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# Inter-actor Trust in the Planning Process: The Case of Transit-oriented Development

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**ABSTRACT** *Inter-actor trust (or the absence of it) plays an important role in complex planning processes. Trust has received much attention in management science, but surprisingly little in planning literature despite the similarities between the two and its increasing importance in ensuring coordination between multiple, heterogeneous actors in delivering developments. This paper aims to explore the role of trust in coordination in transit-oriented developments processes, based on literature research and two empirical case studies in the region of Toronto in Canada and the province of Zuid-Holland in the Netherlands. This research suggests that in both planning contexts trust is an important element in achieving successful outcomes. Trust was often identified at a personal level as something which can bridge differences between organizations, but that can be hindered by a history of distrust between organizations. The building of trust between stakeholders seems dependent on a commitment to building a good relationship early and openness throughout. Breaches of trust, as long as they are not fatal for the relationship, can lead to a stronger trust relationship in the long term. Trust, however, is not just an individual or organizational matter: the broader institutional context was also found to have pronounced impacts on the ability of trust to take root.*

## Introduction

The governance of many modern societal processes is increasingly being carried out in what can be considered consensus-oriented policy networks (Kickert *et al.*, 1997; Edelenbos & Klijn, 2007; Klijn, 2008; Edelenbos & Eshuis, 2012). These policy networks can be seen as structured relationships between public and private actors that have an influence on policy in a specific area (Berardo, 2009). Characteristic of these networks is that none of the involved actors has the power and means to plan and implement projects on their own. Consequently, the resources of multiple actors are necessary to lead to a

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successful outcome. Also, in spatial planning, professionals have had to deal with this increasing complexity of planning across scales and traditional institutional boundaries with multiple actors involved. In these processes, based on interdependency, they have increasingly had to rely on communicative strategies to plan and implement projects and programmes (Cars *et al.*, 2002; Hajer & Wagenaar, 2003). Although the need and necessity of planning through governance in policy networks have been widely acknowledged (Woltjer, 2000; Swain & Tait, 2007; Laurian, 2009; Barrutia & Echebarria, 2011), it has proved to be a challenge for planners. Transit-oriented development (TOD) programmes are a case in point. TOD programmes are being developed in a number of urban regions to support the choice of more efficient forms of transport by coordinating land-use and transport planning. Research related to such programmes suggests the necessity of involving multiple actors in different sectors at the regional and local levels (Curtis *et al.*, 2009). Experience so far shows many delays, partially implemented programmes and constant disputes about programme necessity, goals and the implementation strategy.

The concept of trust receives considerable attention in management and organizational science as a way to coordinate the actions of independent actors within a policy network structure. In planning research, the concept of inter-actor trust (or the absence of it) is being discussed with increasing frequency as it seems to play a pivotal role in planning through policy networks (Amdam, 2001; Hibbitt *et al.*, 2001; Gössling, 2004; Edelenbos & Klijn, 2006, 2007; Klijn, 2008; Laurian, 2009; Klijn *et al.*, 2010; Edelenbos & Eshuis, 2012). It is seen as means to deliver cooperation between various actors which is in turn a requirement for coordination in complex planning processes. Recently, Klijn *et al.* (2010) have researched whether actors in environmental planning processes consider the results of the process to be of a higher quality when trust is present as well as the relationship between attempts to support interaction and the use of network management strategies with trust. Their research findings show indeed that trust is related to perceived quality and that the use of network management strategies is related to the formation of trust. Although Klijn *et al.*'s research has shown trust is important in planning processes in the Netherlands, in general, there is still little research dealing with this issue in more specific types of policy networks, like the ones that exist in TOD processes. Additionally, little comparative research is available on the importance of trust in complex decision-making processes in different institutional contexts. Furthermore, there is little research exploring the question of why and how trust in planning can lead to better results and actions and the question of which actions and factors are important for the creation and maintenance of trust.

This paper aims to contribute to addressing these gaps, by (1) developing a better understanding of the relationship between inter-actor trust and cooperation between stakeholders when planning and making decisions for TOD in policy networks in different institutional contexts; (2) exploring ways in which trust influences planning processes and outcomes; and (3) exploring mechanisms affecting the creation and maintenance of trust. In all cases, we ask what the implications are of differences in the institutional context. The questions guiding our comparative research were: "to what extent is inter-actor trust important when planning for TOD in policy networks", "why and how is inter-actor trust important in these processes" and "which actions and factors are supportive for the creation and maintenance of trust and how do they function?"

The paper is organized in three parts. Below, we will continue with defining the concept of trust in policy networks, analyse how it functions and elaborate on the influence of institutional structures on the importance and formation of trust between stakeholders. Afterwards, the role of inter-actor trust in policy networks is examined and analysed in TOD planning processes in two regions, Greater Toronto in Canada and the province of Zuid-Holland in the Netherlands. The last part discusses the relationship between trust and cooperation between stakeholders when planning in policy networks and explores the factors that influence the creation and maintenance of trust.

### Trust: Definition and Importance in Policy Networks

Literature relating to trust presents several characteristics of trust including: *reciprocity* where positive experiences feedback to build trust, *asymmetry* whereby trust can be more easily destroyed than created especially in the beginning of the process and *confirmatory nature* whereby actors are more inclined to believe information that confirms rather than refutes preconceptions (Earle, 2004; Edelenbos & Klijn, 2007; Laurian, 2009). In addition, there are three different conceptual models of trust which are ontologically distinct from each other. First, we distinguish *rational-personal trust*. In this form of trust, the focus is the individual (Laurian, 2009), that makes a rational choice. She lets herself be vulnerable to another with the expectation of positive behaviour from another (Rousseau *et al.*, 1998, p. 395). Trust is, here, a form of cost-benefit analysis aiming at net benefits of trusting and being trustworthy. It is of primary importance that the interests of an actor are served by considering the interests of another (Hardin, 2002, p. 4).

A second model is *social-cultural trust*. This form of trust is more abstract and not directly connected to an individual, but rather to abstract systems (Zucker, 1986; Giddens, 1990; Swain & Tait, 2007). Knowledge of social values, norms and ethical and social behavioural codes is important in the formation of trust (Kramer & Tyler, 1996; Seligman, 1997). Shared values make individuals and organizations more predictable even when one does not have any specific information about an individual. This then makes it easier to take actions which are consistent with the values of others (Kramer *et al.*, 1996; Braithwaite, 1998). Cultural institutions are closely related to this form of trust. For Laurian (2009), the link is quite clear. She states that the social structures of institutional contexts (social relations, shared values, social similarities, agreement over goals and a sense of identity) are directly linked to the presence of social trust.

