost importance.

In order to be able to evaluate these dialogues, it is highly advantageous if they are recorded in a similar way. This makes it easier to compile different experiences and discuss the similarities and dissimilarities in projects.

Presentation Material

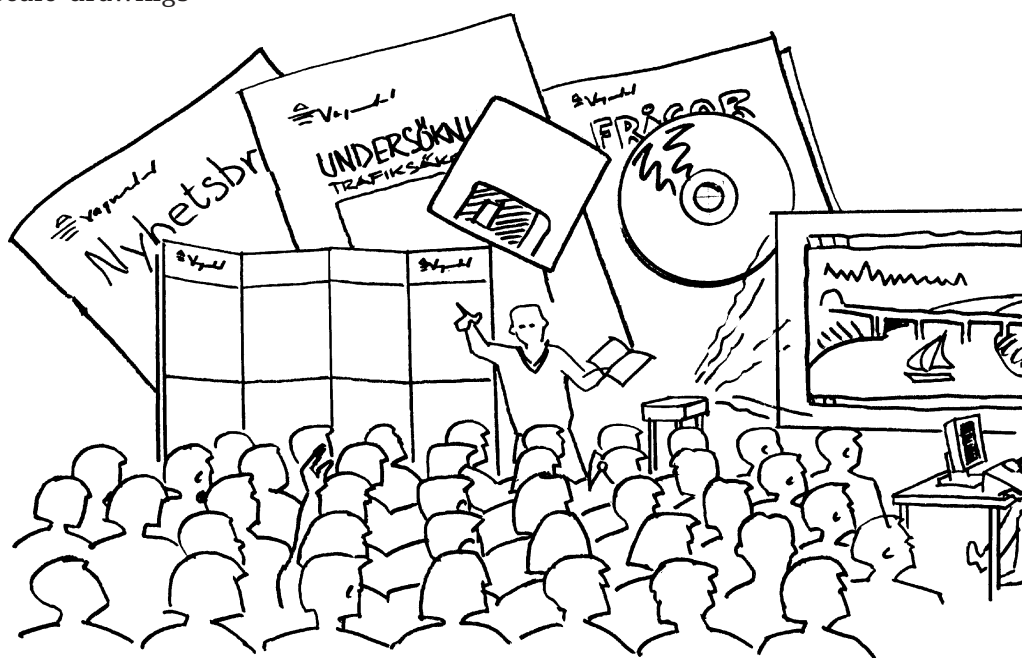
The quality of the presentation material used in public consultations or dialogues should be as good as possible. Good quality means it should be intelligible and comprehensible and not made complicated by providing any and all conceivable information. Preferably it should be in the form of a map that clearly illustrates the question at issue. Functional presentation material is easily obtained through choosing the right map segment and adding all the alternatives under discussion. A public relations officer should be assigned to the project at an early stage so that presentations are adapted to the intended target group. Modern GIS technology, computer-aided drawings and 3D technology make it fully possible to produce high quality presentation material early on in the process, even if there has not been enough time to investigate all the factors involved. It is always possible to present a preliminary sketch, a draft or the like while clearly indicating that it is not the final proposal.

It is easy to distribute simple sketches in A4 format to everyone at a public consultation. These can be used as OH slides and in PowerPoint presentations on all dialogue or consultation occasions. Large-scale drawings

and maps are preferable at meetings and open houses where they can be hung up and discussed in small groups. Such maps usually need to be adapted with different colour markings for the sake of clarity and to function as a basis for discussion.

The planning process itself has much to gain if clear, straightforward presentation material is produced right away. This makes it possible for everyone involved to see the problems and shortcomings and react earlier. Ordering such material in conjunction with the contracting of the consultant provides more tangible material on which to base discussions at the initial public consultations.

In connection with public dialogues, professionally well-prepared material is often interpreted as a sign that everything has already been completely analysed, and that it is too late to exert an influence. This is a dilemma for the person who is to conduct the consultations. While there is a need for clear, reliable information material, this should not inhibit the dialogue. The status of the presentation material within the project must therefore always be made clear.



Dialogue Options

What are the Various Options?

There are a number of dialogue options that can be used in connection with public consultations. A few of these are discussed below. The different methods can be used individually as well as in all sorts of conceivable combinations to achieve a dialogue that works locally. They can be used in a chain of dialogues beginning from the feasibility study

and preliminary design plan through to the formal adoption of the final design plan and project implementation. The following matrix is a compilation of the methods described below.

