

Quotes and Definitions from “Planning in Iceland” (2003)

By *Trausti Valsson*

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“Trausti Valsson has achieved an extraordinary feat of scholarship: he has written the comprehensive, definitive, encyclopaedic account of planning in one European country, from the beginnings to the present day... Thorough in its research, comprehensive in its scope, always highly readable, Trausti Valsson's book sets a new standard in historical scholarship and provides a model for other scholars in other countries to follow” 10

Sir Peter Hall is Professor of Planning at the Bartlett School of Arch. and Planning, UCL

Introduction 11

1 The Subject of This Book 11

“The scope of this book, Planning in Iceland – From the Settlement to Present Times, is intentionally broad...” 11

“The purpose is not to write the usual type of historical account... Rather, the main purpose of the book is to create an understanding of how settlement and planning have evolved in Iceland – and thereby to gain an

understanding of settlement and planning that may provide a broader perspective than the development in Iceland. In order to achieve this goal it helps to look back in time...” 11

“To put it briefly, humans, like other organisms, have to conduct a search process, a process that is in fact a trial and error process...” 11

“The story of the settlers’ search for a place in Iceland is both fascinating and impressive... if a mistake was made in the selection of a site people often learned it the hard way. If, for example, a farmer settled too close to the slope of a volcano or to flood areas along the coast, nature was quick to teach him a lesson. The early Icelanders could only learn from their, often harsh, experiences and move to another place” 11

“In modern times, humans, in many cases, have lost this early knowledge of how to live and work in this country. Consequently, this loss of knowledge and the frequent detachment from past experiences – even if modern humans have acquired a varied scientific knowledge... Wrong decisions, such as settling in areas prone to avalanches, have resulted in terrible accidents...” 12

“we will trace how the cohabiting of man and land evolved in Iceland. The tracing of these patterns serves the purpose of being an introduction to how to become "literate" on what aspects of nature matter the most, as we work on the planning of settlements in this country...” 12

“...In Iceland this language of relationships is easy to understand, not least because on this island we are able to observe the origins of the processes that are, or have been, at work in shaping the land. The Icelandic experience is especially impressive and clear because

wrestling with the forces of nature has often been such a gigantic undertaking that it might even be called epic.” 13

“...it is a common misunderstanding that the task of deciding what should be the future of certain settlement areas and urban structures should only be the responsibility of planners.” 14

“The most common misunderstanding is that to plan means that an attempt is being made to fixate everything and to make arrangements standardized and inflexible. This, however, is simply bad planning. Good planning opens opportunities” 16

“Another common misunderstanding is that if a decision is taken to approach things in a planned manner, it must automatically mean that power is taken from the people – that planning means that there is some supreme authority that is meant to rule...” 16

“The third misunderstanding often connected with planning is that planning automatically means an end to dynamic changes, i.e., that in the process of planning, regulations and restrictions are produced that obstruct future developments...” 16

“Modern understanding of planning is that this is a method to produce workable solutions, to help simplify regulations and make them more flexible, and to prepare the way for meaningful future use of the built environment. Planning works to help humans to discover possibilities – not to limit choices.” 16

2 Theory of the Built Environment 18

“One of the oldest of human concerns is the effect of the forces of nature and the question as to how shelter and housing can best be constructed...” 18

“...a very ancient task of humankind to try to find the way best to plan activities, whether hunting, agriculture, transportation or selecting a site for habitation.” 18

“Until the industrial revolution most people in northern Europe lived in rural areas or in small towns and villages. The industrial revolution started a process of creating large cities... A common feature of the first industrial cities – modern cities – was that a large number of problems surfaced...” 18

“Because of the huge problems of the towns, many reform theories were created proposing steps to alleviate some of the problems. Best known of these theories is the concept of The Garden City in which the main emphasis was put on zoning, i.e., the separation of occupational areas and residential areas. The theory also stressed the need for open spaces and greenery in residential areas...” 19

“Iceland also had its messenger of these theories – Gudmundur Hannesson, who was a professor of medicine at the University of Iceland. In 1916 Hannesson published a book on the subject called Skipulag baeja (On the Planning of Towns).” 19

“...the first planning law that was passed... in 1921. Following the implementation of the law the State Planning Commission was established. Besides Hannesson, the members were the Director of Roads and the State Architect...” 19

3 Basic Elements of Planning Theory 21

“...describe some basic elements of planning theory, starting with the levels of planning... In many countries there exists a country plan that is meant to give a general overview... g is called a continental plan. In these plans the large transportation infrastructures usually come first. The agreements reached on world development, e.g., at the two United Nations'

conferences held in Stockholm in 1972 and in Rio in 1992, were actually the first steps to some kind of a global plan...” 21

“...is the regional plan. This type of plan embraces the main physical aspects in a certain area...” 21

“...The master plan of today has become the main tool of local governments to shape and guide the future developments of the community in question...” 21

“The next lower planning level, the detail or local plan, presents the working out, in further detail, of the planning of areas and neighbourhoods...” 21

“Specialized plans or sector plans are often made for cultural districts, areas for tourism, harbour areas and airport areas...” 22

“A recent development (written in 2002) is that planning acts has started to move more away from the designing and planning of new neighbourhoods and areas...” 22

4 Interpl. of Planning and Natural Features 23

“The interplay of living, industries, occupations and settlements with the forces of nature is more prevalent in Iceland than in most other countries. Because of this, planning projects in Iceland are more focused on studying nature as preparation for planning...” 23

“The idea of making it a central issue in all planning and development that planning should be carried out in a responsible way in terms of the natural environment is the fundamental thesis of this book...” 23

“To make the reader more able to understand this aspect of the story of the cohabiting of people and nature, Book One, following this Introduction, will introduce the various

aspects of nature and describe how much the forces of nature have shaped the history of settlement in Iceland...” 24

“An evaluation of natural features – as preparation for planning – has occasionally been carried out in Iceland. However, which natural features are the most important... Such preparatory studies are greatly concerned with earthquakes, most importantly in south Iceland...” 24

5 The Import. of Man-Made Environments 25

“In ancient times, when humankind lived in nature and as part of it, harmony with natural conditions was of greatest importance...” 24

“As these large man-made structures had begun to be built for the first time in history a considerable need for large-scale planning emerged...” 24

“The urbanization process in Iceland took about 100 years. It started at the end of the nineteenth century and had reached about 90% at the end of the twentieth century...” 26

6 The Need to Dig Down to the Roots 27

“In spite of this extensive knowledge of nature and the natural hazards in Iceland, we have of late been thrown into great difficulties in cohabiting with the natural forces in Iceland, as attested by the effects of recent avalanches, mud flows, ocean and river flooding, and earthquake damage...” 27

BOOK ONE – Nature: The Forces That Shape It I THE LAND – AND WHAT SHAPES IT 31

1 The Internal Forces 31

“Familiarity with the nature of these forces helps in understanding what are the main characteristics of the landscape of Iceland...” 31

“The field of geology called geomorphology deals with the structure of the land and how to interpret the structures to show how the land was formed and shaped” 32

2 The External Forces 33

“The external forces of weathering and erosion are first and foremost driven by energy that comes from the sun...” 33

“This whole spectrum of landscape forms in Iceland has been useful to Icelanders for various types of activities. Harbour construction, for example, has been easy in many sheltered locations and many of these are actually natural harbours...” 34

3 Shaping by Man, Animals and Vegetation 35

“the appearance that is created by culture and habitation has been given a specific name: cultural landscape...” 35

“The cohabitating of the nation with the land has, frequently, in the course of history, been disastrous. Often the critical factor was the limited hay production. Especially in the cold years and in years of great eruptions and ash fall...” 35

4 How Nature is Constantly Changing 37

“Let us take an example from changes in climate; in this case the vegetation fluctuates, both seasonally and in response to colder and warmer years. In cold periods the vegetative cover retreats down from the mountains...” 37

“The edge of the coast provides another example of fluctuation. At this land/sea interface many types of dynamics are at work. In some cases ocean floods have caused disasters, for example, as large areas are being washed away as the natural breakwaters of the coast are eroded away...” 37

“...global warming... the glaciers in Iceland will disappear in due time. Consequently, the glacial rivers will change into clear water rivers and the glaciers will stop scraping the underlying bedrock with their heavy load” 38

II THE LAND: USES AND DANGER 39

1 Types of Natural Resources 39

“What is considered to be a natural resource changes very much from one period to another” 39

“The features that were of most importance in selecting sites for settlements, as fishing started to develop, are easy to define on maps...” 39

“...In some cases, intended planning provides an opportunity to start a new study of the natural features of an area with the aim of creating a sufficient database for the planning” 39

“The first all-encompassing preparatory work of this kind in Iceland was the making of a series of maps interpreting natural features in preparation for a master plan for the areas north and east of Grafarvogur in Reykjavík in the mid1970's.” 40

2 Types of Natural Hazards 42

“Today, Iceland has become highly urbanized so the earlier need of the agricultural society to use almost every patch of the country for settlements – even very close to the volcanic areas – is no longer needed...” 42

“... external forces. One of the features that result from them are the earthquakes... second feature that follows from the forces is volcanism itself and what comes with it; lava flows, pumice falls, floods from beneath glaciers and mud flows down mountain slopes...” 42

“...Today it is very easy to map where there is a great danger of avalanches but nevertheless this danger has, until recently, not been much recognized in planning.” 44

3 The Interplay of Natural Features 45

“Both the risk assessment and the conclusive findings in the lowest box are, however, not sufficient for estimating the full costs of damage. It is also necessary to estimate the social and economic damage that can occur, as well as the costs of rebuilding.” 48

III ADAPTATION OF SETTLEM. TO NATURE 49

1 The Ideology of Designing with Nature 49

“As people started to become freer in the choice of habitation, for example, because of the use of engines, they gradually forgot how important it is to adjust settlements to natural and local conditions...” 49

“...the arrogance of modern humans towards nature had developed to such a degree that people were not at all willing to listen to nature. This arrogance and disrespect have frequently been the primary cause of the difficulties in coexisting with nature.” 49

“... the idea that it is a necessary first step in all planning to study the location and adjust the planning to it. One of the most eminent theoreticians in this field was Ian McHarg, who wrote the book *Design with Nature*. The theoretical concept is taken directly from nature, where the harmony of location and life forms has been perfected...” 49

“Civil engineering theories deal mostly with features such as adaptation to geological features and the effect of the construction on the surrounding hydrology. It should also be noted that the bedrock and the soils can play an important role when it comes to the selection of a site.” 50

2 Examples of Good Adaptation 51

“In 874 Ingólfur Arnarson arrived from Norway with his band of followers with the intent of settling this new land of Iceland. To choose the site he threw his high-seat timbers into the sea: where they came ashore he would make his home. He sent his slaves Vífill and Karli on a three year expedition all along the south coast of Iceland to find where the timbers had come to shore...” 51

3 Examples of Poor Adaptation 53

“The greatest mistake the settlers made in this new country was to settle in low-lying areas open to the ocean, e.g., on the Reykjanes Peninsula. It was also a great mistake to settle too close to the flanks of volcanoes and far up in the highlands...” 53

“In the first centuries of settlement there was quite a large settlement in Thjórsárdalur Valley close to the slopes of Mt Hekla. The gigantic eruption of 1104 threw out a huge amount of volcanic ejecta and the area was covered with a layer of pumice and ash, in some places several metres in depth. This is comparable to how the towns of Pompeii and Herculaneum in Italy were destroyed and covered...” 53

“Við verkefnið að laga byggð að staðháttum eru til ýmis nytsamleg vísindi. Má þar t.d. nefna jarðfræði, eldfjallafræði, gróðurfræði og vatnafræði...” 55

4 Why Adapt. Does Not Come Automat. 55

“There are many applicable branches of science to assist us in this task of adapting the settlements to local features, not least geology, volcanology, botany and hydrology...” 55

“Many scientists contributed greatly in the twentieth century to interpreting and defining the natural features that have been the most dangerous in Iceland in the past. One of these

men was the geographer and geologist Sigurdur Thórarinnsson...” 55

BOOK TWO – First Steps in Sh. of Settlem.