A third type of trust, *general-personal trust*, also exists at the personal level. Here, deeper personal relations rather than a simple rational assessment are the root cause of the trust. Trust comes into being through personal knowledge about another actor and thereby the expectation that the other will fulfil his promises. Distrust is the result of a lack of this knowledge. According to Laurian (2009), this process rests on two pillars: characteristics of the other actor and observed behaviour. These observations consist of information on the motives of the other party, dedication, honesty, competency, conflicts of interest and power position. The creation of this sort of trust contributes to the development of social capital (in addition, to norms, obligations and various other structural and cognitive dimensions) and is suggested to be supported by Habermasian ideal speech (comprehensibility, honesty, sincerity, legitimacy, equal status, inclusivity, openness and transparency) (Habermas, 1984; Innes, 1996; Nahapiet & Ghoshal, 1998; Kumar & Paddison, 2000; Laurian, 2009).

Moving from these theoretical concepts to the relevance for planning in policy networks, there are a number of benefits of trust in these processes. To start, it is a replacement for information. Trust is a way to plan in the face of increasing complexity where it is not possible to possess complete knowledge, make accurate predictions and eliminate all risks (van Ark & Edelenbos, 2005). Even when one is not certain that the other participants will act in the expected way, when trust exists, they will not act opportunistically (Deakin & Wilkinson, 1998).

Sabatier *et al.* (2005) go further and suggest that it is essential for reaching decisions when visions collide. In planning with multiple stakeholders and with actors across territorial levels and sectors, absolute knowledge is impossible and disputed visions and uncertainty are bound to arise. In addition, a number of studies (Parker & Vaidya, 2001; Tomkins, 2001; Klijn & Edelenbos, 2007) suggest that in planning processes where trust between stakeholders exists, better and more innovative solutions can be delivered. Sydow (1998) makes the direct link with trust clear by stating that trust is a much better coordination mechanism in complex multi-actor processes. van Ark and Edelenbos (2005) state that parties that trust each other will be willing to be vulnerable to other parties more quickly than when trust does not exist which can make it easier to reach agreements than when actors remain defensive.

Furthermore, stakeholders who trust the other actors and believe in the legitimacy of the planning process will comply with decisions made in the group setting regardless if their demands are fully met (Laurian, 2009). Actors will be more willing to discuss conflicts with others rather than breaking off the planning process. Trust results in more resilient planning processes. Of course, it is worth noting here that a party cannot repeatedly be disadvantaged without damaging trust.

This paper sees *general-personal trust* as the definition of trust closest to the notion of inter-actor trust in policy networks. Other definitions, however, also play a role. *Rational-personal trust* suggests that one party trusts another because it is in the interests of that party to behave in a trustworthy fashion. That cooperation serves the interests of the actors is a condition for the creation of general-personal trust. *Social-cultural trust* is closely related to cultural institutions within the organizations participating in the planning process in the policy network. What is referred to as social-cultural trust is an indicator of how compatible the institutions in two organizations are which can facilitate or hinder the formation of general-personal trust between individual actors.

### Creation and Maintenance of Trust

Given the suggestion that trust is important, it is essential to consider how it can be created and maintained. Trust is something that is the result of a process that unfolds over the long term (Zucker, 1986). Research suggests that trust is higher in denser policy networks where actors exchange more information (Coleman, 1988; Putnam, 1993). Edelenbos and Klijn (2007) found that decreased communication between actors led to problems with trust between actors and, thus, in the planning process.

Bryson and Crosby (1992) speak of a central actor who can function as a catalyst for the creation of trust. van Ark and Edelenbos (2005) found that a civil servant in one case was essential in reaching the agreement through the creation of a shared vision and supporting communication. They further suggest that a manager can improve the reciprocity of relations between stakeholders, ensure that rules for the interaction are established and

respected and stabilization of interaction patterns. Laurian (2009) suggests that neutral intermediaries or managers can prevent distrust and encourage communication. Problems with an overdependence on interpersonal trust are highlighted when one actor leaves the planning process and is replaced.

According to Edelenbos and Klijn (2007), rules are of vital importance and determine how conflicts are dealt with, how information is exchanged, how benefits are distributed and how parties can leave the planning process. Considering that rules play a vital role in determining the contributions of actors and how interactions occur, coupled with the importance of cooperative action throughout the planning process, it seems clear that a cooperative formulation of rules involving all actors will be beneficial to trust between the actors and prevent situations where one actor feels disadvantaged by a regulatory structure in which he did not have any say.

The role of contracts and other hard agreements is disputed in literature. Some authors (Nooteboom, 1998; Volery & Mensik, 1998) argue that contracts are a sign of distrust in planning. Further, it has been said that trust is a placeholder for contracts and that one replaces the other. Alternatively, others (Woolthuis, 1999, p. 57; van Ark & Edelenbos, 2005) believe that trust and contracts complement each other and that trust can improve compliance to contracts. Conversely, contracts or written agreements are seen as effective in ensuring compliance with verbal (trust based) agreements (van Ark & Edelenbos, 2005). They embody the trust between the actors. Important here is that contracts must be used to confirm what has been agreed and not used defensively. If policy networks start using hard contracts in the pursuit of stability and security rather than softer agreements, this can undermine established trust (van Ark & Edelenbos, 2005). Recently, Edelenbos and Eshuis (2012) have shown that various co-evolutionary pathways of trust and control exist.

Institutional factors also play a role in the development of trust. Institutions introduce the rules of the game. In planning, they, for example, determine the form that planning ultimately takes on and is rooted in society and in forms of the state. Janssen-Jansen (2004) defines institutions as rules, norms and structures that form social capital in society and simplifies and expedites complex interactions. It is generally accepted that there are formal and informal institutions (Salet, 2000). Formal institutions are procedures, laws, organizations, bodies and rules that govern society (Janssen-Jansen, 2004). On the other hand, informal institutions are general patterns of integrated social values, norms and procedures in the form of guidelines and image forming (Chrisholm, 1989). Edelenbos and Klijn (2007) suggest that institutional characteristics of organizations can prevent the formation of trust. On the other hand, it is certainly possible that they can benefit the development of trust.

## **Methodology**

### *Case Selection*

To answer the questions posed in the introduction, a case study research design and qualitative research methods have been chosen. The second and third questions, in particular, deal with “how” and “why” questions for which a case study design and qualitative research methods are best suited (Gering, 2007). In accordance with the stated goal of studying, the impact of trust on coordination in a policy network in different institutional contexts, two cases of TOD programmes (the units of analysis) were studied. Policy network coordination between transportation and spatial planners at multiple levels and

the support of property developers, rail operators and managers are necessary in these cases. The first case, *Stedenbaan*, is located in the province of Zuid-Holland in the Netherlands and the second is the combined transport—land-use programme developed in the Toronto urban region in Ontario, Canada. Both programmes were started in the last 10 years and are now in or entering the implementation phase. In terms of institutional context, the selected cases differ from each other considerably within the theoretical population of regional TOD programmes planned in policy networks in western countries (Table 1) but are similar in terms of the critical factor of the importance of trust, namely planning takes place in policy networks. In answering the first question, literal repetition (Yin, 2008) is necessary as this will increase the chance of external validity.