Method	Characteristics	Time aspect
Work groups	Work groups are formed and meet a few times for discussions with the Swedish Road Administration.	Can take anything from a month to several years.
Seminars	A couple of meetings with invited delegates. Specific issues are discussed.	A month is needed to allow enough time for the preparations and two meetings.
Study circle / workshop	A group studies a subject together on a few occasions.	Often one meeting a week for 5-10 weeks.
Open house	Manned premises with an exhibition of the analysis material available.	An open house should last at least a couple of weeks, preferable longer. Preparation time, one week.
Charrette	Development on the open house idea. Planners design a draft plan through dialogue with members of the general public who come and go	The charrette itself takes about a week, but the preparations and finishing touches afterwards means having to allot half a year.
The planning book method	Three planning books are produced comprising a combination of questionnaires and information material. Work groups or study circles use planning books.	The method takes a year.
Walk-through evaluation	Promenade in the area followed by a discussion.	This method requires a couple of weeks of preparation, three hours to carry out and it takes about a week for the documentation.



Advantages	Disadvantages	Area of Suitability
Quite easy to implement. Provides a good dialogue.	The groups can function poorly, which causes disappointment.	Good when there is a large group of people who want to be involved.
Simple and undramatic way to achieve a dialogue. Creative way of working.	Only a limited circle is reached.	Suitable when the objective is more in-depth knowledge within a certain field.
Good method for knowledge-building. Creative, method in which much is learned.	Only a limited circle is reached.	Suitable when the objective is more in-depth knowledge in a certain area.
Many people are reached that might otherwise not have shown any interest.	Can be chaotic if the opening hours are too short and many people show up.	Suitable where the intention is to arouse wider interest. Good at the beginning of a project.
Provides good, high quality dialogue. The questions at issue can be addressed creatively.	Long planning period. Places great demands on the project management.	Suitable when there are many stakeholders who can be encouraged to take part and support a joint proposal.
Good, high quality dialogue. Knowledge- enhancing method.	This method takes a long time. Requires major effort on the part of the project management.	Suitable when there is a lot of time available and many people are interested in becoming involved.
Fast and simple method. Gives an indication of where the problems are.	Only a limited group is reached. If it is the intention to reach a wider group, additional walk-through evaluations can be conducted.	Suitable method to introduce a longer dialogue. Good in combination with other methods.

Work Group Method

In this method, members of the community volunteer to become involved in a road project in the form of work groups. These work groups meet decision-makers and road design engineers a few times to conduct a dialogue. This procedure was tested in connection with the feasibility study for the Norrtälje Bypass in the spring of 1996. The dialogue was introduced through a couple of general meetings, at which point the work groups were formed and information was exchanged. The groups then met on a few occasions during the following month. The process was concluded by a couple of general meetings where the various viewpoints of the work groups were collected. Experts from the Swedish Road Administration and municipal planners took part in these meetings.

Working in a reference group can be quite similar to this. The main difference is that work groups consist of people who volunteer to take part in the consultation during their

spare time. Members of reference groups are often appointed by the project management or by a political decision-making body and take part "in the course of duty" to discuss plans or proposals. Another variation is something in-between, where both professionals and laymen take part. It is not always that work groups function well, with the result that the members often become disappointed. The final general meeting can also be a source of disillusionment. Otherwise, this is a relatively simple way to stimulate dialogue for work groups that manage well on their own. Timewise, work groups and general assemblies do not necessarily prolong the project time schedule to any greater extent. Well-functioning work groups can evolve into informal networks for their members and be a resource for the project management during the continuation of the process.



Work Groups and Consultation Groups

As is the foregoing, work groups are formed comprising volunteers who discuss plans in their spare time. These work groups then each select a couple of representatives who take part in consultation groups along with representatives from the Swedish Road Administration, the municipality and other public authorities. These consultation groups meet regularly to exchange viewpoints and information. The work groups are thus able to follow the progress of the project and continually influence the direction it takes through the input of their representatives. Those involved provide the project management with information that is valuable to get early in the process before design plans start to preclude other possibilities.