I BASIC FACTORS IN THE SH. OF SETTLEM.59

1 Features of the Land: A Basis for Shaping 59

“The first factor affecting the development of settlement was that the settlers, sailing from Norway and the British Isles, had good ships and were good sailors. It was also important that the settlers did not bring much livestock with them when they emigrated from Norway because their ships were small. The first settlers therefore had to live from what the ocean and the land could give them directly...” 59

“In the geological history of the earth, the coming and going of Ice Age glaciers, as a result of the cooling and warming of the climate, were then not considerable problems because people simply moved...” 60

2 The Fundamental Importance of Trades 61

“An increased number of fishing boats as well as the method of processing saltfish induced the formation of settlements and as schooners arrived in the late nineteenth century the development sped up. With the schooners, people needed better harbours and in places where such conditions were available, as in Hafnarfjörður, Reykjavík, Flatey, Ísafjörður and Seydisfjörður...” 61

“Vegetable gardening came to the country in the eighteenth century, which made it easier for people with little land to survive in the small fishing villages. Because of the drying patches and the cabbage and potato patches around the cottages, the settlements were spread out...” 61

“Later, as horse drawn carriages arrived in Iceland, the transportation of agricultural products from the countryside to the urban

areas created conditions for the further increase in population in urban centres...” 61

“...originally there was a structure of coastal settlements. With increased livestock and improved conditions for land transport the settlement structure moved towards inland settlements. As fishing started to develop the direction of migration turned around and the people again began to move to the coast...” 61

“... If, however, the world climate is going to become warmer, the problems of cold and snow in central Iceland will decrease, with the consequence that it will be easier to live and travel in the central highlands. If the warming is substantial, the highlands will be automatically revegetated and thus be as suitable for settlements and transportation as any high-lying areas in northern Europe today.” 62

“If people take the predictions of global warming seriously we can conclude that it is unwise and unnecessary to spend the huge effort that is now being made, under poorer climatic conditions, to revegetate the highlands. It is a better idea to wait and see if nature cannot do the work itself...” 62

3 Assets: A Basis of the Power Structure 63

“As time passed, both the church and the foreign monarchs acquired a great deal of land in Iceland but because of how big the country is and how few inhabitants there were, the price of land never became very high in Iceland...” 63

“The first settlers probably also envisioned that their settlement area could become a small state like those that were common in Norway at the time. This attitude was borne out in later developments and some of the first settlers became powerful chieftains, who

allocated good settlement areas to relatives and other followers..." 63

"The bishops of Skálholt were also initiators in employing merchant ships that could maintain commercial ties with foreign countries..." 64

"...it is certain that disagreement among the chieftains of the country was so great and that the settlements so dispersed that none of them was able to make himself king of the country. The Norwegian king used the opportunity to push himself into this power vacuum caused by the strife in the thirteenth century" 64

4 Possibilities in Transportation 65

"...to study how the settlement structure was influenced by the possibilities at hand in terms of transportation..." 65

"The route improvements were manifold. In rugged lavas the tops of the lava heaps were rolled over into the small chasms and in spacious wetland turf was cut and piled up to build up "turf bridges"..." 66

II BASIC FEATURES IN THE SH. OF SYSTEMS 67

1 The Power Syst.: Godar and Assemblies 67

"We will here start by tracing how the power systems – the priest-chieftains or godar and the assemblies – had their origin in the creation of governmental districts..." 67

2 Condit. Shape the System of Transport. 69

"...As the horseshoe still had not arrived in Iceland and little improvement of overland trails had been made, transportation by sea was the easiest mode, especially within fjords and bays..." 69

"In these bays, sea transportation was dominant and centrally located islands in bays like Videy, Flatey in Breidafjörður..." 69

"Land transportation trails often went along the ocean, the banks of rivers and lakes. Travelling thus on the boundaries meant that the traveller did not need to trespass by crossing farm fields, and this also led to the fact that some of the land trails were directed above settlements at the edge of the highlands..." 69

"There were many features that were obstructions to communication, especially the largest rivers, mountain regions, fjords, rugged lava and forests. By mapping these obstructions one can acquire an understanding of what it was that shaped the system of transportation. The study of the transportation system of earlier times can be visualized, and at the same time we get a better idea of where the settlement units were as well as how the settlement patterns of the country evolved." 70

3 Laws of Form that Shape Settlements 71

"Three laws of form: Settlement areas need to have the density of the circle; Secondly, an area has to have a clear centre, and in addition, the lines of communication should preferably run through this centre or close to it. Often strong urban centres are created close to crossroads..." 71

"Some countries have taken the radical step of creating new capitals close to the geographical centre of their territory; examples are Madrid in Spain, Brasilia in the middle of Brazil, and Mexico City at the geographical centre of Mexico. A big problem in modern planning is that the law of the circle is often not respected enough; an example of this is how the Capital Area in Iceland is stretched in all directions..." 71

4 The Althing – First Step Toward Govern. 73

"Following the central place theory, centres of governance or capitals are often placed in the middle of regions or countries. This could not

happen in Iceland because the central highlands were – and in fact remain – uninhabitable...” 73

“If the Althing, – as a place of central governance, – had originally been placed in the Reykjavík area with a close connection to good fishing grounds, all-year ocean transportation and productive agricultural areas, that would have provided the citizens with a livelihood, an urban core most likely would have been formed there...” 73

“...These romantics in some respects lacked a sense of reality and they did not realize how flawed the location of Thingvellir would have been if it came to the re-establishing of the Parliament...” 74

“The realist, Jón Sigurdsson, the most important freedom fighter, understood this and he had much influence on the decision that the Althing should be placed in Reykjavík... Sigurdsson's answer to the romantics was that it was within the power of Icelanders themselves to make Reykjavík an Icelandic rather than a Danish town.” 74

III CULTURAL FEATURES THAT SHAPE SETTLEMENTS 75

1 Systems of Religious and Secular Power 75

“The early society was based on the importance of the family, with power distributed, a system not unlike some aspects of the Catholic Church. The monasteries, in the beginning, also were distributed over the whole country...” 75

“...the system of governance that the Norwegian kings introduced was necessary for structuring this amorphous society...” 76

2 Law as an Instrument in Planning 77

“An assembly, the Althing, was established at Thingvellir in 930... a considerable part of the law that was passed dealt with land use, the

use of grass lands and sheepherding and grazing rights. These aspects of the law were actually, piecemeal, forming the foundation of the land-use plan of the country...” 77

“...In the law promulgated by King Eric in 1294, the first directive on roads was announced: "It is a duty of farmers to make roads according to the directions given by sheriffs and lawmen." 77

3 Foreign Blueprints for Iceland 79

“When the Danish king gained power over Iceland in the early sixteenth century Danish influence increased. This was primarily in the south and west where the Danish governors maintained their headquarters and the most important commercial centres were...” 80

“At the end of the nineteenth century, the Norwegians started to fish for herring in Iceland, mainly in the East Fjords and in the north. Their whaling stations were, however, mostly set up in the West Fjords but later also in the East Fjords. Because of this, "Norwegian towns" were established in these parts of the country, often because the Norwegians brought their houses with them on their ships. Therefore, the east and north have more Norwegian characteristics than the south and the west of Iceland.” 80

IV BASIC SYSTEMS OF THE SETTLEMENT STRUCTURES 81

1 Systems of Secular Governance 81

“The office of bailiff was established in 1683. The best known of these bailiffs was the first Icelander appointed to that office, Skúli Magnússon. He later took the initiative in establishing an industrial village in Reykjavík called the "New Industries", in 1752.” 81

“...Áskell Einarsson's hypotheses is that abolishing of the amt-districts, that were a kind of regional government, contributed to the strengthening of Reykjavík as a centre and

thus to the weakening of the countryside...”
82

2 Systems of Religious Governance 83

“The church gradually came into possession of a considerable amount of farmland as well as certain rights that came with the land. In time it became the task of the church to be in charge of education in the country and many of the churches and monasteries were seats of scholarship, but first and foremost it was the two bishoprics...” 83

“A great change happened in the position of the church when the Catholic Church was abandoned and the Evangelical Lutheran Church took its place in 1550. These changes, even though some were inconvenient, increased the integration of secular and religious power...” 83

3 Systems of Comm., Harbours and Fishing 85

“Increased fishing meant that the urban spots where they were located were strengthened and at the same time many of them became commercial harbours for the exportation of the fish and also, of course, for the importation of goods...” 85

“The main criterion for choosing a commercial centre was that the harbour was good and also that there were good conditions for building the housing needed...” 86

“... understood that supporting certain urban cores was a precondition to improving settlements so that specialization in various fields could evolve. Because of this thinking a directive was issued in 1786 to reduce the number of trading centres that were allowed to conduct commerce to six...” 86

4 Systems of Transportation 87

“... how the natural features of the country had an influence on how the transportation systems were formed. Part of the surface

transport system in the country was, at this time, routes across the central highlands.” 87

“... As the highlands started to erode to a considerable extent, there was no longer enough grassland for the horses and as the topsoil disappeared, rocky sand or desert was all that was left...” 87

“... In 1776 the Danish authorities issued the Reskript, a rather specific directive on how roads and bridges should be built and ferries established. In this very same year, regular mail and passenger ship service to Iceland was initiated...” 87

“In the first legislation regarding roads in 1894 the roads were divided into transportation routes, national routes and mountain routes that were to be paid for by the state treasury, and county roads and local roads that were to be paid for by the counties and the local districts.” 88

“... These bridges and the short roads were a precondition for being able to transport a considerable amount of agricultural produce to the urban centres...” 88

5 The Educational Systems 89

“... schools for educating the priests were established in Hólar and in Skálholt. Those who wanted to study law and other worldly subjects after 1736 had to go abroad. Most of them went to Copenhagen, as was natural because Copenhagen was at that time the capital of Iceland...” 89

“Reykjavík started to be built up as a centre of education and schools in the nineteenth century with the establishment of the Latin School in 1846, the Seminary in 1847, the Medical College 1876 and the School of Law in 1908. In 1911 these schools were combined to form the University of Iceland.” 89

“Because of the negative influences of the Industrial Revolution on life and the environment of towns, as well as the wish to improve education in the rural regions themselves, quite early an ideology was postulated that had the goal of having many of these schools develop into rural centres” 90

BOOK THREE – Plan Development of Towns and Regions

I CATEG. OF SETTLE. AND TYPES OF PLANS 93

1 Primary Causes of Urbanization 93

“I An authority of some kind settles in a certain place... and the place gradually becomes a town. II Agriculture reaches a high level of development. Because of this various types of processing industries, food production and commerce evolve... III Fishing leads to the forming of a town... IV Some type of industry comes to be: 1 Primary production, for example, salt and metal and coal production 2 Secondary production, for example, lumber or iron products 3 Service industries: a) Services for other industries, e.g., blacksmiths and mechanics... b) Service to the settlements, e.g., carpenters, food production, etc. V Culture, e.g., seats of learning or university towns VI Leisure (e.g., Blackpool and Baden-Baden).” 93

“...A hierarchical structure, which can build up large religious centres, was therefore not operative in the first two centuries of settlements in Iceland.” 93

“...only one village that has this star form: Thykkvabaer. That this could happen in Thykkvabaer is probably because of the fertility of the soil there...” 94

“...various types of tools could increase the productivity of the land as, for example, irrigation systems where water and the minerals in the water are distributed over the fields. A basic tool which the original settlers

had was the ord or coulter plough, which opens up the soil...” 94

“...The third type of urban centres are those which originated because of the development of fishing...” 94

“...development of fishing from this primary stage did not occur until a market had opened for fish products in foreign countries. When Bergen in Norway had become the capital of Iceland the exported fish mainly went there because Bergen had the big advantage of being an outpost of the Hanseatic League” 94

“...led the new Icelandic officials to begin to change things. Skúli Magnússon was the first Icelander to fill the office of bailiff and took the initiative of founding the New Industries and creating the concept of the first industrial village in Iceland.” 95

“...volcanic eruptions and years of cold spells at the end of the seventeenth century, as well as blockades because of the Napoleonic Wars that closed off the markets, were among the reasons why the early attempts at developing Icelandic industry became so difficult...” 94

“The Age of Schooners started around the mid-nineteenth century on Flatey Island in Breidafjörður and in Reykjavík in 1866. The modern type of urban growth had therefore finally started...” 95

2 Why Urban Development Came Late 96

“...centres of government developed in Iceland even though the first early sprouts of a government for the whole country had already materialized...” 96

1. geographical features of the country were such that it was divided up into strongly separated spatial units.
2. settlement only really developed like a collar around the country. Often the

lowlands which were suitable for urban development were encircled by mountains.

3. farmers were mainly focused on producing food for themselves and their own people. Therefore people were not very dependent on each other and there was so little excess production.
4. there was no overarching executive power in the country but rather that this activity was too dispersed.
5. the small fishing boats could only catch the fish in the few weeks in the winter and spring... people did not have the schooners to seek the fish in deeper waters.
6. lack of natural harbour areas in some of the larger agricultural areas was a greater problem... This was because they were located either deep in the shallow fjords or on the sandy, shallow coast.
7. A theory maintains it was first and foremost a negative attitude on the part of the farmers... that stood in the way of the development of urban areas along the coast... agriculture was still... very dependent on manual labour and made little use of technology..."
8. Only Skálholt and Hólar qualified as cultural centres in Iceland... the monasteries were cultural centres, but with... the Reformation in Iceland in 1550 most of the monasteries disappeared from history. 96-98

3 Types and Levels of Planning 99

"The main types of planning in the broader sense are the planning of governmental systems, economic planning, planning of trades, technical planning and infrastructure planning..." 99

"The beginnings of economic planning were primarily introduced through the Danish king's organization of commerce in the Middle Ages." 99

"Let us now proceed to the levels of planning that were shaped by the type of government that was prevalent at each time. For most of the time, there were three levels of government – the amt-districts, the counties, and the communal or local districts, and over these, of course, the fourth level, the king in Denmark." 99

II THE FIRST URBAN DEVELOPMENTS 101

1 Large Farms of Chieftains and Church 101

"This section will explain how the first urban developments came to be in a country that up to this time only had rural areas..." 101

"As the Age of the Sturlungar started in the twelfth century there were already small units of militia in the country. The most notorious of them were under the Sturlungar, Haukdaelir and Ásbirningar families. The increased power of the chieftains... could build up cultural centres on their farms or in a designated place within their region. The best known of these cultural centres are Haukadalur, Oddi and Reykholt..." 101

2 Places of Commerce and Fishing 103

"The sites of commerce, at each given time, give us an idea about where the main production of export products came to be" 103

"...one can realize how sensible these proposals of Magnússon and the Land Commission were. In a spatial sense, the main commercial harbours are logically selected" 105

"... the main harbours... were also intelligently selected... The boldness of these proposals becomes apparent in light of the fact that Reykjavík was suggested as the main harbour

for the whole southern lowland in spite of the fact that there were no bridges over the large rivers...” 105

3 The Establ. of Trading Stations in 1786 106

“Skúli Magnússon had proposed necessary changes in the system of commerce in the country that, among other things, advocated a decrease in the number of commercial harbours. The possibility of presenting such bold plans partly originated in the fact that the country was going through desperate times, so desperate that cheaper ways to conduct commerce had to be found. It was also important that the idea of establishing a few but strong trading stations would, at the same time, open up opportunities for strengthening the development of other types of trade” 106

““Offers were made to attract such people: ... a free permit to operate and free building lots together with building grants. The land for these trading centres was bought with government funds. The civilians were also exempted from taxation for 20 years, though they had to pay some monies to the trade centre and to the trading station itself. Citizens who operated shops in a legalized trading centre were also given the right to shop in other harbours...” 106

III DEVELOPM. TOWARDS A CAPITAL CITY 108

1 Moving Instit. into the Reykjavík Area 108

“The interest of the Danish government in improving services and local government in Iceland around the mid-eighteenth century manifested itself among other things in stone buildings for the new institutions.” 108

“The Bessastadir estate was built in 1761-1766 and somewhat later the governor moved his residence there from Copenhagen.” 108

“The Danish king in this period started to make Icelanders his officials, importantly Skúli Magnússon as bailiff in 1749. A stately

domicile for the bailiff was built on the island of Videy in 1752-54...” 108

“At the Nes farm on the Seltjarnarnes Peninsula, a stately building was built in 1761-65 as a home and workplace for newly appointed doctor for the nation, Bjarni Pálsson...” 108

“...the most important decision that resulted in making the south-west... and a place for the capital city was that of the Second Land Commission, namely, to move the bishop's seat at Skálholt to Reykjavík, together with the school. What followed was that the cathedral, the seat of the bishop, was built in Reykjavík ... “Furthermore, a decision was made to move the Althing parliament to Reykjavík.” 108

“...the migration of institutions in Reykjavík in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries occurred most often in two steps. First they were moved into the neighbouring regions and then somewhat later into the village or the town itself. The main reasons for this were that, given the great financial difficulties of the time, the Danish monarchy saw it as a sensible measure to provide the institutions with good farms because farm income helped the official to run the institution...” 108

“It is of interest to observe how this same pattern of two-step migration also has occurred in modern times. This happened as people from the countryside moved, as a first step, into little fishing villages close by. The early migration to Dalvík is an example, the second step being that people migrated from there to Akureyri.” 109

2 First Steps in Pl. the Devel. of Reykjavík 110

1. first settler of the country, Ingólfur Arnarson, was the one who laid down the first line in the future plan.