**Table 1.** Comparison of key factors in Toronto and the Stedenbaan

Characteristics	Stedenbaan	Toronto
Form of government	Unitary parliamentary democracy	Federal parliamentary democracy
Surface area region (km <sup>2</sup> )	3403	7100
Population region (000s)	3847	5500
Density region (person/km <sup>2</sup> )	1130	775
Spatial form	Polycentric—clearly discernable urban areas	Developing polycentric, few urban areas outside the central area
Public transport	Concessions (private operators)	Mixed, primarily public ownership and operation
Financing of public transport	Centralized for major investments (structured consultation through MIRT (meerjarenprogramma infrastructuur, ruimte en transport)), decentralized for minor investments	Shared (infrastructure investments shared between government levels)
Local financial independence	Largely dependent on central government	Independent, but limited in scope
Relative strength of local government	Moderate	Weak
Relative local planning autonomy	Broad (only priorities set by national government/province, they are interpreted locally)	Limited (priorities set by province/regional government, plans must be approved)
Origin of programme	Regional/sub-regional governments	Provincial government
Actors involved in programme		
Super-regional	3	3
Regional	1	2
Sub-regional	5	12
Local	17	21
Site/station area	Many	Many
Site/station areas	36	25
Size—site/station areas (km <sup>2</sup> )	1.13	0.75

Given the characteristics of this common challenge, we expect that the role of trust will be important in both cases. The answering of the other questions requires a more inductive approach. The answering of the last two questions will lead to the generation of hypotheses that can be tested in future research.

### *Research Approach*

The first step carried out was to analyse documents and publications relating to the projects (list in Appendix 1). This also resulted in an overview of the organizations involved and the course the projects have taken until now. The name of the person most involved in the respective process was found and he/she was contacted for an interview. On the basis of document analysis and interviews, other respondents were selected. In total, 26 interviews have been carried out at the regional level and 5 with actors involved in developing site/station areas in late 2009 and early 2010 (see Appendix 2 for a list). In a number of cases (6), actors at the regional level were also involved in the local developments and these were also discussed. The interviews were semi-structured. Before every interview, a questions' list was sent to the respondent with general questions relating to the three research questions. The analysis of the interviews took place by making transcripts and categorizing the answers according to the three research questions.

## **Inter-actor Trust in Planning Practice: Two Case Studies**

### *Background: Stedenbaan*

The Stedenbaan programme aims to strengthen the backbone of the train network in Zuid-Holland, with The Hague and Rotterdam as important core. The programme aims to concentrate spatial development at station locations in the multi-centered urban network, increasing the frequency of the train services and improving transport to and from stations (stations are shown in Figure 1).

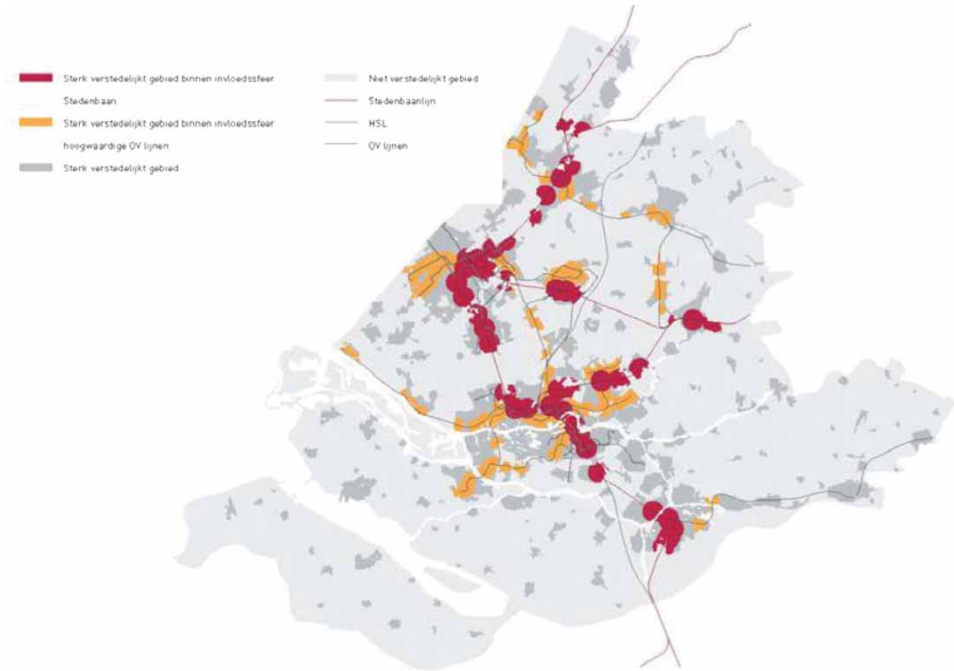
Stedenbaan is the product of a cooperative partnership between various governments (province, large municipalities and regional) and the Dutch Railways (Nederlandse Spoorwegen (NS), exploitation) and ProRail (infrastructure provider) with indirect involvement of the national ministries of spatial planning and Transport and has, therefore, no clear "owner". The priorities of the actors are set individually, but there is a shared conceptual framework. Coordination at all levels is essential as all partners must use their powers simultaneously to implement the programme (Figure 2 shows the agreements and coordination in the programme).

Currently, there are different groupings within the process where politicians and civil servants come together to deal with issues and make decisions. The coordination of the process on a daily basis is organized by the *Projectbureau Stedenbaan* (now *Projectbureau Stedenbaan+*). The realization of Stedenbaan is dependent on a number of financial programmes. Despite the fact that the programme includes no new rail lines, but only improvements in connections and capacity, investment in infrastructure is still needed.

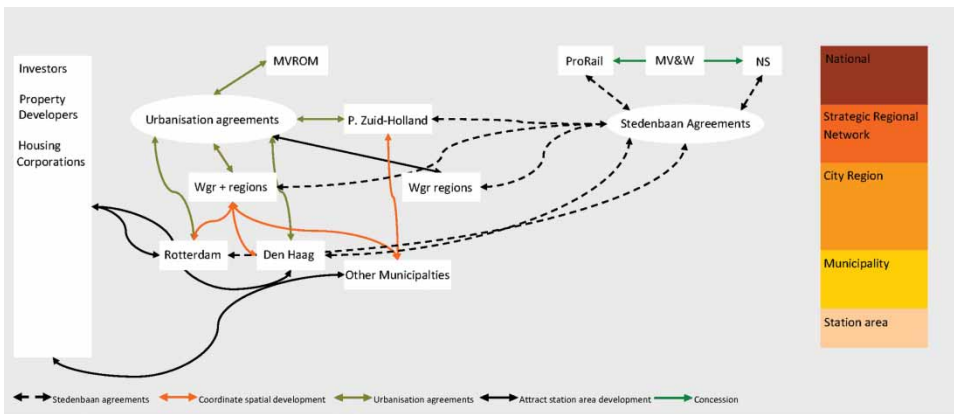
### *Background: Toronto*

Since the 1970s, a number of centres have developed in the Toronto urban region in parallel with the planning and/or implementing of public transport connections (Filion &





**Figure 1.** Urban areas around Stedenbaan stations (red), around high-quality public transport (yellow)  
 Source: Atelier Zuidvleugel (2006).



