



Arguing –

Maxims for Arguing

As of 9.2013, mn; translation: 09.2016, Lars Kaiser

What absolutely has to be considered when arguing in planning? The following maxims are a selection of fundamentals, which should be beard in mind when arguing in planning. The follow the maxims for decision-making (see module) and can be compared with them.

Maxims are fundamentals for acting, applicable in certain situations. With that, it is said that their consideration has to be checked in every case (see «maxima regula»: «highest norm»).

Source: Rolf Signer, [Vorlesung Planungsmethodik \(translated\)](#)



Maxims for arguing- an open selection

- Single source of information too weak!
- Single line of reasoning too weak!
- Ask the book of counter-examples!
- Possibility before probability!
- Keep the premises in sight!
-



Single line of reasoning too weak!

Especially in spatial planning, actions and decisions always impact multiple areas and actors, who have different and not rarely conflicting demands for a space.

- ▶ Basing a recommendation of action merely on arguments of ones aspect are rarely convincing.
- Example Flüelen: To base the choice of a preferred route for the bypass of Flüelen solely on rail-operational aspects will lead neither to comprehension nor to acceptance from the canton and the communes.
- Contrarily it is not advisable to omit out rail-operational aspects from the point of view of the cantons and the communes and to argue solely with settlement development or noise emissions.



Single source of information too weak!

- As a planner, one often depends on external information to justify decisions.
- Using just one source is dangerous!
 - The source can be incomplete.
 - It may not highlight all required aspects.
 - It can be based on assumptions that may have changed
 - It can be influenced by sectoral interests.
 - It may just be plain wrong.
- ▶ This is why you should always use two or more external sources to justify a decision.
- ▶ This is valid especially for sources that originate from an interest group or associations of the economic or political sector.
- ▶ This is also valid for official plans and plannings
- ▶ **What to do if there is only one source?**

Single source of information too weak! – an example

VBZ line concept: Tram tangent Rosengarten: Milchbuck - Albisriederplatz

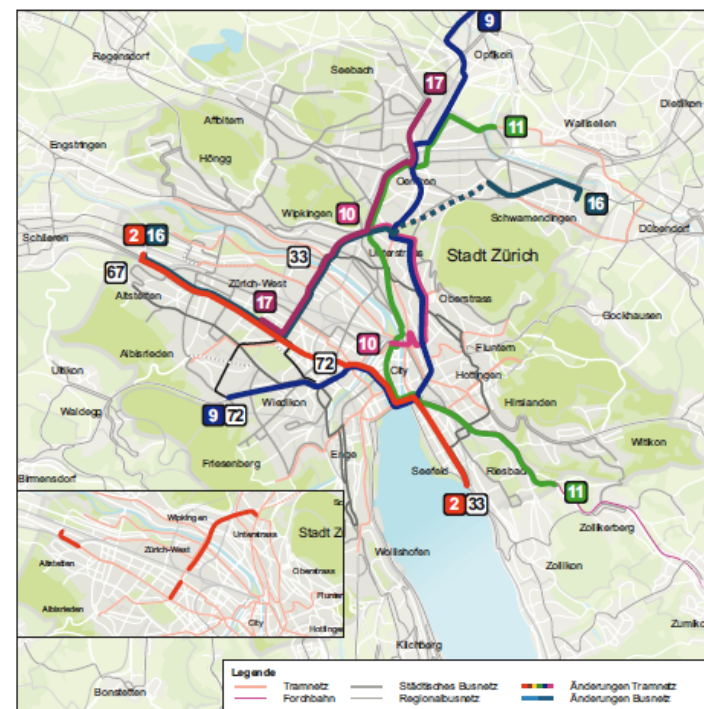
Etappe 3: Tramtangente Rosengarten (2020)

Damit die Fahrgäste zwischen den Wachstumsquartieren Zürich-West und Zürich-Nord ohne Umweg über das Zentrum hin und her reisen können, sollen diese Quartiere bis ins Jahr 2020 mit zwei neuen Tramlinien 16 und 17 über den Korridor Rosengartenstrasse verbunden werden. Der heute doppelspurig geführte Autoverkehr wird zwischen Bucheggplatz und Hardbrücke durch ein Tramtrasse ersetzt.