2. Skúli Magnússon and his collaborators selected this farm of as a place for the factory village for his New Industries.
3. official institutions were moved there. The first was a prison, built in 1760.
4. Shortly before 1800, the offices of the bailiff and the high court, the precursor of the Supreme Court, were moved to Reykjavík.
5. Soon after the village had received legalization as a market town in 1786, a considerable number of merchant ships started to come to Iceland. To start with, the merchants carried on their business out on the ships. 110

3 Devel. of Reykjavík as an Urban Centre 112

6. Around 1800 the impetus to progress was supported by the fact that, due to the catastrophes that had hit the country, it was necessary to adjust and restructure.
7. Re-establishing of the Althing in Reykjavik.
8. The moveing of the Latin School from Bessastadir to Reykjavík.
9. The officials... moved one after the other into the town – the governor, the bailiff, the chief judges, and the national doctor and pharmacist.
10. Various activities moved with these officials to Reykjavík, for example, the Jardabókar Fund with the bailiff, a fund that was the predecessor of the State Treasury.
11. the people of Reykjavík had to fight a hard battle, for a long time, to be allowed to join The Fire Insurance Association of Danish Trade Centres.
12. The Danish king gave up certain monarchical rights in 1848, which led to the establishment of a national assembly in Denmark.
13. Increased freedom of the press 1874 led among other things to the establishing of two Reykjavík

newspapers: Thjóðólfur and Lanzbladid.

14. Maritime products from Iceland came from the fisheries in Faxaflói Bay, primarily from Gullbringa County and from Reykjavík.
15. In 1876 as regular coastal shipping started with a grant from the Landssjóður fund.
16. Apart of the fight for independence to be relieved of the stranglehold of the commercial... where the powerful Danish merchants tried to maintain this system.
17. In 1888 an important change came about, namely that coastal and foreign shipping was directed to Reykjavík.
18. Of primary importance to improve the transportation routes connecting Reykjavík and the neighbouring regions.
19. Important achievement in the transport of the inner part of Faxaflói Bay was the introduction of small steamboats that served the area and connected the settlements.
20. The establishing of wholesale companies in Reykjavík at the beginning of the twentieth century meant that the final step towards a modern commercial system.
21. Establishment of The Icelandic Steamship Company in 1912.
22. Important steps in the advancement of the country were the establishing of The Iceland Bank in 1904 and the telegraphic sea cable link to Europe in 1906. 112-116

4 Reykjavík: Devel. of Urban Features 117

“...The growth of the town at the end of the nineteenth century – because of the fishing – meant an increasing demand for land for grazing and vegetable gardens. What followed was that Reykjavík became one of the largest agricultural areas in the country...” 117

“This need for agricultural land also meant that the town council bought most of the farmland in the neighbourhood in order to secure enough land for cultivation and grazing. In later times this buying of land turned out to be quite advantageous for Reykjavík. This public ownership of land...” 117

DEV, OF ENVI.MATTERS IN REYKJAVIK:

1. The town council was given the task of cleaning the privies but the regulation was not enforced because the field owners protested.
2. Example of how dirty Reykjavík was in the early twentieth century was that slaughtering mostly took place outdoors...
3. 1902 that the first closed drain was laid in Aegisgata Street.
4. Establishing necessary public utilities such as the water supply system in 1909...
5. ... and the gas distribution system in 1910.
6. “he gas station... tar as a by-product. By mixing the tar with gravel... had asphalt that could be used to pave the streets in the downtown area.
 - A. A steamroller to flatten the asphalt was bought in 1912.
 - B. r. In this same period the building of concrete houses started.
 - C. Telephone lines were strung from telephone poles.
 - D. After 1915 the increase in population remained rather stable or about 1000 per year. It is a pleasant coincidence that the number of inhabitants, in thousands, followed approximately the last two numbers of the year all the way up to 1945...
 - E. The use of the telephone became widespread, but as telephone lines were not yet buried.

- F. This was also the period of horse drawn vehicles.
- G. In the winter there was some sleigh traffic in the streets, especially when ice was cut from the Lake.
117-119

IV REYKJAVÍK PRIOR TO WORLD WAR II 120 **1 The Revolut. in Pl. During World War I 120**

“The year 1915 certainly can be said to have marked the beginning a focused discussion on planning in Reykjavík. In the spring there was a large fire in the town centre. Twelve wooden houses, adjacent or close to each other, burned down...” 120

“Gudmundur Hannesson, a physician, wrote the first Icelandic book on building and planning concerns, a book that was published the following year. This book, or treatise, was the foundation for a bill on planning which came before the parliament in 1917...” 120

“The plan of 1927 made some attempts at managing land use according to a zoning scheme but later the result was "sterilization" and bedroom neighbourhoods that lacked life.” 121

2 The First Master Plan of 1927 122

“The main characteristics of the plan are that little difference is made between main thoroughfares and residential streets and that a continuous row of buildings was proposed to line most streets. Because of this, there is much disturbance today from the traffic in the old part of town...” 122

“...In the newer areas ample space was given for residential areas with detached houses. The plan also prescribed the height of buildings.” 122

“...Of most importance was that the harbour was starting to come into use, which meant

that several fishing and commercial companies gravitated to the town centre” 122

3 Devel. of Infrastructures in Reykjavík 126

“Few realize how much the various technical infrastructures of cities influence the way they are planned...” 126

“After a fight with the town council Gudmundur Björnsson succeeded in having these wells shut off. Björnsson's battle ended with success because soon the construction of the water supply system... completed in 1909... Another big step towards a healthier town was to lay sewer pipes under the streets.” 126

“The introduction of electricity started with small kerosene-driven motors at some companies. World War I meant that there was a delay in further development and also the decision, made earlier to opt for gas, caused a delay in the introduction of electricity...” 126

“The first hydropower plant in Reykjavík was built by the River Ellidaár in 1921.” 126

“... use of the geothermal hot water by installing district heating... The project was finished in 1930 and 70 houses on Skólavörðuholt Hill were connected.” 127

“...were just about to start to build the system World War II started, considerably delaying the project. But on December 1st, 1943, the first buildings were connected...” 127

“The Age of Cars started in Iceland in 1913 as two Canadian-Icelanders brought a new Ford to Reykjavík. Earlier, in 1904, one experimental car had been brought to Reykjavík...” 127

“The emerging of fast car traffic led to many changes in planning. Special sidewalks were constructed along all streets where people

were expected to stay in order to get clear of the cars. Later some planning schemes tried to separate pedestrian traffic...” 128

“Since cars are noisy and polluting, planning theory has developed a policy to pull building construction back from the streets. Most often this has meant that green spaces line the roads....” 128

“...In 1931 the Reykjavík Bus Company was established. The next year the company bought six buses that were put on several routes, according to a route plan...” 128

“Various other infrastructure systems were gradually constructed, including social structures like those of playgrounds, day-care centres, schools and outdoor areas. The last one of these systems to be considered in planning was the system of open or green areas...” 128

4 The Consequences of the Depression and Military Occupation 129

“The main consequence of the Great Depression that started in 1929 was that people had to be content with rather poor housing. Therefore the idea of the 1927 plan, that most of the wooden houses in Reykjavík should disappear, could not be implemented. The architectural conservationists of today are therefore in debt to the Depression for preserving what is now cherished.” 129

“In the 1930's people therefore suddenly realised that on the top of Skólavörðuholt Hill there was totally inadequate space for a university so soon people started to draft a plan for a university in the Melar area.” 129

“...Colourless concrete buildings rose up from the barren rocky landscape and the lifeless form of functionalism was characteristic of the new neighbourhoods. There was an attempt to make official buildings as large as possible

and some of them were pretty gloomy, like the Telephone Offices at Austurvöllur, Arnarhvoll, the Austurbaer Children's School, and the Harbour House." 129

"... a sudden halt one morning in May 1940 when the British army landed in Reykjavík and, without a shot, captured the country. In a very short while the British Tommies had erected tents widely over the town." 129

"At the end of the war, after the military left, many of the barracks were used as flats..." 132

"Most of these barracks were so badly built that they were a health hazard..." 132

"The army barracks, since they occupied many of the open spaces, stood in the way of construction..." 132

V REYKJAVÍK AFTER WORLD WAR II 133

1 The Notorious Plan of 1948 133

"In 1948, a plan was made for this whole area. Even though it was very simple and was not formally accepted by the town council, it expressed all the main aspects of the new worldview that had taken over Reykjavík during the war. This plan embraced all the latest fashions trend in planning, both in Europe and America, fashion trends that later turned out to be very flawed..." 133

"The most pronounced characteristic of the plan was that the whole coast of the peninsula from Gróttta to the innermost part of Ellidaárvogur Bay was set aside for industry. Not a single spot on the north coast was shown as a recreational or residential area." 136

"A second characteristic of the plan was that roads, for the first time, were divided into three groups according to the transportation they were meant to serve..." 136

"The third main characteristic of the plan was a clear division of land uses: industry, residential, institutions and city centre. The idea of zoning has its origin in the polluted towns of the early industrial age but makes much less sense in a town that, at that time, was in the process of being converted to geothermal heat." 136

"The fourth main characteristic was the vast green spaces in the eastern part of town." 136

"The idea about detached satellite neighbourhoods had not yet been implemented. Therefore, rather nice neighbourhoods were planned and constructed following the old tradition on the Melar and Hagar roads in the west end and in the Hlíðar and Holt areas in the east end." 136

"In this period of increased wealth everything that was reminiscent of poverty and difficulties, as for example the little wooden houses in the old town, were regarded as meagre and ugly..." 137

"It can be taken as a sign of the times and of the general atmosphere among the town's inhabitants that the new detailed plans for the downtown aimed at demolishing most of the old buildings, except for the Cathedral, the Althing (parliament) building and a handful of other stone buildings." 137

"There were for example plans to tear down the Old Latin School and build a concrete box in functionalistic style in its place, and the whole downtown area was meant to be an accumulation of concrete buildings designed with a ruler. Fortunately, Reykjavík was spared this misfortune..." 137

2 Planning Development on the Eastern Half of the Peninsula 138

"Already, before the war, dispersed settlements had started to develop there, for

example, by the Kleppur Psychiatric Hospital.” 138

“These little semi-rural villages – far outside the main settlement – came to be because earlier in the century there had been a great need for agricultural produce in the Reykjavík area due to the lack of adequate road connections to the agricultural regions in the southwest of Iceland. The arrival of the British army in 1940 prompted a renewed demand for agricultural produce, primarily chickens, eggs and pork...” 138

“...The Garden City ideology was revived a few times, notably by the architect Corbusier, who termed it Satellite Planning...” 138

“In these twenty years, Reykjavík had swelled to seven times the size of the area within the Hringbraut (Ring Road), which was fully built at the end of the war, i.e., there was a 700% increase in area whereas at the same time the population only increased 70% or from 47,000 to 78,000 inhabitants.” 139

“Even though these years were very prosperous, this rapid expansion eventually cost the city huge amounts of money because all utilities like sewage, water, electricity and geothermal district heating became so expensive that the city could only just keep up with some of the most primary needs.” 139

“The 1957 plan reaches beyond the peninsula to areas east of the River Ellidár. The same policy was followed when the Ártún headland and the north side of Grafarvogur Bay were designated as industrial areas...” 142

“A newspaper article criticized the situation: “The method of piecemeal planning, and the resulting disharmony between different units of the city and its neighbourhoods, was created because each neighbourhood, or a

fraction of it, was planned individually without enough regard for the whole.”” 42

“It can be said of almost all of Reykjavík that it is an assemblage of almost every type of planning and building style. Another contributing factor is that architects and planners have been educated in very different countries because until now there has been no design school in Iceland and on their return they put into practice the various stylistic ideas they had been exposed to. The result is that, even though the development of Reykjavík, for the most part, is modernistic and fairly uniform, the differing foreign influences and periods mean that the various neighbourhoods in Reykjavík are much livelier than in the suburbs of Scandinavia and Britain, for example, of the same period.