**Figure 2.** Stedenbaan, connections between actors in the planning process.

McSpurren, 2007; Filion, 2009). A regional TOD programme consisting of two partially coordinated plans has been developed by the province of Ontario through the Growth Secretariat and the provincial public transport agency for the Toronto area, Metrolinx to manage the future growth developments. The spatial component, the *Places to Grow* plan (MPIR, 2006) aims to concentrate 40% of expected growth in 24 high-density

urban growth centres (see Figure 3). This policy document is developed within the framework of the Places to Grow Act (2005) (see Figure 4). The *Big Move* (Metrolinx, 2008), regional transportation plan developed by the provincially created regional transportation authority, Metrolinx, deals with connecting these growth centres and is responsible for the GO Transit system of regional train and bus services (see Figure 3). Metrolinx is expected to develop strategies to generate funds to supplement an initial investment of the Province and must work with existing, largely independent, public transport agencies to achieve its ambitions. Coordination takes place between the ministries of Transport, Energy and Infrastructure (MEI), where the Growth Secretariat is located, and Municipal Affairs and Housing (MMAH) at Canadian provincial level (Canadian provinces are much larger than the Dutch provinces, and are, in terms of autonomy, more comparable to the national level in the Netherlands).

Despite the intensive policy integration, there is no overarching organization that is responsible for the whole regional TOD programme. The development of the growth centres is historically considered to be a local responsibility, with only little need or desire to collaborate with surrounding local governments. The public transport

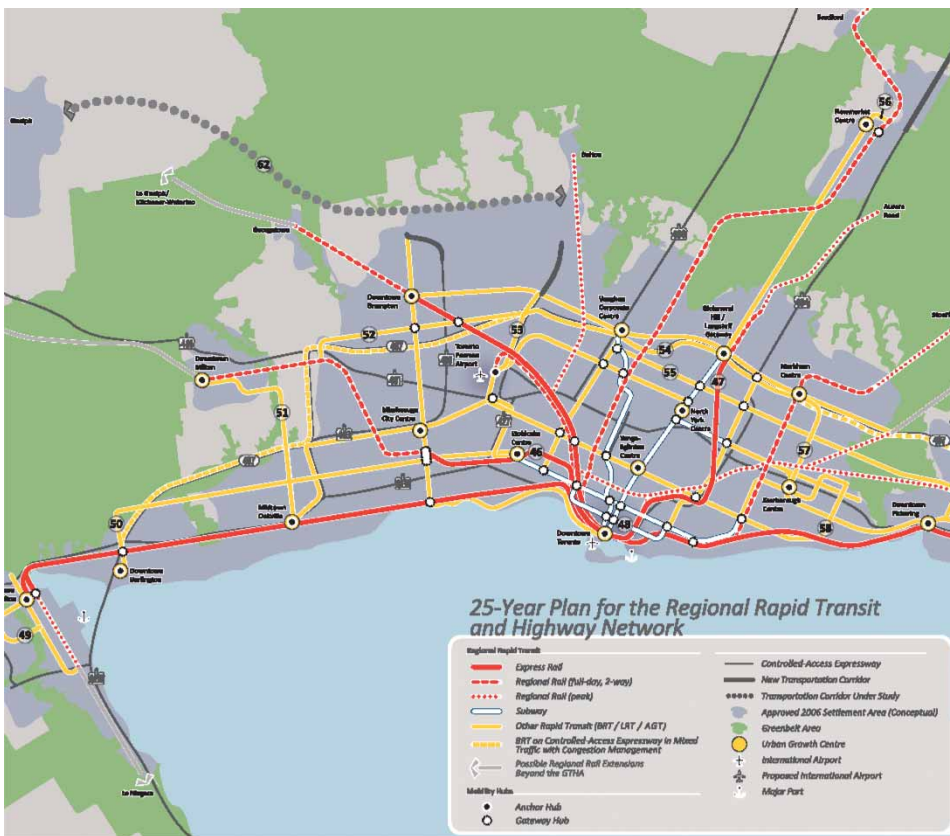


Figure 3. Big Move plan for regional public transport  
Source: Metrolinx (2008).

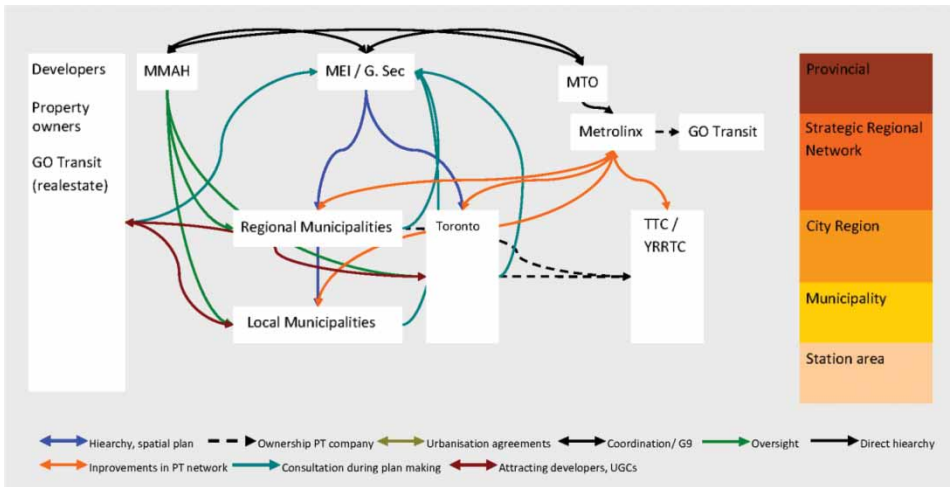


Figure 4. Toronto, connections between actors in the planning process.

network is something that is directed at a regional level through Metrolinx. In terms of how the goals of the transportation plan are implemented, local transport companies such as the Toronto Transit Commission (TTC) and the York Region Rapid Transit Corporation (YRRTC) are responsible for their own developments and implementation.

The importance and role of trust in the two cases are discussed below.

### Importance and Role of Trust: Stedenbaan

In the case of Stedenbaan, few formal tools are available to the project bureau to oblige the different stakeholders to implement the programme. Many interviewees believe that trust plays a crucial role in this process as it can ensure that parties make agreements with each other and that they are prepared to abide by them. For instance, since there is no way to guarantee dense urban development or increased train service frequencies in advance, the parties must trust that the other will deliver.

A respondent with experience at the local and regional levels emphasized trust as a way to improve efficiency in the planning process. In her experience, it is extremely costly and time-consuming if stakeholders constantly have to check that the others live up to their obligations as laid out in legal contracts. This is not to suggest that naivety is expected, but that there needs to be a balance between controlling the actions of others and trusting that they will deliver.

Trust is also something that enables taking the risk of making one vulnerable to the possible damaging actions of others and not always needing to protect one's own interests. This was seen, for instance, as important in the decision of the NS to share ridership information at each of the stations along the rail network. This brought risks with it as the NS is a commercial company. Only after a time of relationship building and discussions was it possible to reach an agreement where the NS stated: "we won't give you all of the [ridership] information, but we will give you some of it, and only if you sign a declaration that it won't be used further or made public". The respondent found this an example of

how a mutually acceptable solution could be found to move forward in the planning in the planning process. Without trust, the project would have stalled in that phase.

