



Newsletter December 2023

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The feeling of a decision taken over the heads of citizens is growing stronger and stronger. We believe that openness, correct information, consultation and cooperation with citizens are indispensable for good governance. Therefore, we would like to keep you informed with this newsletter on the progress of the 'Outdoor sports complex Huldenberg' file.

Where do we stand on 01/12/2023:

The long-awaited next step (scoping note) in the dossier is finally here. The municipality lists the objections, comments, questions and suggestions from citizens and bodies, and, to the extent possible, answers them. You can find these at <https://www.huldenberg.be/nl/rupbuitensport>

We often read replies from the municipality such as: 'suggestions or proposals will be taken into account' and 'the programme will be further refined when the SIP is drawn up'. Questions about funding or road safety are answered with: 'The SIP will not comment on this'.

(SIP = Spatial Implementation Plan, which defines the zoning of a particular area)

For your information: This scoping note contains the opinions of the various bodies involved

1. GECORO (Municipal Commission for Spatial Planning)
2. Agency for Roads and Traffic (AWV)
3. Environment Department of the Flemish Government
4. Department of Agriculture and Fisheries of the Flemish Government
5. Department of Mobility and Public Works of the Flemish Government
6. Deputation of the Province of Flemish Brabant
7. Sport Flanders
8. Elia (network manager of the high-voltage electricity grid)

Apart from AWV, which has no comments or objections in this case because there are no regional or motorways in the file, the others are favourable **under certain conditions**, which must now be taken into account in the project.

The opinions can be found at <https://dsi.omgeving.vlaanderen.be/fiche-detail/57b32a3e-1613-4208-8fea-a409d6f21d0f>

The main conditions, objections and opinions are:

- **Too limited and insufficiently substantiated location study.** Unclear on the basis of which criteria the original potential sites were reduced to a shortlist of only 3 sites. Meanwhile, the location study has already been replaced by a new one with 9 sites with also adjustments to the criteria for the Nijvelsebaan site. (Vlamoven)

- The programme of outdoor sports activities should be defined more concretely and the principle of 'economical use of space' should be applied. There is no correct ratio between the area needed and the proposed area of 8.3 ha. Clear motivation of the required space requirement is needed here

- **Sufficient qualitative compensation of agricultural land** must be provided. Agricultural activities should be given maximum protection.

- Investment should be made in **sufficient safe cycling and footpaths** between the core and the site, as well as on the site as in the immediate vicinity.

- **Paving should be kept to a minimum** and sustainable water management should be applied.

- Confirmation should be sought from the EIA team that the project is **not likely to cause significant environmental impacts**. (Environmental Impact Report)

- It is requested that the design concept be worked out through **participatory consultation with local residents** (including the parking event and light and noise mitigation measures).

It is also noted by the Province of Flemish Brabant how this project relates to the spatial structure plan for Flemish Brabant, which includes the following points:

- **Preserving and strengthening the open character**, stopping urban sprawl
- Maximum development of **natural and agricultural structure**
- **Strengthening and development within the main village of low-dynamic recreation** (= walking, cycling, nature experience) with attention to ecology

And also in relation to Municipal Spatial Structure Plan:

- The planning area is located on the Overijse plateau on which the encroachment and fragmentation of contiguous agricultural land must be prevented.
- For the main village, priority is given to clustering **housing in relation to the natural landscape values and the existing agricultural structure**.

This project goes completely against the municipality's own spatial structure plan as well as that of the province.

Two organisations that also officially lodged objections are **Natuurpunt** and **Boerenbond**:

Among other things, **Natuurpunt** asked that sufficient attention be paid to the effects on the surrounding area, especially in terms of mobility, noise and light. They find the research into this insufficiently substantiated so far.

Boerenbond notes that there is a finite loss of agricultural land. The land that would be exchanged is not all equally valuable. They also ask for a proper study on drainage due to the lack of infiltration as a result of paving.

Finally, ELIA also asks to take into account the presence of underground high-voltage power lines along Nijvelsebaan, which means that deep-rooted vegetation should not be allowed in its vicinity.

JUST TO CLARIFY: NOTHING HAS BEEN DECIDED YET.

Where do we stand? The municipality is now preparing the preliminary draft of the SIP. This is expected to be submitted to the municipal executive for approval in early December. That preliminary draft will determine the zoning changes to the site and the contours it will have. In addition, the municipality must also determine in detail a section of town planning regulations on what they want to plan on the site. For both aspects, in line with their participatory approach, the municipality must take into account the input of the paraadt (citizen participation).

After the approval by the college, a new round of opinions will start among the various advisory bodies. Based on those opinions, the preliminary draft will be edited into a draft that, normally, will be submitted for approval to the municipal council in February 2024. That is the start of a public enquiry

We expect final adoption of the SIP at the June city council then.

Local residents and many with us, continue to oppose this project. Our objections were by no means refuted.

The peace, the sense of space, the atmosphere of rural living, the rolling nature and the greenery present are the primary reasons why residents have deliberately chosen to live here.

Moreover, the (financial) grandeur of this project for a rural municipality like Huldenberg is something we question.

Besides, taking such an area of agricultural land and then largely paving it is out of date.

The negative impact of the planned SIP on the surrounding area clearly outweighs the improvement of the existing sports infrastructure.

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