3 The Danish Plan of 1965 143

“At the end of the 1950s it became increasingly clear that the frame of the plan was once more bursting at the seams...” 143

“...planners had agreed that the most sensible policy would be to build south...” 143

“...were initiated, only to founder on the negative attitudes of the “little kings” involved, who were certainly not ready to take the steps necessary to work towards co-operative development of this area...” 143

“The second alternative for the direction of future development would have been to go north to the Úlfarsfell area. Factors that stood in the way of this alternative were the overblown harbour ideas...” 144

“What was left, in terms of a future direction, was the third and worst alternative, i.e., to build residential areas up to the heaths. The Danes seem to have had a remarkable love for the flat highlands...” 144

“Another main aspect of the plan, the airport question, also went wrong...” 144

“The Danish plans show very wide city thoroughfares. The Miklabraut Avenue, for example, is shown with eight traffic lanes and at the nine traffic junctions, nine overpasses are shown.” 144

“It is hard to fully realize what kind of destruction would have occurred in the old city centre if the planning ideas of the master plan of 1965 had been followed through.” 144

“... the New City Centre was unfortunately delayed so that commercial activities that should have been constructed there started to spread all over town... This means that people now have to go all over the city, in their cars, to shop.” 145

“Fortunately, the worst damage to the environment and the housing in the old part of town was averted, not least because of the work of the ideologists Thorsteinn Gunnarsson and Hördur Ágústsson.” 145

“The awakening of conservation and environmental concerns that started in 1965 can in some ways be traced to the Hippy Movement. This movement altered our vision towards many issues such as heavy industry, highways for private cars, and blocks of modernistic concrete constructions...” 148

“The seven-year story of the 1965 Danish plan, as it was adopted by the City Council, till 1972 as the development of the Planning Office was established is a story of a breakdown of the value system that the entire plan was based on.” 148

4 The Reykjavík Development Office 149

“The main reasons for the establishment of The Development Office were three: a foreseeable shortage in the building of

residential areas after 1980, changed visions in planning, and the re-awakening of an older idea to establish an office that would be in charge of the implementation of plans.” 149

“As the 1965 plan was finished most people thought that there would not be a need to work on a master plan for the next couple of decades...” 149

“Because of the lack of some kind of union among the communities the work on planning at the Development Office started without having the whole picture of the Capital Area in mind...” 152

“Another failure that the office felt was intolerable was that the West Country Road, going through the northern part of the Capital Area, should cross the salmon river Korpa three times... This led the Development Office to offer the possibility that a New West Country Road could go over Ellidaár Bay.” 152

“One of the most important projects of the Development Office was an incentive improvement in environmental matters... the ruling Independence Party made this the main issue of the city elections. In preparation a Program on Environment and Outdoor Life, later called the Green Revolution, was put together...” 153

5 The Reykjavík Planning Office 154

“of preparation and would, very likely, have been implemented if the Conservatives had remained in power. The largest of these projects were: 1. A rebuilding project for the Skúlagata area, 2. A commercial area in the New City Centre and 3. New residential areas in the Grafarvogur Bay area. All these projects were stopped because of the new planning policy of the Leftists...” 154

“...The Conservatives argued that it would be impossible to stand up against their

development because the shopping malls could offer lower prices. But certainly more planning problems go with this kind of commercial centre, such as increased traffic, the death of neighbourhood shopping and often also an uglier environment.” 158

“As the Leftists came to power for the second time in 1994, they put a new large harbour in the plan for the Eidsvík inlet. They also increased the industrial areas on the south slope of Geldinganes and started a gravel quarry there...” 159

“The problem of Eidsvík and Geldinganes again became one of the main election issues in the spring of 2002...” 160

“The first environmental programme to be decided in Iceland was the Green Revolution of 1974 in Reykjavík, but later other communities in Iceland followed this example. After the Rio World Conference in 1992 most governments signed declarations attesting that they would have environmental programmes developed...” 160

VI DEVELOPMENT OF NEIGHBOURING COMMUNITIES 161

1 New Communities ca. 1950 161

“The western part, where the town of Seltjarnarnes is now, had a settlement of coastal fishing farms... whereas there were only two legal farms in the area where Kópavogur is now...” 162

“for the Seltjarnarnes communal election... the seat of government was moved from the western tip to Kópavogur in the east. This, together with the geographic separation of the two, led to the forming of a new community in Kópavogur...” 163

“the Mosfellssveit communal district and an urban core was formed close to the school at the River Varmá... The next communal district

to the north of the Capital Area, i.e., to the north of the Mosfell community district, was the ancient Kjalarnes district... reached from Leiruvogur Bay to the demarcation of the Kjós district...” 163

“The Kjós district is sometimes seen as a part of the Capital Area and some people from the capital carry on activities there. These are mostly summerhouses...” 163

“The district that goes to the south from the Capital Area is the Vatnsleysuströnd communal district...” 163

2 The Dev. of Kópavogur and Gardabaer 164

“Increased car ownership and improved roads out of Reykjavík to the south made this possible and the building areas in Kópavogur had some advantages for those who were wanted to farm or garden...” 164

“At this time Reykjavík had decided not to continue to offer lots because of how fast the land was consumed by the new neighbourhoods. Many have pointed out that because of this many of the highest taxpayers were driven away...” 165

“This planning policy of Reykjavík turned out to be the beginning of the development that made the neighbouring communities – which earlier were the communities of the poor – into the communities of the wealthy...” 165

3 The Development of Hafnarfjörður and Bessastadahreppur 166

“...Hafnarfjörður, Bessastadahreppur (Bessastada District) and Gardabaer are a part of the old district of Álftaneshreppur...” 166

“At this time (ca, 1870), 50-100 small boats fished from the Álftanes Peninsula. Overfishing of these shallow waters and later the coming of British trawlers into Faxaflói Bay in 1895 meant that the quantity of fish in

these waters was greatly reduced. At the same time the growth of Reykjavík increased the need for agricultural produce. The Álftanes area therefore changed in the first decade of the twentieth century from being a community of fishing farmers to a thriving agricultural area. In this process the number of inhabitants dropped to 300 from 600. Improvement of the road from Reykjavík to Hafnarfjörður facilitated agricultural development..." 166

"Hafnarfjörður gained trading station rights in 1908. A few years after the turn of the century trawler outfitting started in Hafnarfjörður, helped primarily by the availability of the good harbour..." 166

4 The Development of Seltjarnarnes and Mosfellsbaer 168

"The other two neighbouring communities of Reykjavík – Seltjarnarnesbaer and Mosfellsbaer – stand somewhat alone in terms of planning interests..." 168

"Around 1955 a considerable number of residential buildings started to rise in Seltjarnarnes. The lots were sought after." 168

"Mosfellsbaer originally was a rural district..." 168

"The plan for the Mosfell area suffers from the fact that the Westland Highway goes through the whole length of the settlement..." 168

VII REGIONAL PL. OF THE CAPITAL AREA 170

1 Initial Ideas and Conditions 170

"Compared to urban development areas abroad, possible areas for development in the Capital Area are unusually clearly defined by environmental features... and should have provided an incentive to create ideas about the future use of this land." 170

"...When planning preparations finally started, the Capital Area had already been dissected into eight municipalities, which made attempts to form a regional plan much harder." 170

"In the plan of the Development Office of 1977 people finally started to work according to these important basic conceptions, for example by moving the Westland Highway out to the Geldinganes Peninsula and from there to the Álftanes Peninsula – a highway idea today called Sundabraut. In order to work on moving the traffic out of the urban areas and to the east the office presented the idea of an Above-the-Settlements Highway (Ofanbyggdavegur)..." 170

"The best solution, however, probably would be that some type of a Capital Area government be established..." 171

2 Proposals for a Reg. Plan in 1965 and 1973 172

"...the work of this committee on the regional plan was informal, but in 1964 a new planning law provided formal legal authorization. The committee consisted of two representatives from each community and a chairman from the state planning commission..." 172

"Comparing the two regional planning proposals of 1965 and 1972 reveals how the development of planning ideas had been progressing..." 172

3 The Proposed Regional Plan of 1986 176

"As for a regional plan, there is no governmental level in Iceland that can assure that what is proposed in the plan will be carried out. Iceland has in fact two governmental levels: state and local governments. A third intermediate level, as the Fylki in Norway, has not been introduced..." 176

“...highly regrettable that no type of confirmation of the regional planning ideas, neither in 1965 nor in 1973, was achieved...” 176

“...in 1980 it established the Planning Office of the Capital Area...” 176

“As the Conservatives again came to power in 1982 it soon became apparent that Reykjavík did not want to take part in the work on the planning proposals that the Planning Office of the Capital Area had started...” 178

“...regional planning should primarily operate at a level different from that of the master plan, i.e., more on a policy making level that concerns the largest issues involved. The main thoroughfares and connecting roads can be mentioned...” 178

“Throughway... was planned to go from Breidholt down through Fossvogur Valley... had little traffic value for Kópavogur. Kópavogur therefore refused to allow such a throughway to be placed on the Kópavogur side of the valley...” 180

“The State Planning Office had great worries about this, and in 1989 it hired the University of Iceland to carry out an assessment of the influence of the proposed throughway... This report was issued in 1990 and led to some agreement to temporarily put the matter aside...” 180

4 Devel. of the Area until Year 2000 181

“The centre of gravity started of course in the Kvosin downtown area and then gradually moved east over the peninsula. As settlement started to develop in the southern communities of Kópavogur, Gardabaer, Bessastadahreppur and Hafnarfjörður the path of this centre of gravity started to turn to the south...” 181

“The communities, however, accepted the plan proposal individually in the autumn of 2002, but when the approval process reached the Ministry of the Environment, the State Planning Institute expressed its concerns...” 182

“...the airport issue erupted during work on the planning. This delayed the planning work and changed the schedule, but the worst thing about the airport was that a solution was not really reached.” 183

“... a new matter surfaced in the autumn of 2000 as the first plan for a science park in the Capital Area was published. Students at the University of Iceland made the proposals.” 183

VIII DEVELOPMENT OF TOWNS IN THE COUNTRYSIDE 184

1 Development of Towns in the West and West Fjords 184

“As the twentieth century approached, Ísafjörður took the lead in the West Fjords. On the Snaefellsnes Peninsula, on the other hand, the number of trading harbours had been reduced to three – Hellissandur, Ólafsvík and Stykkishólmur...” 184

“...fishermen and farmers started to bring wet fish to Ísafjörður, concentrating on fishing rather than processing the catch at home, the amount of fish from these small places still increased...” 185

“The Althing was thus flooded with requests, but the realist Tryggvi Gunnarsson took the lead in the battle against this drive and in 1885 said that the parliament had legalized so many spots that the insurance companies no longer wanted to insure ships and cargo for all these places, unless with a special permit from the comptroller of insurance...” 185

“Various technical aspects other than insurance were of importance in connection with the question of the number of harbours, for example, problems with providing health control and customs services...” 186

“...The pioneers were mostly Norwegians and whaling companies established whaling stations in many places in the West Fjords and also in the East Fjords...” 187

“The largest whaling station was Sólbakki, which is now called Flateyri, in Önundarfjörður Fjord.” 187

“...The profits from whaling were huge, and it has been estimated that the net profit was double the income of the national treasury during this period. In order to process the whales the Norwegians brought equipment with them to Iceland, including steam-driven whaleboats and steam equipment to extract the oil. Many of the buildings of the whaling stations were also imported from Norway and put up at the new whaling stations. Thus almost complete industrial villages were imported from Norway...” 187

“The highly mechanized operation of whaling became an important school for the Icelanders...” 187

2 Development of Towns in the North 188

““Herring fishing was the impetus for the development of the fishing towns in the north just as fishing for cod and groundfish had started the urban development in the west and the West Fjords. Actually it was in the east that herring fishing first started in the mid-nineteenth century. The first herring outfitters were Norwegian merchants...” 188

“Most places in the north that were agricultural service centres as well as fishing ports have the surest existence...” 189

3 Development of Towns in the East 191

“...the east was almost totally cut off from other parts of the country when it came to land transportation, except for some connection with the north-east.” 191

“Unlike the other foreign fishermen, the Faroese most commonly had their headquarters in Iceland, in this case in the East Fjords. What drove the Faroese to the fishing grounds off the East Fjords was the invasion of British trawlers in their home waters. Around 1900, they got about 70% of their catch in Iceland...” 192

“The eruption of Askja in 1875 had a huge, negative effect on settlement in the East Fjord region...Many of the farmers on the heaths were forced to abandon their farms. This uprooting meant that people from the eastern regions made up the highest percentage of those who emigrated to North America.” 192

“...Because of the telegraph a bridge was erected at the end of Lake Lögur, where the town of Egilsstaðir now is. A road connection from the east to the north, however, was not established until 1934. Some fishing towns were not connected to the road network until very late, e.g., Neskaupstaður in 1949.” 192

“...1928. That same year an article written by Guðmundur Hannesson, a member of the commission, appeared in Morgunblaðið. Hannesson wrote: "I am in no doubt...that my work on the planning commission is the most important of the tasks that I have been working on...” 194

4 Development of Towns in the South 195

“The town in the Westman Islands was by far the largest fishing town in this part of the country... For some reason fishing from Eyrbakki and Stokkseyri never took off.” 195

“In 1930 two dairies were established, one in Hveragerdi and the other in Selfoss. In the same year the Árnes Co-operative Association was established in Selfoss...” 196

“...for urban development in the south was the establishing of secondary schools, usually located where there was the possibility of utilizing geothermal heat... The geothermal heat also provided an opportunity for starting other types of activities, mainly greenhouses.” 196

“In 1973 an unusually dramatic volcanic eruption started in the eastern part of Heimaey Island, just outside town. The island was successfully evacuated, with no lives lost. The people had to put up with living on the mainland for many months...” 196

“...A ferry (between V and Bakki) can go in most weather, though the great question is whether it is possible to build a harbour at Bakki that will not constantly be filled with the sand drifting along the coast (Written in 2002)...” 197

IX DEVELOPMENT OF LARGER TOWNS IN THE COUNTRYSIDE 198

1 Ísafjörður and Vicinity 198

“...it seems that Ísafjörður is going to survive. The state has given considerable support to Ísafjörður and vicinity in many ways, for example by building an 11 km tunnel that was opened in 1995. This tunnel starts in Ísafjörður and branches in the middle of the mountain to Sudureyri in Ségandafjörður and to Öndarfjörður...” 198

“... in the narrow fjords in Iceland, the lack of lowland areas is a disadvantage. On the other hand, these fjords have the great advantage that most of them are natural harbours...” 198

“In 1971 the Icelandic planning law became 50 years old. The State Planning Committee then

decided to announce a competition on the planning of a fishing town...” 198

“...The authors of the winning proposal for Ísafjörður were four young men: Ingimundur Sveinsson, now a well-known architect, Ólafur Erlingsson, a chief engineer, Ólafur Ragnar Grímsson, the President of Iceland (till 2016), and Gardar Halldórsson, later the State Architect of Iceland.”