This discussion confirmed trust is important when planning in policy networks, just like Klijn *et al.* (2010) have shown in their research. Our research also showed trust plays a role as a replacement for information which makes it easier/possible to take risks that serve the goals of the partnership but are not in the immediate, but rather long term, interests of individual parties. Increased efficiency is also an outcome as parties do not have to devote valuable resources to protecting their interests and they can share sensitive information which advances the goals of the partnership.

### **Importance and Role of Trust: Toronto**

In the case of Toronto at the regional level within organizations such as Metrolinx that deal with multiple stakeholders regularly in complex situations trust was considered important. According to two actors in Metrolinx, their first task is communicative, namely convincing actors and building trust from others that they do not aim to take over competencies, but simply want to facilitate better coordination. These actors recognized that the building of general-personal trust would not only prove effective in the short term, but yield long-term benefits. In terms of land-use planning, the provincial government has recognized the importance of inter-actor trust to reach the goals of the Growth Plan. This was illustrated in the statement that “trust is important, but I don’t think it’s there. They’re just looking at how they can make a profit”. One actor believed that, despite the fact that trust was not the only factor that leads to effective cooperation, when trust is absent parties tend to focus on their specific negotiating positions and short-term interests.

As an example, one regional planner emphasized the shortage in demand for office development in the whole region as well as in areas outside the central urban areas. It is not expected that the provincial government will involve itself in the politically risky task of establishing priorities for the developments, thus, the coordination, if it comes, must originate from bottom up. Municipalities must trust each other enough that they will be willing to support the development of an area outside their jurisdiction with the expectation that they will enjoy benefits later when development within their borders is on the agenda.

In a number of cases, the settlement of conflicts or making difficult decisions was discussed. One strategy was the use of a negotiator to settle conflicts. In another case, an actor found that when different actors work together “most of the time it’s not an issue of not trusting and quite frankly there are different opinions, they can be negotiated or they have to be referred higher up the chain to get a final decision”. An actor active at the regional level noted that without trust in each other the parties still may interpret such a decision differently, which can ultimately lead to the same conflict situation in the future.

Despite the positive sentiments about trust among some actors, others were more sceptical. In one case, it was found that “trust almost implies a sort of personal relationship and I don’t think that’s the way that the system’s set up to run”. Further, at the strategic network level, it is a question of the novelty of the programme, which means that few actors have directly been confronted with the reality of planning in policy networks. According to interviewees, there is still sufficient flexibility in the—predominantly hierarchical—system that if lower governments interests are not served by the planning goals of the Province they can avoid implementing them. Based on some of the

answers, there are indications that trust is necessary for governments to take decisions that serve the long-term interests of all, but not their short-term interest—in other words, the taking of risks.

### **Creation and Maintenance of Trust: Stedenbaan**

According to the Stedenbaan partners, development of trust is a long-term undertaking. One respondent stated that “trust is built slowly, but destroyed quickly”. Many of the processes described refer directly and indirectly to the time-consuming nature of trust creation. Eight interviewees indicated that a time investment in the beginning of a cooperative partnership was essential for the subsequent success of the process, but that the importance of it was often underestimated.

#### *Communication and Openness*

Both communication and openness were seen as important for the creation of inter-actor trust (mentioned by three actors). One participant stated: “it is not only sending information, but also being open for signals and listening” as well as “being open to discussing motives and understanding the interests of the other”.

The way that information is shared is also seen as of considerable importance, especially when it relates to decisions that have an impact on the project’s success chances. It was stated by four actors that not sharing that information in a timely manner with the result that others learn about it through media or other circuits can lead to suspicion and distrust, especially when it confirms prejudices. This was illustrated in the announcement of the preferences of the NS and ProRail for the High-Frequency Rail Transport investment, implying that other rail corridors were more in need of investment than the Stedenbaan corridor. The Stedenbaan actors were not consulted prior to the announcement, which damaged the trust relationship.

In addition to the importance of the actions of individuals in building trust, it was also emphasized by four actors that getting to know counterparts in other organizations and building a trust relationship benefits the working relationship when different actors work together in various partnerships. One civil servant described how study tours and informal dinners were beneficial in building this sort of relationship with his colleagues. He stated that: “after a number of years the network between professionals in the region has developed to the point that you begin to trust each other”. This relationship was beneficial when difficult issues had to be discussed. The flow of sensitive information between these colleagues makes it possible to strategically deal with political differences before they lead to major conflicts. Despite the mobility of civil servants between various governments, the building of personal trust was suggested to improve the relationship between the institutions. In this case, when a colleague leaves it usually leads to a dip in the level of trust, but eventually relations improve as a new trust relationship can often be built more easily. The trust that existed between the two actors seems to have been institutionalized within the respective organizations, which makes it easier for trust to develop between new actors.

Since many municipalities were not involved in drawing up the initial Stedenbaan partnership, it is essential to convince them about the necessity of the Stedenbaan and, thus, their commitment during the implementation phase. A representative of the regional

office of the NS spoke of repeatedly going to talk to municipalities when asked to build trust in Stedenbaan and the NS with regard to train frequency increase. In another case, the NS arranged to “bring stakeholders to Germany to see the new [trains], the aldermen could sit behind the controls. We wanted to convince them that it is ‘our’ train”. This was intended to let them see that the NS was clearly committed to delivering on the promises made and that the trains being built were of the desired quality.

### *Breach of Trust*

The previously mentioned announcement of the High-Frequency Rail Transport investment preferences resulted in a breach of trust among Stedenbaan partners. Yet, ultimately, it proved to be positive for the relationship (cited by two actors). It is attributed to the realization of the NS that Stedenbaan was extremely important for the region and that they needed to repair the damaged trust to avoid the problem becoming fatal to the project. In terms of concrete results, this had led to a more transparent and open decision-making process.

### *Contracts and Agreements*

One respondent suggested that there are two reasons that parties do not enter into binding contracts: that they prefer to avoid committing themselves to a decision, or that actors trust each other enough that they will live up to their responsibilities and do not want to force others to commit to deadlines which may or may not be met given the flexible nature of policies in such a network of actors. On the basis of eight of the interviews with those involved in Stedenbaan, it seems that there is a general consensus that the second statement better embodies the reason for the lack of binding contracts and institutionalization in legally binding planning policy. One respondent found this more informal approach beneficial given the relatively long reluctance of the NS to make binding commitments. Actors reported that agreements made on the basis of a trust relationship were more enforceable than when this is not the case. Informal moral appeals to deliver on contractual obligations were perceived to be stronger than falling back on legal processes.