This method was used during the winter and spring of 1997 in connection with the second phase of the Norrtälje Bypass, the preliminary road design. The consultation was introduced through a couple of general meetings, at which point the work groups were set up and information was exchanged. The work groups discussed the questions that materialised through the preliminary road design. The consultation group met approximately once a month when a dialogue was conducted between representatives from the Swedish Road Administration, the municipality and the work groups. On several of these occasions different experts were summoned. A hearing was arranged with municipal politicians. The viewpoints of the work groups were taken into consideration in the preliminary road design and influenced the content of the environmental impact analysis. The dialogue project was concluded by a general meeting when the

viewpoints and experience of the participants were collected. (A more detailed description of this dialogue project is presented in Swedish Road Administration Report 1997:100 entitled *Dialog i Norrtälje, allmänhetens medverkan i vägplanering* [Dialogue in Norrtälje, Participation of the General Public in Road Planning], and in a paper entitled *Dialogue in Norrtälje* presented at an international conference. This can be downloaded from www.arkitekturanalys.se.

A similar work procedure involving both work and consultation groups was implemented in 2005 and 2006 during phase three of the Norrtälje Bypass Project. This dialogue process was concluded with an open house and general meeting as well as a couple of landowner meetings. Plans are to construct the road in 2013.

Alexandersson and Rönnlund describe a similar working method in their book *Nya spår* [New Tracks] in which they give an account of how a village community can organise their work and coordinate meetings and input. Organising more detailed consultation is always time-consuming. The "bureaucratisation" of volunteer efforts can bog down group members. On the other hand, this procedure enables dialogue between different parties and makes it possible to spread different points of view and get a response. More sustainable civic participation is ensured, which promotes the democratic process. According to Alexandersson and Rönnlund it will ultimately be possible to incorporate this procedure in the municipal decision-making process.

Seminars and Dialogue Meetings

The simplest way to generate conditions for dialogue is to arrange a series of meetings for a constructive discussion of the question at issue. At least two of these meetings should have basically the same participants. The better the preparation, the greater the chance of success. Different pedagogical tools can help keep participants from being blocked by their own preconceived ideas. One example is the metaplan method, but there are other types of pedagogical methods that work just as well. At seminars and other constructive meetings it is important that there are not too many participants and that they all get a chance to speak. It is when everyone has a chance to take part in the discussion that dialogue is achieved.

The idea behind the method developed from the metaplan method is that representatives of several stakeholders are invited to two seminars to discuss a specific problem. At the first seminar these delegates are requested to write down what they experience as the problem on small slips of paper. These are then read aloud and arranged on a notice board as "trees", sorted into cause and effect.

The problems are also categorised according to type. Everyone is then requested to copy down the problems in this hierarchical order. As homework, the delegates are to return to their own stakeholder groups to discuss the questions at issue, adjust "the tree" and prioritise the questions according to what is considered most important to address first. The metaplan concept uses a common pedagogical instrument to be able to visualise a problem, in this case a "tree" where the "leaves" are slips of paper containing comments and ideas.

At the following seminar a few weeks later the delegates report what was discussed in their respective associations / with their fellow colleagues. This is followed by an idea experiment whereby the delegates are divided into groups to write down how they imagine solving the existing problems. These seminars can be highly creative and the dialogue can work very well. This method is easy to arrange, takes little time and is an excellent way to promote dialogue, consultation and more in-depth knowledge.



Study Circles

Another way to arrange a dialogue is to involve representatives from different interest groups in study circles to learn more about the problem(s) related to the plan at hand. Study circles are also a well-established tradition in Sweden and therefore relatively easy to arrange.

The study circle should have some form of contact with the road project via a project manager, coordinator, etc. A study circle is not limited to exactly the same time frame as the road project in question, and the members can act as a resource during larger public consultations.

In similarity to seminars, study circles can be very creative and the dialogue can work very well. This is a very good method for dialogue, consultation and increasing knowledge.

"Drop-in" or "Open House"

A drop-in opportunity for the general public is a method that can work for consultation and dialogue. During a certain period, a manned site office is set-up in existing premises, such as a library or school. Experts and other persons in positions of responsibility are there to answer questions from the public and discuss their ideas and suggestions. The opening hours must suit the times when people can come. This method can be very productive if the right people are available and if the times and location are chosen carefully. The viewpoints presented on these occasions, including names, should be noted down and saved. People can also be encouraged to put their comments in writing, preferably on the spot.

Arrangements can also be made at a drop-in site to exhibit existing maps and other analysis material. This facilitates discussion.

It is suitable to arrange drop-in facilities either on a couple of occasions or during a longer time if the planning process is long. This method needs to be combined with other means of consulting the public. A general meeting in connection with a drop-in period is a suitable combination.