2 Akureyri and Vicinity 200

“The first settlement was created on a little sandbank below the Búdargil gully, where now is the town centre...” 200

“Because of Akureyri's tradition as a cultural centre and a school town, the state government decided in 1987 to establish the University of Akureyri...” 200

“The establishing of the university on the other hand has proved to be a necessary foundation for the town to come to grips with future development...” 200

“...by relocating research divisions and creating branches of state institutes in Akureyri connected with the university, including the Fishing Industry Research Institute and the Oceanological Institute.” 200

“The people of Akureyri discovered early that this architectural heritage was a cultural resource and therefore started to do research into the value of the buildings and the older neighbourhoods...” 200

3 The Mid-East Fjords A Multi-Core Area 203

“For a long time there has been a lack of policy making within the regional and country planning levels of Iceland. The politicians in Iceland have lacked the courage to have such plans made... to formulate such a policy, people also need to come to a conclusion on

what will be a logical settlement structure of the country...” 203

“In order to let this triangular settlement structure work as a whole, people need to make sure that the east pillar holds up, for example, by improving and shortening road distances, both on the Ring Road and also by building a highland road on the north side of the Vatnajökull Glacier.” 203

“...In addition, the utilization of the energy resources would become easier and cheaper and the things that the eastern part of the country has to offer, in terms of tourism, would be more easily obtainable...” 203

“The result of this strife is that no single town has been decided on as the future core and therefore central services have been distributed widely over the towns in the region...” 204

“In spite of this, the fact remains that Egilsstaðir has been constantly growing stronger. An upper secondary school has been established there, and good sporting facilities, a hospital, a hotel and other service-related activities, so it is not unlikely that the people of the East Fjords will soon come to an agreement on the policy to make Egilsstaðir the capital of the region.” 204

X REGIONAL PL. IN THE COUNTRYSIDE 206

1 Reg. Pl. in the West and West Fjords 206

“Regional planning is a rather new component of the law on planning. It was introduced into Icelandic law in 1964...” 206

“The basic idea of the regional planning level is to be an intermediate step between programmes on the country scale and programmes of individual municipalities..” 206

“...it is uncertain if there is enough will to follow up on them once they are formulated.

And those who ask could add: Keep in mind that because the regional planning work is on a voluntary basis...” 207

“...these three regional plans. The first is the regional plan for south of Mt Skardsheidi, which is actually the town of Akranes and vicinity...” 208

“The next regional planning area in the Borgarfjörður area was decided to be the areas north of Skardsheidi Heath, which embrace the upper regions of Borgarfjörður.” 210

“The third regional planning area is the regional plan for Mýrasýsla County for 1998-2010. The plan spans only 12 years, which was a novelty that was introduced in the new planning law of 1998, i.e., that a regional plan could cover a minimum of 12 years. Earlier the general rule had been 20 years.” 211

2 Regional Planning in the North 212

“The area in the countryside most in need of a regional plan is the Eyjafjörður area where Akureyri is located... Besides Akureyri, there are quite a few urban sites in the Eyjafjörður Fjord region...” 212

“This regional plan proposal has a strong point – compared to all other regional plan proposals that have been made since, namely, that it is also a kind of regional development...” 212

“Helgi Hallgrímsson, director of the Natural Science Museum in Akureyri, wrote a very important report which presented an important first proposal on what natural areas in the Eyjafjörður region need to be preserved ... Many a council member became very surprised as they saw this map with the proposal for hundreds of conservation areas” 214

“In 1989 the regional planning work was continued... a rather extensive study of natural hazards was added. The availability

and protection of fresh water supplies from certain areas was given special protection and a great deal of work was put into the question of waste disposal..." 214

3 Regional Planning in the East 216

"...the first regional plan in the east was begun, covering the Hérads region... The necessity that drove the making of this regional plan was, among other things, ideas on construction of a hydropower plant and heavy industry in the East Fjords." 216

"In future, regional plans have to embrace larger areas and, at the same time, be more schematic. By doing so, they would only deal with the main lines of the plan..." 216

"In general it can be said that if no large undertakings are in sight there is not much need for making a regional plan..." 218

4 Regional Planning in the South 219

"The first regional planning worked on in the South was for Ölfus, Hveragerdi and Selfoss..." 219

"For some time, work was under way on the regional plan of the upper half of Árnes County, but the unification of some communities in this region derailed this work, as in many other places..." 219

"In the Sudurnes area there is a planning tradition because of the necessity to resolve matters concerning the Keflavík airport as well as the military defence areas..." 220

"The new planning law includes a paragraph that requires that natural hazards should be accounted for in a plan. Some types of natural hazards, for example avalanches, landslides and ocean or river floods, are easy to account for..." 221

"...Hallgrímur M. Hallgrímsson, wrote a fine MS thesis... The basic idea of his thesis is to create a new type of regional plan for Iceland where a division into regions can be shaped in such a way that they become logical units in terms of the impact of natural hazards..." 222

XI STEPS TOW. SUPER – REGIONAL PLANS 223

1 Larger Electoral Districts in 1959 and Regional Associations 223

"Even though this intermediate governmental level was never instrumented, the new electoral districts gave the impetus for some kind of regional management. Regional associations were established..." 223

"As these regional associations followed, for the largest part, the new electoral districts they provided a common voice for the locals for formulating ideas on issues..." 223

"The division of Iceland into new electoral districts in 2003 – even if it has some positive features – means an end to the regional associations in their original form..." 224

2 Drafts for Regional Development Plans 225

"The establishment of the Development Bank of Iceland in 1953 can probably be seen as the first step towards regional development plans in Iceland..." 225

"There were various reasons why the regional development plans did not get as good a foothold as they should have. One reason was the lack of an overview of the basic infrastructure of the... There is one good exception to this, a 1200 page report by the Danish Kampsax Company compiled in the 1960's on the future structure of the transportation system in Iceland..." 225

"Quite soon after work on the regional development plans started a general opinion developed in the countryside that this involved too much paper work. Commonly

such a report began with a documentation of the development of occupations and official services. This first part of the plan for the South is almost 400 pages long.” 226

3 An Idea for a Super-Regional Plan for South-West Iceland 227

“As the idea of a plan for south-west Iceland was formed around 1990, it had already become very necessary to start to look at this region as one planning and development area. In this process a proposal surfaced that a question should be put to the regional associations in the area and that a working group should be created...” 227

“...recent improvements of the roads in this area; people were starting to see that this whole area could develop into a single occupational and service area.” 227

“One of the things that was of special importance in this draft for a superregional plan was that now the land itself should again be seen as a valuable resource...” 227

“A special part of the book – written in preparation for a general structure proposal for the area – covers the development of settlement patterns in south-west Iceland all the way from the time of the original settlement in the late ninth century to the present...” 228

“The special studies carried out with the collaboration of the group and the Directory of Roads included ideas about building a south coast road in order to connect the Reykjanes Peninsula to the southern lowland...” 228

“...seen as a pilot study of how comparable planning work could be carried out for other parts of the country...” 229

“In the work on the new regional plan for the capital area in 1999-2001, this unfortunately

was only done to a small extent. The narrow frame of the plan was rarely surpassed, and a negative aspect was that only the communities in the capital area were allowed to take part in the work.” 230

XII REG. PLAN FOR THE CENTRAL HIGHL. 231 1 Wrestle for the Auth. of the Highlands 231

“One of the most serious disputes within the area of planning that has ever occurred in Iceland is the dispute about the Regional Plan for the Central Highlands...” 231

“Since the law was passed the Highland Commission has been at work formulating and filing claims on behalf of the state for ownership of the central highlands. The owners of the farms in question have to file claims against the state. The proposals of the Highland Commission about what should be the demarcation between the homelands and the highlands...” 234

“The editorial in Morgunbladid in May, 1998, says: "In the past few weeks a marathon debate on the highlands and its future has been taking place....As a matter of fact it is clear from the responses from people outside of the Althing that here we have a matter that has touched the heart and soul of the whole nation."” 237

2 Research, Transport. and Power Plants 238

“When planning is to be started in an area many types of information need to be available, as well as decisions on some of the goals of the work...” 238

“The author of this book started in 1979 to work on such maps, maps that interpret various factors concerning natural features in Iceland... that planners could know from them which are the positive features and, on the other hand, which are the negative features, i.e., those features that need to be avoided.” 239

“When the author of this book started to teach planning in the Faculty of Engineering of the University of Iceland in 1988 these series of maps proved to be a good foundation... One of the projects was an idea in the autumn of 1991 for a first regional plan for the central highlands.” 240

“In 1988 the Minister of Transportation, Matthías Matthiesen, had appointed the author as well as representatives of the National Power Company and the Public Roads Administration to a work group that was given the task of exploring possibilities of connecting parts of the country with highland roads...” 240

“The main finding of Thórarinsson's investigation, using the overlay technique and conducted in collaboration with his instructor, was that the best route to the north from the highlands was on the east side of the Skjálfandafljót River...” 241

““...the negative verdict of the State Planning Agency against the Kárahnjúkar plan took the politicians by surprise. A comment of the Prime Minister became famous as he said that it was strange that some bureaucrats that had not been given any authority by the public thought they could deny approval of a power plant so important for the area.” 243

3 The Regional Plan of 1999 244

“...the Althing decided in 1993, with a temporary amendment to the planning law, that work on the regional planning on the central highlands should be started...” 244

“...the planning committee alone was more or less given the task of deciding what should be the basic parameters on a country scale. This it did, for example, as concerns policy on transportation, tourism, power utilisation, nature conservation, etc. None of the

members of the committee were professionals...” 244

4 A Dispute over Highland Planning Ideas 248

“... serious disputes took place over the various aspects of issues regarding the highlands and related legislation during 1997 – 1999...” 148

“the regional plan proposal was advertised as the planning committee had finished its work on it...” 248

“...About 95 people and institutions sent in formal comments or claims, totalling about 320 pages...” 248

“In its comments the Ministry says: "The ministry likes to draw attention to the fact that no cooperation has been ventured as concerns the work of the planning committee. It is also a surprise to the Ministry that no contact was made with the Ministry of Agriculture or the Ministry of Transport and Communication."” 248

“The Icelandic Museum of Natural History therefore said: "It cannot be understood how a plan for the highlands can be proposed without having first made an attempt at defining and categorizing geological features...” 249

“The crux of the matter is very simple: the committee has the power, people can make comments, but the committee themselves shall pass the verdict in their own case...” 251

BOOK FOUR – Development of Systems on a Country Scale

I PL. OF SYSTEMS ON A COUNTRY SCALE 255

“...many of the aspects created in the building up of societal systems have actually contributed to the efficiency and productivity of today's societies. A good health system, for

example, means that the citizens are healthier and therefore can be more productive.” 255

“Other societal systems that have been constructed in Iceland include the various independent associations...” 258

2 The Technological Infrastructure 259

“The technological systems of the country are divided into six main areas: transportation, utilisation of hydropower, marine resources, utilisation of geothermal power, evolution of industries, and finally development of information and technology. There are three transportation systems in Iceland: ocean, land and air...” 259

“Originally regular shipping to Iceland developed as a mail service, and at the same time the country mail routes were created...” 259

“In 1947 the State Electric Power Works was established. It had, according to law, the task of continuing the development of power plants, as well as connecting the various electrical supply systems of the country.” 261

II THE MAKING OF NATI. DEVEL. PLANS 263

1 The Activities of the Devel. Institute 263

“A special bank was therefore established that provided loans for profitable ventures. This bank, the Development Bank, was conceptualized in 1953 with advice from officials from the World Bank in Washington...” 263

“...Division of the Economic Institute were moved to the new institution. Two other institutes were integrated into the Development Institute, the Development Fund of Iceland and the Employment Distribution Fund, which was now called the Settlement Fund...” 264

“The Jóhannesson government's manifesto in 1971 backed a widespread programme on developing the country's basic. The Development Institute was asked to create an industrial development programme...” 264

“... the industrial development plan had already started with the assistance of specialists from the United Nations Industrial Development Organisation (UNIDO). The main programmes were for trawlers and quick-freezing plants...” 264

“The great building up of the basic agriculture industries in the countryside that resulted from these programmes, resulted in checking the flight from the countryside to urban centres...” 265

“The Development Institute started preparing special settlement programmes for the countryside and divided the country into planning areas that, to a large extent, followed the form of the electoral districts...” 265

2 The Activities of the Reg. Devel. Instit. 267

“The Regional Development Institute took over some of the earlier functions of the Development Institute in accordance with a special law in 1985...” 267

“a speech by Davíð Oddsson, then mayor of Reykjavík and a few years later the Prime Minister. In his speech Oddsson said, among other things: "I think that in the name of the regional development policy many wrong decisions have been made...and quite often suspicion sneaks up on you that the feasibility reports of so-called specialists are simply made in order to let hopeless cases look good.... I should not need to mention the seawater mineral processing plant, the plant for producing grass pellets as animal feed, the algae processing plant or the Broffeld rockwool factory...” 267

“The... flaw in this regional concept and the dissatisfaction that resulted because of it among the Capital Area inhabitants was clearly revealed in Oddsson's speech at the conference: "Things should never be allowed to develop in such a way that whole regions and communities get the feeling that they are living on some kind of social welfare." 267

“... the institute should be changed from providing loans, as banks do, to becoming a development institute. Following this goal, work on a policy-formulating programme on settlement concerns was started in 1992 and in 1994 regional development programmes as well...” 268

“...countryside should be regarded as growth areas. The comments of the National Audit Bureau on these points were: "The definition of the term growth area has been affirmed on behalf of the institute, but it is nowhere mentioned which areas of the country fall under that definition...” 269