### *Influential Actors*

Five actors stated or suggested that the institutional differences between the NS and the public sector actors posed difficulties for the trust development. Despite the existence of the regional offices of the NS, the organization remains centralized with all major decisions being taken in the main national office in Utrecht. Cultural differences led to problems early in the Stedenbaan process. Local government actors were eager to have the NS commit to a date for the train frequency increase. This led to a shock in the NS, who expected to commit only when it became apparent that the spatial development (and, thus, the additional passengers) was being realized. Previous experiences where the NS invested in building new stations and the property development and connecting infrastructure was delayed were found to be influential here. Such situations led not only to lower revenues, but resulted in fewer passenger kilometres which is a priority for the NS because of contractual agreements with the national governments (MV&W, 2005). Many local government actors have complained about how reserved the NS is with providing

information about ridership numbers and the prospects for the frequency increase, not fully understanding the NS must bid nationally on a competitive basis.

### **Creation and Maintenance of Trust: Toronto**

In general, a number of the same processes active in the creation and functioning of trust as discussed above were mentioned in the Toronto region. However, many of the responses about the creation and function of trust in planning were derived from indirect examples and answers rather than direct responses to questions about trust creation. For many, the concept of trust was not something that is regularly thought about.

#### *Communication and Openness*

Since the Province of Ontario took on an active role in regional planning once again, there is, according to interviewees, an incentive for regional actors to communicate and cooperate. This has taken the form of a change in the administrative institutional structure—namely that official plans must conform to regional plans and all plans must conform to the provincial planning policy. Three of the local actors mentioned that there was no regular intergovernmental communication between actors involved in the growth centres. Also, they indicated the lack of contact between land-use and transport planners, after the abolishment of the regional board of directors. Five actors voiced suspicions and concerns about the motives, actions and sincerity of other actors, which suggests a lack of communication. One actor suggested that a lack of communication can also lead to suspicions about the motives of other actors, which can ultimately shift focus from the goals of the partnership and cultivate distrust.

In an interview about the creation of the growth plan, early in the planning process, one respondent noted that openness was important. The communicative open approach of Ontario was praised, which did not start with a top-down plan, but rather by examining existing plans for growth centres in the region looking for examples of good practice and opportunities for harmonising priorities and reducing the number of development nodes. During the implementation stage, openness and respect were also mentioned. Actors who were active at the strategic regional level were able to relate trust to understanding the interests and needs of other parties. In interviews with Metrolinx, respondents found it important that this respect and openness were translated into actions. The voluntary submission of an area plan to municipalities where Metrolinx is active was used as an example to build trust with municipalities. Coordination at the strategic level seems to have improved, especially between Metrolinx and the Growth Secretariat. A number of actors (four) have mentioned how a number of previous employees of the Secretariat work at Metrolinx. Again, the personal relationships between actors in both organizations seem to make communication easier.

#### *Fulfilling Promises*

Re-entering the area of regional planning, it is seen as essential that Ontario invest in its goals to overcome distrust. A respondent involved in the making of the Growth Plan saw fulfilling promises as essential to convincing municipalities to buy into the plan and realize its goals. Systematically making clear through actions is seen as the only way to build trust

and bridge the gap of distrust. Recent funding cuts and the unstable financial situation are expected to impact the level of trust in the region. Several parties (four) expressed concerns themselves or suggested that other parties are concerned about how provincial funding announcements will translate into funding for specific projects and whether the government intends to deliver on its promises (see also Goddard *et al.*, 2010).

### *Historical Relations*

In the Toronto region, the historical relations between stakeholders are extremely important. Seven actors mentioned these. These can be considered cultural institutions within a specific organization. The negative impacts on trust of these were made clear in a discussion about the impact on negotiations. When negotiations begin with the knowledge that the other party will not deviate from their negotiating position, the atmosphere is from the first instant negative and discussions begin from a basis of distrust. It was stated that “you can’t trust them. They have ulterior motives in everything they do and it’s important. Going into a negotiation or a relationship you’re constantly on guard and you don’t want to give up anything, because you don’t get the same thing in return”.

### *Contracts*

The making of contracts or in the case of government parties, MOUs<sup>1</sup>, was found by seven respondents to be related to building trust between stakeholders. Interviewees found that it was necessary to translate agreements between parties into a more binding form. In one case, an actor spoke of a party that did not want to sign a MOU, which led to strains in the relationship. On the other hand, a respondent emphasized that MOUs without the basis of a trust relationship will lead to different interpretations and statements such as “we didn’t mean it in that way”. One actor suggested a trend towards a more defensive litigious planning system where actors are more intent than ever to defend their interests, which hinders trust development and the quality of solutions.

### *Influential Actors*

The priorities and interests of a number of actors have had a substantial influence on the development of trust, according to several respondents. The two largest transit agencies in the region were most often mentioned.

Four actors suggested that the goals of GO Transit as an organization could lead to conflicts and trust issues and the interests in encouraging development at its stations. For example, GO Transit has extensive parking facilities around its stations to attract passengers for the trains. This leads to problems with municipalities that want to develop on the stations lands. Despite the emphasis on this sort of development in the GO 2020 plan, there is fear that the goals of GO Transit as a regional train company whose passengers travel to the stations by car will stop them from having an active role in property development at its stations.

Many interviewees (seven) outside the Municipality of Toronto mentioned difficulties in working with the TTC. It was often attributed to culture within the organization and a belief, because of a long and successful history, that their practices were the most effective. This has led to reluctance to consider problems from another perspective. The



TTC is largely dependent on fares to fund its operations and it is seen as defensive against proposals to change fare systems and further their regional integration. From interviews, there is no one cause that is identified by respondents as to why regional cooperation is so difficult, but the goal of the company (providing good public transit in Toronto before considering regional expansion), a cultural belief that their practices are the most effective and historically rooted independence seem to explain most of the problems.

## Discussion

### *To what Extent is Inter-actor Trust Important when Planning for TOD in Policy Networks?*

Our findings, based on qualitative research confirm that when planning in policy networks, the role of trust is evident. This is in accordance with earlier quantitative research findings (Klijn *et al.*, 2010). It is important to make clear that Stedenbaan seems a better example of an effective policy network with a higher degree of coordination than the Canadian example. Given this, it is not surprising that the importance of trust in planning was confirmed by a larger group of respondents in Zuid-Holland than in Toronto. The interdependence that is a characteristic of the policy network is visible in several cases in Toronto where organizations are working outside the traditional hierarchical structure. These actors (Metrolinx, Growth Secretariat, YRRTC and regional municipalities) were more inclined to recognize the importance of inter-actor trust. At the level of the area developments responses were more mixed. Thus, the importance of trust seems to depend on the extent to which one plans within a policy network. Nevertheless, this research has shown that at least a certain amount of trust is important when planning in policy networks regardless of the institutional context.