Wichtige neue Streckenabschnitte werden Milchbuck und Escher-Wyss-Platz, Hardplatz und Albisriederplatz sowie Farbhof und Hermetschloo verbinden.

Liniennetzentwicklung: Infrastrukturetappe 3 (2020)

Infrastrukturelemente	Albisriederplatz – Hardplatz (0,6 km), Escher-Wyss-Platz – Bucheggplatz (1,2 km) Bucheggplatz – Milchbuck (0,8 km), Farbhof – Hermetschloo (0,7 km)
Damit verbundene Liniennetzanpassungen	Neue Tramlinie 17 Seebach – Bhf. Oerlikon – Bucheggplatz – Hardbrücke – Letzigrund Neue Tramlinie 16 Hirzenbach – Bucheggplatz – Hardbrücke – Albisriederplatz – Hermetschloo Tramlinie 9 nach Flughafen Kloten (statt Hirzenbach) und Tramlinie 10 nach Bucheggplatz (statt Flughafen Kloten) Aufheben Buslinie 72 zwischen Milchbuck – Albisriederplatz Aufheben Buslinie 33 zwischen Escher-Wyss-Platz und Schmiede Wiedikon Verknüpfung Linie 33 Wollishofen – Schmiede Wiedikon mit Linie 67 Linie 72 nur zwischen Triemli – Albisriederplatz – Schmiede Wiedikon Verlängerung Linie 2 bis Hermetschloo



Tramtangente Rosengarten, Milchbuck – Escher-Wyss-Platz, Hardplatz – Albisriederplatz, Farbhof – Hermetschloo

Source: VBZ

Single source of information too weak! – an example

Civil engineering office o the City of Zürich: Tram tangente Rosengarten: Milchbuck - Albisriederplatz

VBZ Linienkonzept 2025

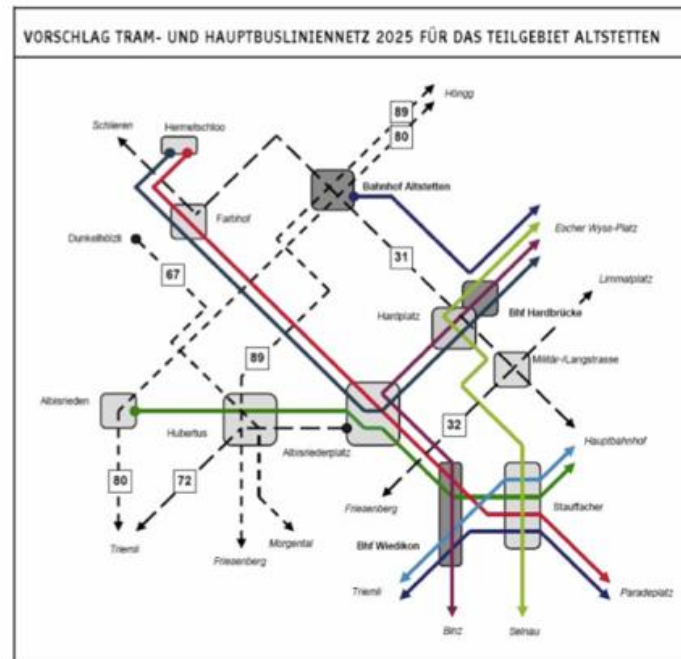
2. Etappe 2015:
Tram Hardbrücke
(Verlängerung
Tramlinie 8)