“...the central point, namely that the board of the institute had not followed the instructions of the Prime Minister presented in his letter in the name of the government. This "negligence" is probably the explanation why the National Audit Bureau was asked at the time to review...” 269

“...institute had not followed the instructions of the Prime Minister presented in his letter in the name of the government. This "negligence" is probably the explanation why the National Audit Bureau was asked at the time to review...” 269

“On page 9 in the section containing the main findings, the National Audit Bureau stated: "During the eleven years that have passed since the law was implemented, the Regional Development Institute has not defined what socially effective development of settlements

includes, what constitutes an unacceptable settlement decline or what constitutes a viable settlement. The institute therefore does not have clear measurable comparisons on which to base decisions...” 270

“In 1990 Oddsson became an MP for the first time, and a few weeks later, the Prime Minister. Shortly after this he talked in the Althing about the possibility of helping people move from places of little hope into specific growth areas... Both the Althing and the people in the countryside responded very negatively to this idea...” 270

III NATURE CONSERVATION PLANS 272

1 The Origin of Nature Conservation Ideas 272

“It is often said that 1970 marked a watershed in environmental issues as attitudes towards the environment became a strong point in the discussion of society and settlements. The year marked the first International Year on the Environment, which then led to an international conference on environmental concerns in Stockholm in 1972. The environmental movement has its origin in the immense environmental problems that had surfaced...” 272

“When humans had started to surpass what nature could withstand, on a global scale, with the polluting of waters, the ocean and the atmosphere, people started to realize that Nature itself needed to be given a still stronger position...” 273

“As the Industrial Revolution progressed, however, various large problems started to surface because people did not know how to plan cities nor to defuse or solve the problems.” 275

“...the natural scientist Jónas Hallgrímsson at the head of the flock. The battle in the mid-nineteenth century for independence from

Denmark was very important in strengthening national pride..." 275

2 Special Laws and the Nat. Conserv. Law 278

"...In 1907 Thórdarson published an article in Skírnir which he called "The Protection of Beautiful Places and Remarkable Natural Sights". 279

3 Survey of Nature Conservation Areas 282

"The Nature Conservation Law of 1971 defines four categories of conservation. These are natural monuments, national reserves, country parks and national parks. In addition to the national park at Thingvellir that was established according to a special law in 1928, a national park was established at Skaftafell in 1967. Another park is the canyon of the river Jökulsá á Fjöllum, established in 1973. This canyon includes the famous Dettifoss Waterfall. In 1975 a national park was established at Hornstrandir, which is a huge seaside cliff on the northernmost tip of Iceland. In 2001 the Snaefellsjökull Glacier National Park was finally established." 282

IV NAT. PLANS FOR SUSTAINABILITY 287

1 The Ideology of Sust. Development 287

"... The "sustainable" approach makes it possible to assure that the asset itself is not damaged, but rather that the use of areas in question can be developed..." 287

"The area where the concept of sustainable development is best known in Iceland is management of the fish stocks..." 287

"It is more than just the overuse of fishing stocks, vegetation and energy that has called the nations of the world to band together to support the ideological concept of sustainable development. The UN took one of the biggest steps in this direction by publishing the report Our Common Future in...1984..." 287

2 State Policies and Pl. on Sustainability 290

"...Based on the work in the Rio Conference, an international action plan for improvement of the environment as was approved by the member nations. This document is called Agenda for the Twenty First Century, in short Agenda 21..." 290

"The programme was approved by the government in February 1997 and published early in the summer under the name Sjálfbær þróun í íslensku samfélagi (Sustainable Development within the Icelandic Society)." 291

V THE INTEGRATION OF NAT. PLANS 292

1 The Lack of Integration 292

"... in order to achieve large-scale integration, to start at the top of the decision pyramid by developing a vision..." 292

"At the same time the UN started to offer assistance in the making of development plans in many countries, Iceland being one of them. Thus a manufacturing industry development programme and a programme on the future development of tourism were created around 1970." 293

"...if the government had started to work on integrated goals around 1960 then the number of harbours and airports that were built during the 1960's and 1970's, during the time of maximum construction, could have been avoided..." 293

"...In 2000 a decision was finally made by Sturla Bødvarsson, the Minister of Transport and Communication, to commence making an integrated transportation plan..." 295

2 Integration of Transportation Plans 296

"The concept of an integrated transportation plan was carried out in a logical way in the Kampsax plan for Iceland in 1969..." 296

"...as Iceland was included, together with some other EFTA countries, in the European

Economic Area. In conformity with this agreement Iceland has had to accept various laws and regulations from the EU..." 296

"... the proposal of the Transportation Plan for 2003-2014, giving the routes that will make up the Transportation Net. This net consists of the three transportation modes-land, sea and air, as well as of the connections to foreign countries." 300

VI A NATIONAL PLAN FOR TOURISM 301

1 Policy Making for Tourism 301

"...overcrowding and damage to soil and natural formations, gave an extra push to rushing these precautionary measures." 304

"Another big incentive for starting the development of a policy on tourism and plans to handle the traffic was the significant inconvenience of the fact that the tourist season only really existed during the summer. Clearly measures had to be taken to improve the number of tourists during other seasons..." 304

"... people had become used to the possible gain to be had from planning..." 304

"...on page 227, a special structural plan for the south-west of Iceland was described. Some of the main incentives for this work were that it was clear that, with defined actions and a definite plan, it would be possible to strengthen tourism in this area." 306

"These map series and discussions of the findings based on them, i.e., on where the best and worst areas for tourism are, were later presented in the book *Vegakerfid og ferdamálin* (Roads and Tourism) published by the Public Roads Administration in 2000." 306

2 Implementation Plan for Tourism 307

"...it was an important innovation in the work of the Ministry of Transport and Communication that the policy and plans for

tourism be followed up by an implementation plan for the various aspects involved." 307

"...On the bright side, the goal of evening out the differences between tourist seasons has been more successful than expected. It is especially good that there has been a greater increase of tourism in the winter season..." 308

VII A FRAME PLAN FOR ENERGY PROD. 312

1 Basic Ideas of the Frame Plan 312

"The fundamental idea of the frame plan was to create a new classification of power plant alternatives in Iceland. In this case, the alternatives would not only be classified according to feasibility, but would include various other points of view, such as the environmental costs of each option and any possible reduction in tourism..." 312

"The lack of long-term planning in the preparation of power plant options has meant that relatively few of the planned options have been studied thoroughly..." 313

"The National Power Company has often had great difficulty in having their proposals accepted and is therefore very much in favour of starting early to study the energy options so that it can invest in further design without spending more than is necessary. Several times the power company has spent large sums of money on research and design of energy options, only to face the need to alter the scheme or abandon..." 313

2 Research and Special Studies 318

"As to research into the feasibility of high temperature geothermal areas, certain minimum standards were set defining the needed information about the areas in question. A special map needed to be at hand for the areas to show where cracks and eruptive vents appear. Furthermore, an estimation of permeability of the bedrock should be conducted..." 324

“In specialist group I, on nature and heritage conservation, one of the biggest tasks was to divide all the areas into habitat types. This gave a framework for what types of plants and animals live in the areas in question.” 324

“The main method used for defining the conditions needed for habitat types is to search for the basic characteristics of the area in question, followed by a definition of what types of plants and animals can live in the various types of habitats...” 324

“The area where least knowledge exists in Iceland is an assessment of the landscape. Assessment of landscapes entails various basic factors such as diversity, how unusual a landscape is, how well it illustrates basic types of landscape formations, and how well it demonstrates the effect of the forces that shaped it.” 325

“In his report, Carl Steinitz emphasizes that the logical first step in such a work would be to assess the whole country before turning to the different areas. Only in this way can decisions be made in reference to the whole of Iceland...” 325

3 The Proposals of the Frame Plan 327

“...This time schedule gives an overview of the geothermal areas that will be evaluated in the frame plan. These power plant options have already been described briefly.” 330

VIII PLANS FOR OCEAN AREAS 331

1 Ocean Areas Close to Urban Areas 331

“This section will attempt to sketch a picture of how the ocean areas are likely to enter into and affect planning and settlement in Iceland...” 331

“... planning methods have been developed that deal with the utilization of the fish resources...” 331

“In many areas on the surrounding shelf and on the ocean floor close to the shore, telephone and electrical cables have been laid. Pumping of building materials from the ocean floor has also become extensive, and finally there are some clues to show potential oil close to Iceland...” 331

“The use of an ocean area close to a settlement has a long history in Reykjavík and its environs. Because of the importance of the harbour activities for the Reykjavík community, the scheme developed very early that the Port of Reykjavík Authority would be in charge of the ocean areas by the town and of the areas of activity along the coast...” 332

“...harbour activities that are now being thrust into the centres of residential areas, as at Eidsvík, would be best located outside of the Capital Area...” 332

“One of the largest construction aspects in the harbour areas in Reykjavík has been landfill that has mostly been added to meet the increasing demand for space and for the harbour itself...” 333

“...about 3 million m³, has been bought from Björgun, the company that pumps gravel from the bottom of the ocean close to Reykjavík. This quality material is most often in the upper layers of the landfill to lessen the danger of variations in subsiding...” 333

“...pumped about 10 million m³ of material, and because it is most profitable to pump up from little depth, much of this material has been taken too close to the shore... This has meant a retreat of the coastline in some places...” 334

“... be argued that it would be sensible to create a completely new policy for the planning of coastal and ocean areas in

Reykjavík, as well as other urban areas in Iceland.” 336

2 Plans on Utiliz. of the Fishing Resources 337

“...the appearance of the fish markets in the 1980's. Now it suddenly had become of extreme importance that the ships bring the catch to a harbour where there was a fish market where most species and sizes of fish were sold at a good price.” 337

“The introduction of the quota system also helped in getting rid of the enticement of home harbours and the quotas also meant that a development towards larger trawler operators...” 337

“Another negative aspect of the gear used by factory trawlers is that they only process on-board about half of the weight of the fish caught and the rest, too small or by-catches, are thrown overboard...” 338

“A very important feature in minimizing the costs of fishing is to have as good data as possible on where the fish can be caught at each given time... Today, information like this is almost a commercial secret kept by the outfitters in question...” 338

“The management of the fisheries has of late become highly developed in Iceland. The Icelandic state understood rather early the necessity to develop various types of regulations to prevent the disruption of spawning grounds and to close fishing grounds if the catch contains too small fish. In addition, there are regulations about the mesh size of the nets...” 338

“...The first measure taken in order to protect the shallow waters of Iceland was to extend the fishing zone in four steps...” 338

“What pushed Icelanders to demand the extension of the fishing limits and to enter the

fight against Britain was that at this time it had become obvious that the size of the fish stocks in Icelandic waters had diminished” 339

“...Icelanders therefore fully understood the necessity of being able to manage the fisheries in a better way. This was the incentive that made them take the last and largest steps to extend the fishing limit to 50 and later to 200 miles – in the face of great opposition. What probably helped Iceland the most was the military importance of the country vis-à-vis the then USSR and Iceland's membership in NATO...” 339

3 Cables, Mining and the Search for Oil 341

“... In 1854 an American named Shaffner was granted a monopoly by the king of Denmark, who reigned over Iceland at the time, to lay a telegraph cable over Iceland...” 341

“The marine cable (1906) to carry telegraph and later telephone messages caused a revolution...” 341

“Another feature that could also completely change the position of Iceland globally would be the discovery of valuable minerals on the ocean floor...” 342

“...it is considered most probable that oil can be found along the Jan Mayen Ridge in sediments...” 342

“...that current difficulties in settlements areas like the East Fjords could – as soon as in a few decades – be turned around so that the East Fjords could possibly become the part of Iceland where most things are happening” 344

“...it is probably too bold to suggest that one of the larger harbour cities in the North Atlantic could develop in the East Fjords.” 344

IX STEPS TOWARDS A NATIONAL PLAN 345

1 The Idea of a National Land Use Plan 345

“...The earlier eight sections have also dealt with the step-by-step development leading towards a national plan. The various types of programmes and plans on a country scale that have been developing...” 345

“What characterizes a national or a country plan is that it drafts pictures of the future, pictures that describe a likely or a desirable development of a country...” 345

“The discussion of settlement development in Iceland has primarily taken place in the sphere of economics and politics, focusing on special problems or conditions in certain given areas. The physical aspect in the shaping of settlements and the countrywide systems has, on the other hand, been left out to a large degree.” 345

“...If... people go too far towards drafting one particular picture of the future, there is certainly a danger that some ideological points of view will start to surface...” 345

“Theories of planning have recently moved away from ideas that aim to shape the future according to ideological parameters towards the idea of seeing planning as a neutral tool primarily used for investigating likely future developments in order to be able to realize ahead what the consequences will be..” 346

“Possibly it is even wrong to talk about planning in this connection; perhaps the discussion and research should centre instead on "what means or conditions offer themselves".” 346

“There is a fundamental need to strengthen settlement areas and their urban cores so that they can meet the current demands for a higher level of services. This obviously translates into a need to strengthen a few powerful towns in each part of the country...” 348

“Disputes and lack of understanding have, on the other hand, meant that elsewhere, for example in the West Fjords and the East Fjords, people have not been able to agree on one central place...” 348

“In 1973 the author of this book started to develop an idea about a study of such natural features in Iceland. In the process of this work ideas about future schemes started to develop and the first articles about a future country plan based on this work were published in the spring of 1977.” 350

“Denmark was the first of the Nordic nations to start work on a national planning level with the establishment of the National Planning Committee in 1961. In the book 27 slags planer (27 types of plans) the following definition of a national plan is given: "A national plan is integrated by official institutions as a physical plan under the auspices of the National Planning Committee, a plan that covers the whole country and functions as a co-ordinating organ for various issues.”” 350

“...The State Planning Institute and the Regional Development Division of the Development Institute together started to collaborate on a report on the main prerequisites for a country plan...” 350

“...a bill was presented to the Althing on a land-use plan for Iceland. The law was enacted and the Minister of Agriculture was given the task of carrying it out.” 350