### *Why and How is Inter-actor Trust Important in these Processes?*

There were many similarities in answers to the question about how trust can benefit the planning process. Based on this, the following conclusions have been drawn. These can also be seen as hypotheses needing further testing:

- (1) Trust functions as a replacement for information and facilitates risk taking without complete certainty about the outcomes. In Toronto, the building of trust is seen as something that can have a direct positive effect on distrust between actors and eventually reduce it, making cooperation more efficient as not all information is available. In *Stedenbaan*, a similar situation was observed between government parties and the NS. The gradual improvement of a trust relationship between the organizations has had clear positive effects for the planning process. In the Netherlands, and to a lesser extent in Ontario, personal trust was found to be effective in resolving differences and potential conflicts between stakeholder organizations. In both areas, trust facilitates belief in information provided by others.
- (2) Inter-actor trust makes the partnership more resilient. In the *Stedenbaan* case, this was demonstrated by the recovery from the crisis caused by choices concerning the High-Frequency Rail Transport programme. In Toronto, there is no comparable example,

but actors did recognize that the building of trust could make cooperation easier in the future.

- (3) Trust makes it possible to implement what is agreed upon in contracts. This was seen in both regions.
- (4) The development of trust can have an impact on cultural institutions within organizations where a form of what can be described as social-cultural conditions between organizations can come into being, which means that a certain level of trust can exist between stakeholders who have no personal relationship.

*Which Actions and Factors are Supportive for the Creation and Maintenance of Trust and How do They Function?*

To answer this question, the conditions for trust must first be considered. In both cases, communication and satisfying of interests showed to be necessary. Having confidence in the participants in the process (in their competence for example) as well as in their organization and the chances for the programme/plan to be successful facilitate the creation of trust. In keeping with the characteristic of confirmation, the opposite can occur. Trust between individuals can make it easier to trust the information delivered by another or their organization.

Based on this, the following hypotheses can be made:

- (1) Openness, delivering on promises and competence (related to confidence in a person) are important in the creation and maintenance of trust.
- (2) Contracts are an instrument that must be used to confirm agreements based on a trust relationship. Examples from Stedenbaan point to how they work to strengthen a trust that exists, while in Toronto examples pointed to the problems that arise when contracts are not based on a trust relationship. Referring decisions to an intermediary functions similarly to a contract. When he/she makes a decision to resolve a conflict between parties that do not trust each other, the decision is interpreted differently or not accepted.
- (3) A breach of trust is an interesting way to reaffirm trust between parties. This is very unpredictable, but in the case of Stedenbaan, it proved an opportunity for actors to reaffirm the importance of the partnership and eventually improved relations. Policy networks that do not survive a breach of trust would probably not to deliver policy outcomes.
- (4) Institutional arrangements are influential in creating and maintaining trust. At the level of the particular organizations involved in the planning process, there are a number of institutional structures that influence cooperation with other organizations. Some institutions determine the goals of the actor and their financial independence. This is something that was influential in trust formation in both countries primarily within public transport companies. Cultural institutions within the organizations lead to different opinions and viewpoints among actors which can lead to conflict or facilitate cooperation and the development of trust between actors. The response of many actors in the Toronto region and some in Zuid-Holland of “we are this sort of organization and we don’t do that” is the result of norms and values. What is described as social-cultural trust is a measure of the compatibility of the institutional structures. These influence the formation of general-personal trust and the cooperation.

## Conclusions

This paper has shown that inter-actor trust is an essential element to deliver cooperation between the multiple actors involved in a complex TOD policy network planning process and confirmed the findings of Klijn *et al.* (2010) in a context outside the Netherlands. The extent to which such a network exists is influenced by its context. The structure of planning institutions in Ontario means that there is no history of cooperative partnerships between actors outside the institutional hierarchy, but the new reality will require a network approach. It seems highly unlikely that the institutional structure can be adapted to deliver the desired outcomes through a strict hierarchy. That would be unacceptable in a liberal democracy.

Furthermore, a number of ways in which trust can be beneficial in the planning process have been identified. Trust is necessary to deliver coordination between actions in a policy network that is required to deliver the desired outcomes given the independence of the actors and a lack of clear hierarchy. In terms of information, trust was found to make it possible to cooperate when not all information was available or to have confidence in the reliability of the delivered information. Additionally, trust was found to make the partnership between actors more resilient and ensure that actors deliver on agreements. Finally, a period of sustained trust between stakeholders seems to influence the development of cultural institutions within the various partner organizations.

This paper also suggests a number of processes that lead to the creation and maintenance of inter-actor trust in policy networks. Some are actions of individuals such as openness and being trustworthy, while others are related to the process, such as early involvement of key actors, ensuring that processes support openness and communication and the intelligent use of contracts. A breach of trust is a surprising way to ultimately increase trust, if other conditions are met. Cultural institutions play also a role in the creation of trust. Changes in these structures can stimulate cooperation and ultimately trust in between stakeholders. Cultural institutions within organizations are difficult to change and exhibit path dependency, but develop gradually and can be influenced by relationships between individuals. Planning in policy networks is likely to increase in importance, together with according coordination methods, such a trust. Research on trust in planning is far from complete. In particular, the interaction between inter-actor trust and institutional structures within organizations as well as in the broader society are shown important in our enquiry but there has been little research conducted in this area. It seems that culture within an institution can change through the experiences of individuals which in turn can impact institutional structures or that the reverse can occur. Furthermore, more research, possibly quantitative in nature, in a number of countries, and other policy fields, could be carried out to test hypotheses made above about the functioning, creation and maintenance of trust.

## Note

1. A Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) is a contract between government parties where the details of a partnership are laid out including the splitting of costs.

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## Appendix 1. Documents Studied

Table A1. Documents studied in Stedenbaan and Toronto

Actor	Year	Name of document	Type
<i>Documents studied (Stedenbaan)</i>			
Atelier Zuidvleugel	2006	<i>Ruimtelijke verkenning Stedenbaan: Ruimte en Lijn</i>	Research
Bestuurlijke Platform Zuidvleugel	2007	<i>Ruimtelijke Ambitie Stedenbaan 2020</i>	Policy document
Breed Beraad	2004	<i>Stedenbaan, verslag van Breed Beraad</i>	Report
Gemeenschappelijke Regeling Bleizo	2008	<i>Nieuws Flits 1</i>	Update
Gemeenschappelijke Regeling Bleizo	2008	<i>Nieuws Flits 2</i>	Update
Gemeenschappelijke Regeling Bleizo	2009	<i>Dit is Bleizo</i>	Plan
Ministry	2009	<i>Kabinetsambities Spoor— Voortgangsrapportage 1</i>	Report
Ministry	2007	<i>Randstad Urgent: Urgentieprogramma Randstad</i>	Policy document
Ministry	2009	<i>Spelregels van het MIRT</i>	Policy document
Ministry	1990	<i>Werkdocument Geleiding van de mobiliteit door een locatiebeleid voor bedrijven en voorziening</i>	Policy document
Ministry	2006	<i>Nota Ruimte: Ruimte voor Ontwikkeling</i>	Policy document
Ministry	1958	<i>De ontwikkeling van het westen des lands</i>	Policy document
Ministry	1960	<i>Nota inzake de Ruimtelijke Ordening in Nederland</i>	Policy document
Ministry	1966	<i>2e Nota over de Ruimtelijke Ordening in Nederland</i>	Policy document
Ministry	1983	<i>3e Nota over de Ruimtelijke Ordening in Nederland</i>	Policy document
Ministry	1988	<i>4e nota over de ruimtelijke ordening: op weg naar 2015</i>	Policy document
Ministry	1991	<i>4e nota over de ruimtelijke ordening Extra :op weg naar 2015</i>	Policy document
Ministry	2008	<i>Structuurvisie Randstad 2040</i>	Policy document
Ministry	2009	<i>Programma Hoogfrequent Spoorvervoer (PHS) in relatie tot MIRT-Spelregelkader</i>	Memo
Ministry	2005	<i>Vervoersconcessie voor het hoofdrailnet</i>	Concession
Ministry	2010	<i>Centrum- en knooppuntontwikkeling ontrafeld: Aanbeveling van de UitvoeringsAlliantie Centrum- en knooppuntontwikkeling</i>	Advice
Municipality	2010	<i>Voorstel van het college inzake Masterplan Scheveningen-kust</i>	Proposal
Municipality	2008	<i>Nota van Uitgangspunten: Knoop Moerwijk</i>	Policy document
Municipality	2009	<i>Masterplan Moerwijk</i>	Plan
Municipality	2008	<i>Raadsbesluit 2008/50 26</i>	Council decision
Programmabureau Stedenbaan	2009	<i>Stedenbaan Monitor 2009</i>	Monitor