In Stockholm the Swedish Road Administration tested a type of drop-in activity in conjunction with a feasibility study for road audits in Vaxholm, Arninge, Mörby, Hemmesta and Gålö. On a spring day, the project manager and a public relations officer stood at the town square in front of a large map mounted on a screen so that people could see the alignment in question and have an opportunity to explain what they considered to be a problem. All comments were noted and drawn on a transparent sheet superimposed on the map.

It is possible that people consider this method a little too spontaneous if it is not announced in advance. Only those who happen to drop in are reached. If the open house hours are too short there is a risk that many people might come at the same time, providing too little opportunity for dialogue. This can be somewhat chaotic.

On the other hand, a drop-in activity makes it possible to reach those who might not have bothered getting involved. The method can be extremely good to make people aware that "something is in the pipeline" and that they can be involved without any greater commitment. The method is simple to implement, but does require preparation to ensure that there is background material and other information available.

Charrette or "Planning Weekend"

This is a new type of method that is gradually winning ground in the USA. In England the method is called a "planning weekend" or "action planning". In some ways it is developed from the drop-in method, and is an idea of how public consultation could be conducted. It is in complete contrast to the Swedish planning model involving public consultation and referrals over an extended period of time.

A charrette lasts an average of six to eight days, but this is subsequent to several months of extensive preparation when all existing documents, including technical data, plans and maps are collected for detailed analysis. The area is photographed and audits are conducted. The charrette itself is planned in minute detail to ensure that everything will run as planned.

The charrette is conducted on premises as close as possible to the area in question. A site office is set up for the entire design team for the six days or so.

A charrette shall include representatives from the following professions: a design team of about eight people comprising planning engineers, analysts and architects/landscape architects and those who can quickly produce sketches and deliver on-the-spot presentations.

- A team leader to make decisions
- Municipal planners
- Other public authorities
- The client or developer
- Landowners
- Associations and other players
- Members of the general public
- Anyone who could lodge an appeal and stop the project.

The design team settles in the first day, and everyone is invited to an introductory presentation meeting the same evening.

Everyone intending to take part in the charrette is obliged to fill out a registration form and attend this meeting. The initial speech is important as this is when the entire project is presented.

On days two to five, delegates are welcome to visit the charrette during half the day; i.e., drop in. The discussions continue and all incoming suggestions are included. Everything is hung on display on the walls. Everything is noted and illustrated. Each day is concluded with a review of all that has been received and displayed during the day. As many drawings as possible.

During days six to eight the design team retreats to prepare the final documents, which is a finished plan proposal incorporating district regulations, street and traffic plans, perspectives and illustrations.

The finished document is presented at a general wrap-up meeting the last day. Everything must be ready by a specific time, the entire document photographed and ready to be shown as slides or PowerPoint presentations at the meeting.

A charrette must be carefully planned, prepared and conducted with discipline in order that it results in a finished document. This method is highly demanding for the team management. The premises where the charrette is conducted must be versatile, be able to cater to office needs, computer aided design, have sufficient wall space to accommodate the suggestions submitted and rooms for smaller or larger group meetings including overhead projectors, etc.

This method can be profitable where land is expensive and time is a key economic factor. Those advocating a charrette claim that there are three major advantages to this method: it is effective due to the fact that a finished plan is produced; those taking part feel a sense

of involvement as they "own the plan"; and a charrette usually receives good publicity and "sells" well.

The method is not adapted to how planning is conducted in Sweden. If any key party is overlooked and this person later on questions the validity of the charrette, there is much to lose.

An advantage of the method is that positive consultation and dialogue with everyone concerned can be achieved, and that progress can be made through stimulating everyone to creative effort and discussion.

Planning Book Method

The planning book method is based on contacting those concerned via a type of questionnaire, a planning book that contains qualified information about the case at hand. It takes about a year to conduct this method and entails extensive work for those arranging it. Initially a project group is assembled around some kind of problem. This group draws up a problem description and proposes some solutions. All this is presented in planning book 1, which is distributed to people in the community as a type of questionnaire. In conjunction with planning book 1 being circulated for reply, work groups or study circles are formed with the intention to involve people in discussions on the problems and solutions. Planning book 1 should be answered and recollected within a couple of weeks.

The project group and project manager compile the replies, which are then presented in planning book 2. This book gives a more in-depth description of the problem along with several other suggested solutions. It is then distributed to all those who replied to the first

planning book. Additional discussion groups might be formed at this stage. Planning book 2 can be out in circulation from between one and four months.