“...report of the land use committee – which contains a great number of maps and graphs – was published in May 1986 and was called Landnýting á Íslandi (Land-Use in Iceland and Preconditions for a Land-Use Plan)...” 350

“...2004, a new law on environmental assessment makes it mandatory to write reports on the impact of a project on a country scale...” 351

“Future research on behalf of the government in the past few decades started in 1984 with an executive committee that the Prime Minister appointed in the spring to initiate a future study for Iceland to cover the period 1985-2010. Sixteen groups were established to work on the various aspects of this future study...” 351

“Unfortunately, this work has not been continued by the government, with the exception of work done in connection with the policy-making settlements programme that was started in 1994 and which was described on page 269.” 352

“In the conference of the Planners Association in 2001, Thórdur Fridjónsson, the head of the National Economic Institute, talked about the likely sources of the national income in the future. There he predicted that the income percentage provided by tourism would not increase in the near future. In addition, he was very circumspect concerning the estimation of how much the knowledge industry can contribute to national income in the years to come.” 352

2 An Idea for the First Iceland Plan 353

“In 1975 the author conceived the idea that it would be necessary to aim for a plan for the whole country: a country plan...” 353

“...The preparation process included collecting maps that show areas in the country best fitted for settlements – such thematic maps showing, for example, areas of geothermal energy and the best areas for obtaining fresh water – to name a few factors. This work also involved collecting maps and information about the worst conditions, including areas

that are dangerous because of earthquakes, lava flows and pumice fall.” 353

“In 1973 two dramatic events occurred. One was the oil crisis and the other the eruption on the largest island of the Westman Islands, the island of Heimaey. These two events pointed out very clearly the necessity of such mapping so that planning measures could be applied to help avoid disasters in the planning of settlements and to be able to guide new settlements into areas where the best conditions are to be found.” 353

“In the spring of 1977 the author published the first two articles with the findings from his country plan work. These articles included the presentation of an idea about a future road system in Iceland where the highland roads play a large role. In the centre of the Sprengisandur Desert, which is the geographic centre of Iceland, the construction of the new town of Háborg was suggested. From there roads would go to the three directions, north, east and south...” 353

“in Brussels. This grant helped continue the mapping of the best and worst areas in the country for settlements. The method employed was the overlay method and the map series contains 25 maps that were drawn on transparencies...” 353

“In 1987 the result of this work appeared in the book Ideas on the first Iceland Plan, which will be described better on page 358...” 353

“... 1988 the author obtained a position on the Faculty of Engineering of the University of Iceland. The work of the students became an important part in the study of various aspects...” 353

“The next step was the publication of the book Framtíðarsýn – Ísland á 21. öld (A Vision for Iceland in the 21st Century)...” 354

“...in 1991, a book based on the work carried out at the university. Then in 1993 came Land sem audlind (Land as a Resource), which included maps on the southwest based on the overlay method. This map series focuses on positive and negative features for tourism. It also provides an historic account of how the settlement structure has developed in this area through the centuries – and also in the whole of Iceland.” 354

“...the fourth book, Vid aldhvörf – Stada Íslands í breyttum heimi (At the Turn of the Century – Iceland’s Position in a Changing World), was published. This book came out in 1995 and was co-authored with Albert Jónsson, the special adviser to the Prime Minister on foreign affairs. This book was useful for the country plan work, for instance in the way it clarified the importance of the global environmental movement. It also presented some alternative scenarios for Iceland’s development in the view of how things were developing elsewhere in the world.” 354

“In 1997 the fifth book was published, Ísland hid nýja (Iceland the New), co-authored with Birgir Jónsson, a geo-engineer. The largest part of that book goes into describing the process needed for creating planning ideas about the future...” 354

“...– that the policy frame on the country plan level, provided by the state, was pretty meagre. This lack of the necessary preceding steps for the regional plan became the focus of the criticism in Ísland hid nýja. This lack obviously meant that the plan was flawed in many ways, as detailed in the book.” 355

“The next book was a contribution to the further development of certain aspects of an Iceland Plan. The book is called Vegakerfid og ferdamálin (Roads and Tourism), published in

2000. The main task of that book was to lay out the foundation of the integration of roads and tourism planning on a country scale.” 355

““...deals with the road system and tourism, most other parameters of a country plan and settlement policy enter the picture...” 355

“...The book therefore actually presents a rather comprehensive vision of how the settlements could develop – a vision that in this case originates in a special study of roads and tourism..” 355

“The main findings are that it would be sensible to create a policy that settlement in the country shall rest on three pillars, i.e., that there should be three main settlement areas (see map above). The first area is the cluster in south-west Iceland, secondly the north central cluster, and thirdly in the mid-eastern area. As will be described afterwards, this triangular settlement structure fits well for all the main three industries...” 355

“As concerns tourism, the book points out that the east is no less important for being the third corner of the settlement triangle. This location is important as a gateway because of the ferry from Norway and the Faroes to the East Fjords in the summer and because the Icelandic reserve airport in Egilsstaðir will also be able to strengthen this function as a base for direct tourist flights to and from Europe in the future.” 356

“...The third main idea from the Iceland Plan was to create new, large nature preservation areas, instead of dispersing them in small patches all over the country. In the map these areas are called Public Recreational Areas. This idea of establishing large conservation areas has been gaining ground in the last few years...” 358

“What has happened in the meantime – and is related to this unusual idea about a new city in the highlands – is that now many scientists suggest that the temperature on earth will increase. If the climate in the central highlands of Iceland – that is now very cold and windy – will at some point become similar to that of mountain areas in Europe, the weather will no longer be an obstacle for building a town there...” 359

“There could be a considerable number of positive features for the average person living in the central highlands. The distances to skiing areas in the glaciers are short and it would only take about a two hour drive by car to get down to all the main settlement areas of the country. It would be a special benefit for those living in the highland city that the wind direction and thus the weather, often divides Iceland in two...” 359

3 Probable Future Developments 360

“...The main factor in terms of making an overarching plan necessary is the increased connection between Iceland and the European Union after Iceland was granted associate membership with the establishment of the EEA in 1994...” 360

“...most people and companies now look at Europe as a single interactive unit...” 360

“...because of the need of each member country to understand its position in this new whole the EU published an innovative book in 1991: EUROPE 2000 – Outlook for the Development of the Community. This book presents the most important planning facts of the area – the distribution of population and location of work places, as well as plans for future transportation systems...” 360

“... many other reports have been worked on, for instance the ESDP – European Spatial Development Perspective...” 360

BOOK FIVE – The Developments of Today

I CHANGING VIEWS AT THE TURN OF THE CENTURY 365

1 Changes in the Structure of Society 365

“... At the turn of the century in 1900, Icelandic society was changing from an agricultural to a fishing nation.” 365

“This process of urbanization continued slowly but steadily throughout the twentieth century...” 365

“...there is a good possibility that the service and knowledge society – that has already started to develop in Iceland – can continue developing...” 365

“Iceland stands at a crossroads (written 2002) as concerns the question of what kind of future society is desirable and what kind of goals can be created for Iceland in that respect...” 365

“...and other work requiring technological skills. Therefore, it is not at all certain that the advantage Iceland has today will remain. The largest societies in the world have also conceived the idea of making use of this promising new area...” 366

“In building up a service society Iceland has profited very much from the great increase in tourists as their numbers have expanded from about 15,000 in 1960 to over 300,000 in 2000, which is more than the total population of the country. This huge influx of tourists requires a great deal of services, a fact that has meant that the service level in many villages and rural areas in the countryside has reached a degree that would have been unthinkable” 366

2 Modernism on the Decline 368

“The Western worldview is deeply rooted in Christianity and the views that emerged with the advent of modern science in the

seventeenth century. The pioneers in that development are usually considered to be scientists like Descartes, Newton and Bacon.” 367

“Of late, we have been discovering how primitive this worldview is and how the thinking connected with it has had the effect of creating rather mechanistic ideas, both about the structure of our societies as well as in the area of city planning.” 367

“The author has written a book about this called City and Nature – An Integrated Whole...” 367

“... within modernism the machine is the model, as well as an object of affection; everything that was conveniently planned and put into a system of cubicles is considered to be appealing. Planning, where the houses were like boxes on a conveyor belt, was conceived to be beautiful in the decades after World War II...” 367

“In 1990, an increased criticism of the ideology of modernism started to appear in Iceland and at the same time a dwindling enthusiasm for the concrete boxes of the suburbs...” 367

“...Before the days of motorized vehicles, the possibility of anything other than the mixing of functions was not envisioned because people for the most part had to go by foot wherever they needed to go...” 368

“When the car entered the scene the need for mixing of functions disappeared because if people own a car they can live in one part of a city, shop in another and work in a third. This gave people freedom in their selection of locations for living and working. The result was, however, bad: lifeless bedroom neighbourhoods, unsightly working area.” 368

“...this is as a human environment is that this boxing and fragmentation of functions means social injustice...” 368

“...certain social groups get isolated in the monotone neighbourhoods, or ghettos. The children are not connected with the working life as before...” 368

“...why this modernistic planning scheme is so bad is that it demands huge tracts of land for all the roads...” 368

“The highways are like bulging rivers that people hardly dare to cross... and the organic web that the city was earlier is being dissolved...” 368

3 A Demand for Liveliness and Urbanity 370

“During their study years and in their travels, a large number of Icelanders learned to enjoy the city and city life...” 370

“The first step towards creating this new living city life in Reykjavík was the opening of more restaurants...” 370

“...To change the old town centre of Reykjavík towards a living urban area was rather easy because it had a high density and was built according to the planning traditions of European towns...” 370

“...suburbs, some lively urban core must exist within these neighbourhoods. This has, however, become more difficult of late because supermarkets take over from the older neighbourhood shopping...” 370

“...the city of the future is that the city has to offer a wide spectrum of settlement forms...” 370

II NEW LEVEL. IN METHODOLOGY 372

1 Rejection of Dictatorial Tendencies 372

“Quite possibly, we can see the development of modern democracy as a gradual development away from the "nanny-state" where all decisions are made for the populace...” 372

“Even though socialism aims for equality among people, things have mostly developed such that those who have been elected as ringleaders tend to use the position they have been given to take power away from the people...” 372

“What is good about the free market system is that it has a tendency towards taking power away from those who want to rule, and thus the general public governs simply by what it seeks in the market...” 372

“The free market, however, has many flaws. One of its flaws is that it lacks foresight. It is not until some mishap has happened that the market system reacts and tries to make amends...” 372

“The credo of social responsibility that is very strong in Iceland, as in other Scandinavian countries, also tends to force its ideology upon us through sheer goodwill. What follows from this attitude is that the state is meant to provide people with everything: schools, health services, social services. One characteristic of Icelandic society has been that the educated class has been small and closely knit, often related...” 372

“The idea of a state which takes care of people in nearly all respects has been so dominant in Icelandic society that many now want to change towards a more democratic way.” 373

“The main characteristics of this type of planning are that all relevant ideas are examined in the pre-planning stages. People are most often presented with alternatives

and are even allowed to vote on them in elections or in some type of survey.” 373

2 Integration in Multidisciplinary Groups 374

“...much more emphasis will be put on creating multidisciplinary groups for working on planning.” 374

“...there is, however, a movement towards creating multidisciplinary groups around tasks that create wholes. like that of building a house or planning a city or a neighbourhood...” 374

3 Info-Technol. Provides new Opport. 376

“...What is gained by info-technology is that it creates information systems and inter-linkages that can have important functions in reconnecting...” 376

“In the master plan of Reykjavík in 1965, a computer model was first used to analyze various statistical developments within the city...” 376

“...This database was then integrated into a traffic origin and destination computer program...” 376

III NEW BASIC POINTS IN PLANNING 378

1 Planning: A Vehicle for Social Improve. 378

“... a sorrowful example of re-active action in Iceland is the government's concern about avalanche problems only after 32 people had been killed in avalanches in the West Fjords in 1995.” 378

“...make sure – in the planning stages – that sensitive functions are not planned in such hazard areas or that all necessary precautions and defences have been made.” 378

“This method of foresight and caution is probably most developed within medicine, having given rise to the field of preventive medicine...” 378

“Within this area of foresight and preventive measures, we Icelanders are lagging further behind than most other nations. The reason for this is probably that we, as a nation, have predominantly been living with conditions that have only allowed for re-active actions...” 378

2 Planning: A Way to Meet Higher Environmental Standards 380

“The new environmental demands are now changing many things about how we work and live – and how we build towns and settlements...” 380

“... how improved demands for environmentally friendly practices are being formulated as concerns... how the city has to change from an open system to a closed or a cyclic system...” 301

3 An Activi. to Clarify where Soc. is Going 382

“...It is only too common that dominant ideas about society are used as the foundation in the making of a plan for the future...” 382

“Within the area of technology, such an estimation of future developments is sometimes carried out simply by asking specialists in the field in question about future trends, a process called the Delphi Method... The result is then statistically evaluated, with the mean intended to give a good indication of where things are headed. Another method is to conduct an opinion survey, which is to ask people about their expectations and hopes for the future.” 382

IV REYKJAV. AT THE END OF THE 20TH CE. 384

1 How Bad the Post-WW II Pl. Really Was 384

“...the car became widely owned. The greatly increased number of people owning a car meant that people could commute for very long distances from the suburbs to their work and home again after working hours.

Therefore, the city started to sprawl increasingly, which meant a dispersion of urban life qualities over a large area so that liveliness almost disappeared in these neighbourhoods, in particular as the people got older and the number of children decreased...” 384

“The ideology of zoning, i.e., to put the different city functions in different places, also contributed to the birth of the car city. According to the zoning scheme, most types of companies are not allowed in residential areas. This thinking embodies the "mental remains" from the bad influences that the untidy industries had on the residential areas of the nineteenth century.” 385

“As we come up to the last part of the twentieth century, the demand for a lively city environment started to surface among young people...” 385

2 Revolu. Lifest. Chan. Among the Young 386

“Today the young want increasingly to live in a lively urban environment. Many of the young people want, in addition, to be able to run all their errands in a minimal space – preferably on foot. People also want that their children to be able to walk to school, as they did earlier in the old dense cities...”