3. Etappe 2020:
Tramtangente
Rosengarten
(Linien 16, 17)

Quelle: Infrac
www.vbz.ch

Stadt Zürich
Tiefbauamt, Verkehrsplanung

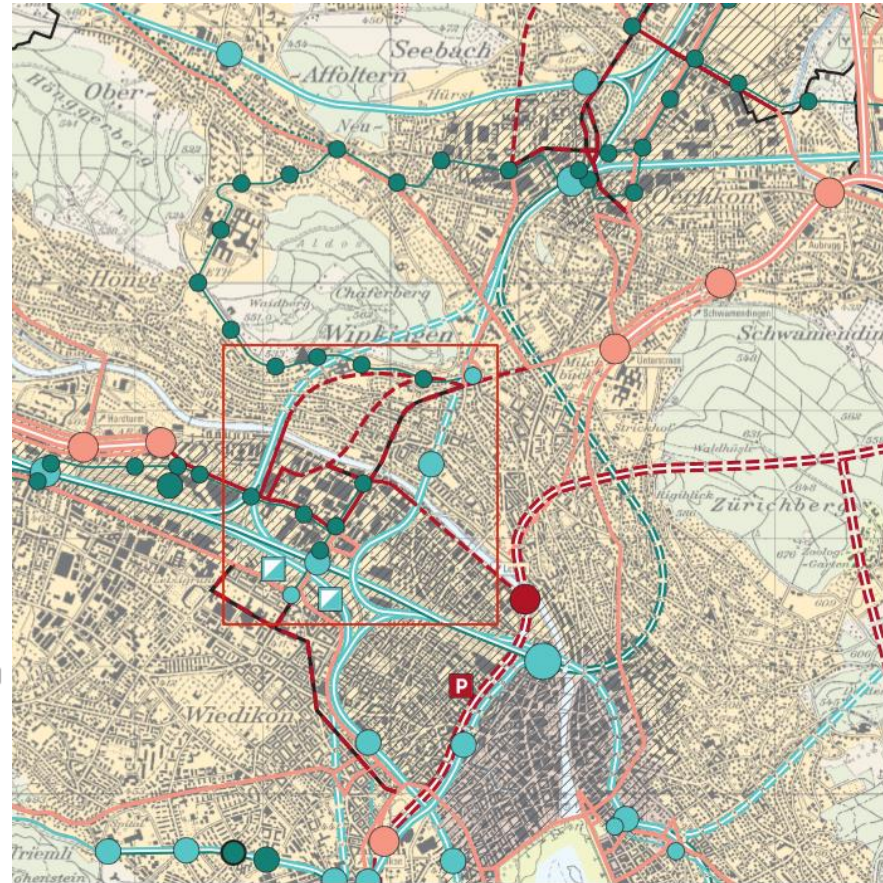
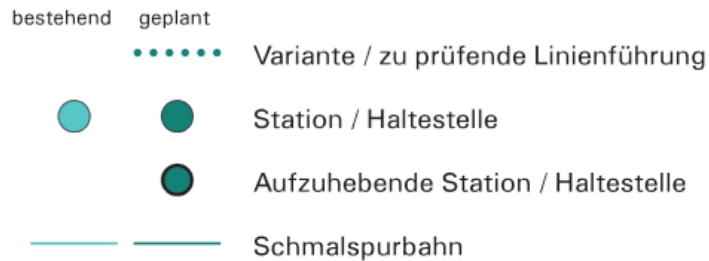
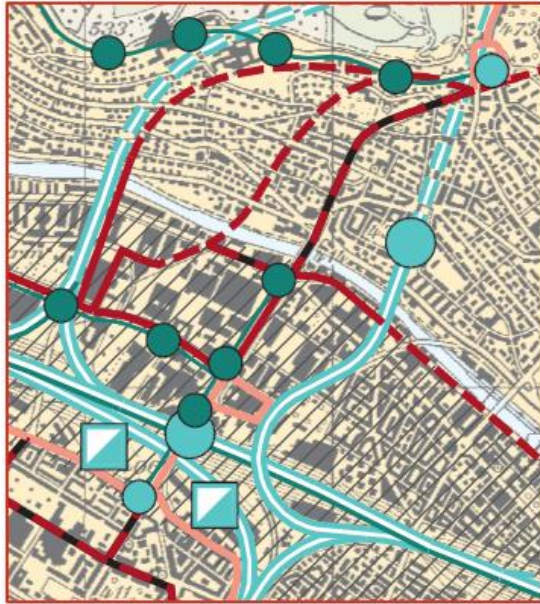
Planungen im Gebiet Hard
17. September 2008, Seite 12



Source: Tiefbauamt Stadt Zürich

Single source of information too weak! – an example

Cantonal guiding plan; Transport section: Tram tangent Rosengarten?