Once planning book 2 has been answered, the measures that those concerned want to have undertaken are compiled in planning book 3. This compilation should be approved by all those who have taken part. A number of discussion meetings should also be arranged before compiling planning book 3. Then it is the decision-makers who are to react to planning book 3 and describe what they plan on doing. Planning book 3 is the end result of the planning book method.

In some cases the procedure can require input from those concerned. In this event, a planning book 4 has been compiled including the demands placed on those concerned.

Producing planning books is laborious, as the intention is that these books shall contain many relevant facts about the problem. This method has been further developed in such a way that the questions to be answered and a fact sheet are compiled separately. This means that the fact sheet can be retained by those involved while facilitating the processing of the answers.

This method can result in a good, advanced public dialogue, and the group taking part can be expanded while it is being implemented. The questions at issue are developed and processed during the dialogue. This method is knowledge enhancing.

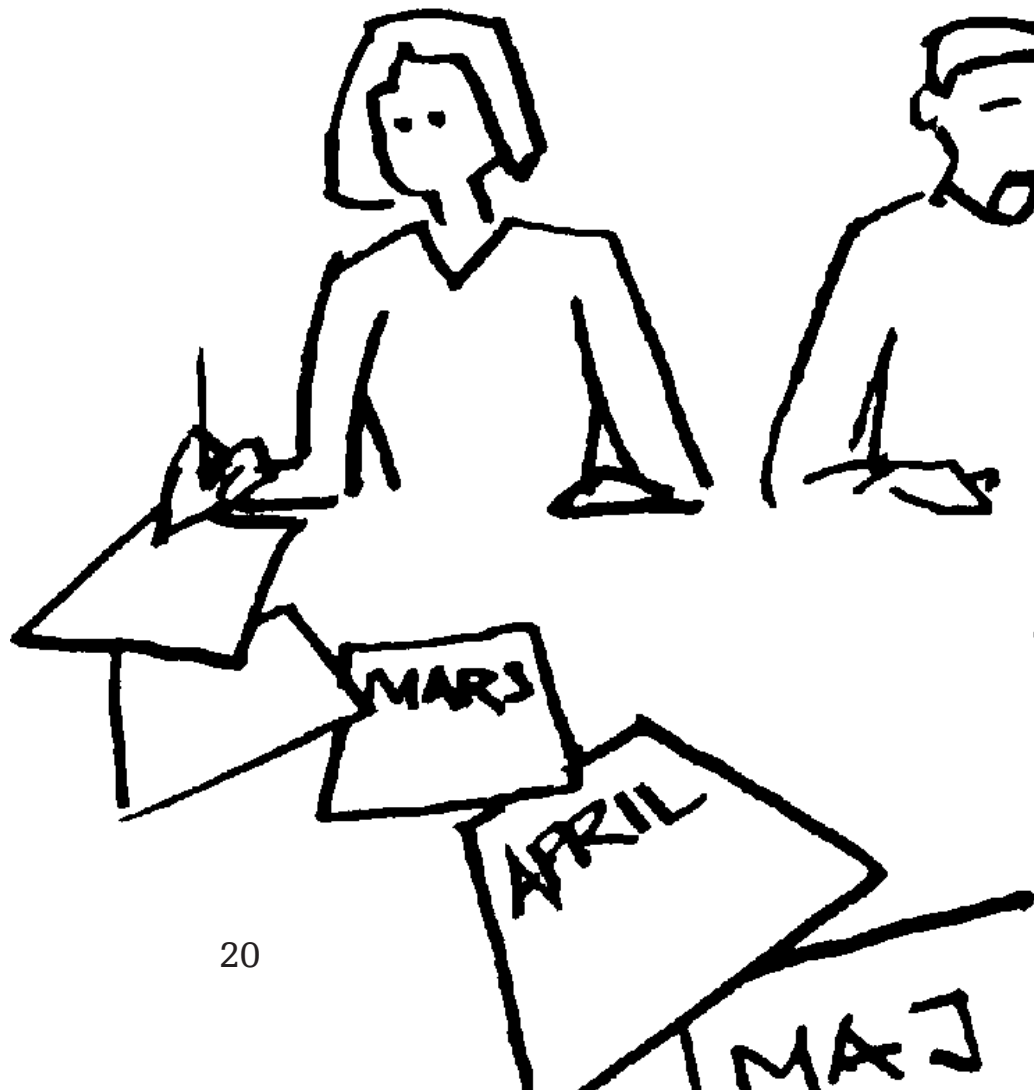
Walk-Through Evaluation

The Walk-Through Evaluation is a method that can be used both at the beginning of a planning project and for an evaluation of the final results. This method means that specially invited people – stakeholders, road users, local residents, planners, administrators, traffic planners, consultants and others walk together around the area in question. A pre-set route is followed, with stops at 8-10 selected spots, where everyone writes down what they consider to be good or lacking there. They subsequently gather at some place in the vicinity and go through all the comments. This gives everyone a chance to meet and engage in dialogue. The comments compiled during the promenade provide good input for recording the walk-through. This documentation is best if the text is supplemented with photos from the various stop sites. The method provides a

fast and easy way to get an indication about what is positive and what is problematic in a specific environment. Further, the method creates a good climate for continuing other kinds of consultation.

The method requires a couple of weeks of preparation in addition to about four hours for the actual walk-through plus another 30 hours or so for the documentation.

This is a simple and quick method to obtain viewpoints, experience and dialogue. It is also suitable to combine with other methods, and works well as an introduction to lengthier public consultations.



Cooperation with Schools

It is important to involve school children as much as possible in the planning. Pupils can learn a great deal about both democracy and the environment through taking part in community planning. School children can conduct on-site study visits when planners can present their plan proposals. Pupils can monitor a planning project over the course of several school years, and also take part through writing petitions and commenting on referrals, writing essays or drawing illustrations, or arranging exhibitions in conjunction with the consultation activities conducted otherwise in the project.