(Continued)

Table A1. Continued

Actor	Year	Name of document	Type
Province	2009	<i>Visie op Zuid-Holland: Ontwerp Structuurvisie</i>	Policy document
Stedenbaan	2009	<i>Werkbijeenkoms Kennisnetwerk Stedenbaan: Nieuw Station Bleizo</i>	Report
Stedenbaan	2008	<i>Stedenbaanpilots: Gezamenlijk van visie naar uitvoering, ervaringen met planuitwerking 2005–2008</i>	Plan
Stedenbaan	2008	<i>Stedenbaanmonitor 2008</i>	Monitor
Stedenbaan	2006	<i>Intentieovereenkomst Stedenbaan Zuidvleugel</i>	Agreement
Stedenbaan	2007	<i>Uitvoeringsovereenkomst Stedenbaan Zuidvleugel</i>	Agreement
Stedenbaan	2007	<i>Nadere overeenkomst Stedenbaan Zuidvleugel: Ketenmobiliteit—Fiets</i>	Agreement
Stedenbaan	2007	<i>Nadere overeenkomst Stedenbaan Zuidvleugel: Ketenmobiliteit—P+R</i>	Agreement
Stedenbaan	2008	<i>Nadere overeenkomst Stedenbaan Zuidvleugel: Ketenmobiliteit—Informatievoorziening, over reisinformatie op stations</i>	Agreement
Stedenbaan	2008	<i>Nadere overeenkomst Stedenbaan Zuidvleugel: Sociale Veiligheid</i>	Agreement
Urban unlimited <i>Documents studied (Toronto)</i>	2005	<i>Milieudifferentiatie langs de Stedenbaan</i>	Research
Municipality	2006	<i>Toronto Official Plan</i>	Policy document
Municipality	2009	<i>Vaughan Tomorrow: A Vision for Transformation</i>	Policy document
Municipality	2009	<i>Vaughan Metropolitan Centre: Project Information Panels</i>	Plan
Municipality	2010	<i>The City of Vaughan: Strategic Plan 2020</i>	Policy document
GO Transit	2008	<i>GO 2020</i>	Plan
Metrolinx	2008	<i>The Big Move: Transforming transportation in the Greater Toronto and Hamilton Area</i>	Policy document
Metrolinx	2010	<i>Move Ontario 2020</i>	Policy document
Ministry	2005	<i>Provincial Policy Statement</i>	Policy document
Ministry	2006	<i>Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe</i>	Policy document
Ministry	1981	<i>Official Plan for the Urban Structure</i>	Policy document
Office for the greater Toronto area	1991	<i>Growing Together: Towards an Urban Consensus in the Greater Toronto Area</i>	Policy document
Office for the greater Toronto area	1992	<i>GTA 2021: The Challenge of Our Future</i>	Policy document
RM Halton	2009	<i>Halton Region Official Plan</i>	Policy document
RM York	2009	<i>York Plan</i>	Policy document
RM York	2009	<i>Public Private Partnership</i>	Concession
Smart growth secretariat	2003	<i>Central Ontario Growth Panel Final Report</i>	Research
Municipality	2008	<i>Draft Midtown Business and Development Plan</i>	Policy document
Municipality	2009	<i>Town of Oakville Official Plan</i>	Policy document
VIVA	2008	<i>VivaNext: Ready to Go</i>	Plan
YRRTC	2006	<i>Delivering the Promise: Rapid Transit for a Sustainable Future</i>	Policy document

## Appendix 2. Persons Interviewed

Table A2. Persons interviewed about the projects and plans

Function	Organization
<i>Persons interviewed (Stedenbaan)</i>	
Former Alderman	Municipality of Zoetermeer
Hoofd	Afdeling Ruimte en Wonen, Provincie Zuid-Holland
Programmadirecteur Stedenbaan	Programmabureau Stedenbaan
Regionale RO Coördinator	Stadsgewest Haaglanden
Former Atelier master	Atelier Zuidvleugel
Agent	Vereniging Deltametropool
Senior policy officer	Provincie Zuid-Holland
Former project leader, Multimobility	NS/Programmabureau Stedenbaan
Senior policy officer, Public Transport	Stadsgewest Haaglanden
Programme coordinator, Stedenbaan	Stadsregio Rotterdam
Former Regional Director	Region Randstad-Zuid, NS
Former director, Space & Mobility	Provincie Zuid-Holland
Project manager	Nederlandse Spoorwegen
Project director	Bleizo
Alderman Housing and Construction	Municipality of Den Haag
Project leader, Rail Corridor Den Haag-Rotterdam	Ministry of Transport and Watermanagement
Project Leader, PHS	Ministry of Transport and Watermanagement
Senior spatial strategist	Department Space & Housing, Provincie Zuid-Holland
Policy officer	Department Space & Housing, Provincie Zuid-Holland
Adjunct director	Spatial Development Department, Municipality of Almere
Senior policy officer	Transport Department Provincie Zuid-Holland
<i>Persons interviewed (Toronto)</i>	
Senior advisor	Policy and Planning, Metrolinx
Councillor	Municipality of Vaughan
Manager of Corporate Policy	Municipality of Vaughan
Assistent deputy minister	Growth Secritariat, MEI
Senior advisor	Investment Strategy and Project Evaluation, Metrolinx
Director	Planning Services, Municipality of Oakville
Manager	GO Transit, Parking
Manager	GO Transit, Realty Services
Manager	MMAH
Executive director	Neptis Foundation
Senior planner	Centres, Corridors & Subways, Regional Municipality of York
Councillor, chairman	Municipality of Toronto, TTC
Chief architect, Infrastructure and Development	YRRTC
Programme manager	Urban Development Services, Municipality of Toronto
Director	Planning Services, Regional Municipality of Halton
Deputy programme manager	Transit City, TTC