Source: Canton of Zürich

Single source of information too weak! – another example

Original quote:

Question: „Why or you so sure the Limmat valley tram will actually be built? “

Answer: „Because it says so in the guiding plan.“



Ask the book of counter-examples!

Evidence for arguing in planning is often difficult to verify.

- That is why it is advisable, apart from searching for proper evidence, to try and disprove an argumentation.
 - What reason/which circumstance could disprove the chosen argumentation?
 - Which decisive actor could opt out?
 - What can happen unforeseen?

- ▶ If this succeeds, the argumentation was the wrong one... or it has to be improved.

- ▶ If it doesn't succeed, the failed counter-arguments can be built into the argumentation and used as evidence.

- ▶ Example: The map choice experiment by Peter Wason... ([nzz.folio](#))



Ask the book of counter-examples!

The map choice experiment by Peter Wason

„... If you doubt this, do the map choice experiment by Peter Wason. Four cards with a digit on the front and a letter on the back are laid down. You can see D, A, 2 and 5 and have to turn those two cards, that allow you to decide on the truth of the following claim: «If one side has a D, then the other side has a 5»

Typically, 75% of the people opt for D and 5, because they think that if a 5 and a D is printed on the back they have confirmed the rule. But check again more precisely! Although you have to prove that each D has a 5 on the back, the statement does not say what can be found on the back of a 5. So the card with the 5 is meaningless. Instead of seeking confirmation of the statement, one should try to disprove it. The correct answer therefore is D (if the back does not show a 5, the claim is wrong) and 2 (if the back shows a D, the claim is wrong). This confirmation tendency may be a problem when in reality we already favor an option, which we now want to justify.”

Source: NZZ Folio 03/09 - Theme: Decisions

Possibility before probability!

- Arguing with probabilities is dangerous. They convey a false security which may mislead you to accept a premise as given.
- Therefore it is better to think through possible developments and estimate which effects mean what for an option of action.

Realität – CHRONOS vs. CHRYSIPPUS

Wir sind damit nicht auf der Linie von CHRONOS, für den das Mögliche ausschliesslich das ist, was entweder der Fall ist oder der Fall sein wird.

Bei CHRONOS haben die unrealisierten Optionen und die verpassten Gelegenheiten keinen Platz.

Wir sind aber auf der Linie mit CHRYSIPPUS, dem stoischen Philosophen, für den das Mögliche das ist, was durch nichts am Eintreten behindert wird, auch wenn es nicht eintritt. Vgl. [BUNGE 1977, 172].

• Bunge Mario Augusto: *Treatise on Basic Philosophy, Volume 3, Ontology I, The furniture of the world.* Dordrecht 1977.

© ETH Zürich | Institut für Raum- und Landschaftsentwicklung | Professur für Raumentwicklung

See: lecture „Planungsmethodik“



Keep the premises in sight!

Premises for decisions are the framework conditions for making decisions or for basing a planning argumentation on.

- In planning, premises are often based upon assumptions:
 - Current or future conditions
 - Incidents or measures whose occurrence or implementation is possible
 - ...
- Delay times and circumstances can change these premises or falsify them
- In order to react to this, a robust planning therefore requires knowledge on under which premises the planning argumentation was based upon

- ▶ Therefore always keep the premises in sight und name them!



As a reminder: Maxims for decision-making

- Rule of total evidence – Which sharper information undermine my decision.
- Rule of sharper information
- Switch-Point-Analysis
- Robustness
- Certainty of statements

See: [Lecture „Planungsmethodik“, Chapter „Entscheiden I“](#)



Signer, Rolf: Vorlesungen "Planungsmethodik" – Kapitel Entscheiden I