Open houses, exhibits or drop-in occasions arranged by planners provide an excellent opportunity for inviting in local schools.

Involving schools in projects, specifically

those entailing physical planning is always time-consuming. As schools have their own schedules to keep, planners should notify schools well in advance, preferable a whole school term ahead. A certain amount of time should also be spent on finding teachers who are interested in becoming involved in the matter.

It is difficult for children to attend meetings in the evenings with many adults. It is also difficult for them to assert themselves in this company. Pupils at the junior high school level could theoretically take part in work groups or study circles along with adults, but no such previous cases have been found. It is probably preferable that children study traffic issues on their own terms and then present their ideas and findings on special occasions later on.





Checklist

A **COMMUNICATION PLAN** includes the total planning of the information initiatives, communication input and dialogue for the entire project and is prepared according to the Quality Manual A – Swedish Road Administration, Stockholm Region. The intended dialogue method is to be included in the communication plan.

SUBJECT OF THE DIALOGUE: nature, detailed specification, possible developments, description of the questions at issue.

THE PURPOSE of the dialogue must be formulated.

OBJECTIVE: what the dialogue should lead to.

DIALOGUE METHODS: choice of several methods applied in combination.

ACTION PLAN FOR DIALOGUE: what should be done and how.

TIME PLANNING for the dialogue affects the project time schedule. Prepare a time schedule.

COST ESTIMATE FOR THE DIALOGUE: important before deciding to conduct a more extensive dialogue.

PRESENTATION MATERIAL: planning the presentation material that needs to be produced for the dialogue.

INVENTORY PLANNING in the project with regard to what the dialogue can require.

BACKGROUND MATERIAL: make an inventory of the background material available, audits, preliminary design plans, etc that could be good to have available for the dialogue.

PARTICIPANTS: list all possible players and participants; prepare an address list.

SCHOOLS: look into the possibility of working together with any school(s) in the area.

PROVIDE WRITTEN AND VERBAL INFORMATION about the dialogue; how it will be organised, what it should lead to, the target groups addressed.

GROUND RULES: formulate the rules that will apply to the dialogue and provide information about this. Ensure that everyone accepts the rules, and change them if necessary.

Keep **MINUTES OF THE DIALOGUE MEETINGS** and record everything. In a well-conducted dialogue it can be discovered that the original questions at issue were incorrectly formulated. Allow these to be reformulated.

PREPARE ALL MEETINGS carefully, with an agenda, presentation material, speeches/presentations, refreshments, suitable premises, etc.

Continuously **SPREAD INFORMATION** about the results of the dialogue to any relevant public employees at the municipal authorities, county councils and the Swedish Road Administration.

FINAL REPORT: compile the records of the dialogue in a final report, including an evaluation of the dialogue conducted. Were the aims and objectives achieved? Go through the checklist.

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