“The young people of today also have various other desires that they want to see realized besides a lively urban environment. They want facilities for pursuits like jogging, cycling, and line skating...” 386

“...A path that was recently opened all along the south coast of Reykjavík has become very popular. This path continues inland through the Fossvogur Valley and all the way up to the Heidmörk Forest...” 386

“Only one large area close to Reykjavík's old centre is available for the building of new city areas. This is the airport area...” 386

“...The airport election was therefore merely a façade. Now (written in 2002) there is the danger that the planning will be carried out in such a way that the various parts of the airport area will be planned without sufficient vision for the area as a whole...” 387

3 Turing against the Farmer Boy's Vision of the City 388

“Most of the oldest inhabitants of Reykjavík came directly from the countryside where they had been brought up in wide spaces with panoramic views and large pastures. Naturally, this vision had a great deal of influence on how the city was planned early in the century...” 388

“...The young people would like to build in the vast green spaces and only leave small patches for playgrounds and outdoor life” 388

“...not many things will be holding the young people in Iceland back from moving abroad unless they are not offered an environment that is to their liking...” 389

“If Iceland is not successful in doing this, the same thing will happen in the Capital Area that earlier happened in the old fishing towns in the country – the young moved to Reykjavík for education and did not return because there were few or no jobs that fit their needs...” 389

V REYKJAVÍK AT THE DAWN OF A NEW CENTURY 390

1 The Airport Dispute opened the Eyes of the Public 390

“The discussion about the airport has been taking place for the last three decades...” 390

“...As the airport issue came up once again in 2000, it was no longer the pollution, the noise and the accident danger that were uppermost in people's minds, but rather how valuable the airport area is, so close to the city centre” 390

“...prompted by the airport issue continued all the way to the election on March 19th, 2001. The media were packed with news, debates, articles and discussions on the issue, a dialogue that ultimately led to discussions on planning matters in Reykjavík in general. The options given in the election were simply "for or against" and those who were against the airport only had a narrow victory.” 390

“A boating harbour and residences linked to it could be built along the south coast in an area that faces the sun, and residential areas could also be offered below Öskjuhlíd Hill, which is currently a great outdoor area.” 391

2 Posit. but Small Steps in the 2002 Plan 392

“... in 2001, the leftist coalition in Reykjavík published a draft for a reviewed master plan

“...Some built up areas were shown in the present airport area, except that the north-south runway was there. Technically one runway is sufficient, as in many places in the countryside, but the opening hours of the airport would, however, be reduced considerably.” 392

“The interest in starting to use the islands north of Reykjavík for settlements can be traced to a TV film by Hrafn Gunnlaugsson which was shown on national television the day before New Year's Eve in 2000. The film had a huge influence in raising interest in building on the islands and also to build more along the coasts of the city. Moreover, the film suggested moving the airport out of the city to Löngusker...” 392

“In the first plan of Reykjavík for this area in 1977, the plan only reached to Lake Leirtjörn. However, there appeared ideas in this earlier plan that perhaps should have been examined more... The idea of creating a town centre at the River Korpa comes first to mind. This centre was meant to extend over the Westland Road and river and would therefore have created a "bridge" over to the building areas in the west. “ 395

“...it was decided in the 1977 plan that the main road to the east would be in the shadow of the Grafarholt Hill along the river. This road plan was unfortunately changed in the plan of 1992...” 395

“...A frame plan had this road curving further north and then running at the foot of the mountain where it was to proceed with many curves along the mountain to the east and finally into Mosfellsbaer. This connecting road is bound to reduce the outdoor possibilities on the mountain...” 395

3 The Debate about the Plan before the 2002 Elections 396

“...Bjarnason had been the Minister of Culture and Education and as such had been working on some of the issues in Reykjavík, such as school and cultural issues. It was also in Bjarnason's favour that he, as a minister, had been supportive of two important planning projects in Reykjavík, namely, the Science Park at the University and the Music and Conference Centre at the harbour.” 396

“The conservatives also criticized a new scheme for the distribution of lots, which the leftists had introduced in Grafarholt, i.e., to put the lots up for auction. This certainly gave the city treasury more money but at the same time, it meant an increase in the price of housing. In addition, the conservatives maintained that the offer of new lots was too small...” 396

“...the conservatives continued their policy from the 1998 election and remained against construction of a large container harbour in Eidsvík. Moreover, the party agreed on the policy of having Geldinganes and its south slopes reserved for residential areas.” 396

“The leftists, however, did not want to abandon the idea about the large harbour. Not long before the elections the leftists reached an agreement with Mosfellsbaer to get jurisdiction of the south slopes of Mt Úlfarsfell, which relieved the pressure of providing new built-up areas...” 396

4 Ass.the Situ. after the 2002 Elections 398

“One of the biggest concerns is, however, how the planning of the Vatnsmýri area, close to the airport, will be resolved...” 398

“...that a settlement is being proposed for the northern part of the airport area...” 398

“The policy on making the town denser has been rather successful and now many areas with old buildings have been cleared to allow for new developments. Examples are the lots of the Lýsi Co., the Coast Guard and BYKO in west Reykjavík...” 398

“The planning law of 1998 already assured some increased rights of citizens to have an influence on planning ideas before they reached the level of execution. In addition, a jury on disputes in planning matters was established...” 399

VI THE COMMUN. IN THE CAPITAL AREA 400 **1 The Kópavogur and Gardabaer Comm.400**

“...Kópavogur used to be one of the poorest communities in the Capital Area...” 400

“...The landfills in the harbour were also enlarged considerably, which is negative

because it spoils the view from Reykjavík, especially from the Nauthólsvík beach.” 401

“This map demonstrates how dangerous it is to let planning matters of the Capital Area be guided by accidental demarcations...” 402

“...Gardabaer, like Kópavogur, has of late expanded rapidly...” 402

“From the start, Gardabaer has had high taxpayers and therefore most of the neighbourhoods look good. The settlement areas are, however, rather dispersed...” 402

“Some change in this policy of dispersed settlements occurred in 2001 as the Björgun Co. started co-operating with the local authorities on building a marina in an area of the shipyard operated by Stálvík...” 402

“...The centre of town stands rather centrally by the Vífilsstaðir Road...” 402

“An idea about a Science Park in the Lake Urriðavatn area was presented in 2000...” 402

“In 1999, Kópavogur started to present ideas for a plan for the Vatnsendi area at Lake Ellidavatn...” 402

2 Hafnarfjörður and the South Devel. 403

“...Hafnarfjörður has the advantage of having an old town core, but what perhaps makes the town most remarkable is that it is located in a rough lava landscape, a feature that makes it unique on a global scale.” 403

“At the north side of the harbour, various ideas on marinas have been created, mainly on landfills outside of the coastal road...” 403

“...there is a need to review the ideas about the location of a highway to the south...” 403

“...the aluminium smelter operates like a stop to the southern development of the settlement.” 405

3 Mosfellsbaer and the North Devel. 406

“...Still today, there is some agricultural activity in the Mosfell Valley and because of the geothermal heat there considerable greenhouse farming...” 406

“...important spot in the community is the Reykjalundur Rehabilitation Centre with its factory. The Mosfellsbaer community profits from the fact that the Nobel Prize-winning author Halldór Laxness was brought up there. Two museums are currently being prepared on his life; one in his own home, called Gljúfrasteinn...” 406

VII THE PL. MATTERS OF THE CAP. AREA 408

1 The Regional Plan 2001 to 2024 408

“...There are primarily five aspects that are lacking in the conception and goal setting of the regional plan: 1. The experiences of earlier planning for the area should have been assessed. 2. The frame of the plan should have been expanded... The section on page 460 elaborates on this. 3. Right at the beginning, or even preferably before work on the actual planning started, an agreement should have been reached about a supra-regional government level... 4. A conclusion should have been reached about the future of domestic flights and where the main airport should be located before the work started. 5. A policy should have been created to build up a really dense city area in the Capital Region, for example, around Skerjafjörður Fjord...” 408

“As the main report of the plan is studied, several things do not seem to add up. The introduction of the report states: “The goal of sustainable development will be the guiding principle for the planning of this area...” (p. 10). As is well known, some of the main environmental problems in cities are

connected to the uncontrolled use of the car.... Therefore it comes as a surprise that no serious attempt is made to rectify the negative balance in the transportation of individuals, 96% of whom travel in private cars and only 4% in public transport (buses)..." 410

"What appears in the description of the plan for the anticipated development from 1998 to 2024 is also a serious breach: "...it is to be expected that there will be a 50% increase in car traffic in the planning period because of the increased number of inhabitants and also because of changes in occupations..." 410

"Because the planners were not actually given the possibility to work on the larger issues, they started to work on certain side issues such as the so-called Green Scarf... a belt of green areas in the back land of the city..." 410

"...It also comes somewhat as a surprise how little traffic is shown on the Ofanbyggdavegur which passes furthest east..." 410

2 Possibilities for a Fresh Approach 412

"...three very large areas by the Skerjafjord, areas that could be used for residences as an alternative to building up on the heaths." 413

3 Likely Future Development 414

"...there are no specific plans (written in 2002) for providing space for building large, dense and urban areas within the current Capital Region, except to some degree in downtown Reykjavík, it is logical to examine what possibilities are available in the region and its vicinity." 414

"The main proposal of this Association on Better Settlement is shown in the large map to the right. The planning idea is characterized by the forming of a circle with landfill, the centre of the circle being a harbour that some of the settlements would face (NW of Örfirisey)" 414

"A second drawback of the idea about huge landfills to the northwest is that this area is at the most distant corner of the Capital Area. Together with a limited space for added traffic on present thoroughfares, this would make it unattractive for people to go there for shopping and amusement because of traffic delays." 414

VIII PL. DEVELOPMENT IN SW ICELAND 416

1 The Devel. of W-Iceland and Akraborg 416

"...that within this area the main growth regions of the country, including the Capital Area, form a triangle where already about 80% of Icelanders live..." 416

"One of the biggest steps in road transportation in the west was the construction of the bridge or causeway over Borgarfjörður Fjord in 1980..." 417

"The biggest gain was that the only large town in the Borgarfjörður area, Borgarnes, became directly connected to Highway 1..." 417

"The largest event that tied the functioning of the Akraborg area to the Capital Region was the opening of the tunnel under Hvalfjörður Fjord in 1998. At the same time, an aluminium smelter was built at Grundartangi harbour. The development of this area leaped forward..." 417

"...People are increasingly starting to use their summerhouses as a second home, or they buy old farms for this purpose. This new form of habitation, called double residing, is primarily known among the upper classes in foreign countries..." 417

2 The Devel. of South Iceland and Árborg 418

"The Óseyri Bridge that was opened in 1998 is in fact a prerequisite for being able to see this area as a single service and occupational zone. Since the bridge was opened, the distances by road do not exceed what is acceptable in

terms of letting the various services provide for the whole area.” 418

“...recently the upper regions of this county have also experienced considerable growth, not least because of the increase in the number of summerhouses. By 2000 there were 4500 summerhouses. Assuming in summer a family of one to two children in each of these summerhouses, the population of the area rises to about 15,000...” 418

“If the number of the inhabitants of the summerhouses is added to the number of locals, we see that during the summer the inhabitants of Árnes County rise to about 30,000. In addition, this area is one of the most frequented tourist areas in Iceland” 418

“The town of Hveragerdi enjoys the privilege of being located by the Ring Road. This town has a history as a health and spa town, primarily because of The Health and Rehabilitation Clinic and the Ás home for the elderly...” 420

“...In his lecture Karl Björnsson pointed out that Árnes County has in fact become a part of the commercial area of southwest Iceland...” 420

3 The Devel. of Reykjanes and the Airport 421

“The Reykjanes Peninsula has some unusual characteristics that set it apart from the three urban areas (adjacent to the Capital)...” 421

“...Even though the Reykjanes area is close to Reykjavík, it is not certain that this settlement would have grown if the Keflavík Airport had not been built there...” 421

“This important South Coast Road is finally in the plans. Besides strengthening tourism, it will open up possibilities for commercial cooperation among the settlements on the Reykjanes Peninsula and the south...” 423

“... Grindavík has a unique position, shared with Thorlákshöfn, that these two towns have the only good harbours on the entire south-west coast of the country, not counting the Westman Islands...” 425

“The Krýsuvík area south of Lake Kleifarvatn is under the jurisdiction of Hafnarfjörður. This is supposedly because Hafnarfjörður assured itself of the geothermal rights there...” 425

Conclusions 426

“...to try to draft a picture of a new understanding of creating human habitats, which is meant to be the central motif of this book.” 426

“...As the first settlers arrived in the country, they found a completely uninhabited land, and the settlements developed slowly and in close relationship with the naturally given conditions...” 426

“It is one of the basic lessons of this book that the built environment is not static and unchangeable... To look at it in a vast historical time frame – as in this book – is to discover that settlement structures are ever-changing.” 426

Glossary 478

With focus on schemes and institutions in Iceland

Archaeological register A list kept by the National Archaeologist of the archaeological remains listed or proposed for conservation.

Architectural heritage The main institution in this field is the **Húsfriðunarnefnd committee**.

In the largest towns there are also institutions that have the task of making proposals on what buildings, or which parts of buildings, should be preserved for cultural, aesthetic or environmental value.

Central areas There exists a hierarchy of central areas with a varying combination of shops, institutions and services: A regional centre serves as a centre for a region. A city centre district is the centre of a city. A town centre serves a town or a part of a city that functions independently.

A neighbourhood centre serves a neighbourhood. A shopping centre or a mall is a centre mainly for shops.

Classification of streets Streets and roads divide into different categories, often defined by their functions. The 1965 Plan of Reykjavík introduced four types of roads: primary, secondary, tertiary and quaternary roads.

Collecting roads (tertiary rd.) These roads collect the traffic from the residential areas and lead to their connecting roads, which then connect to the primary roads.

Complementarity If two aspects are designed to work together, for instance, city and nature, they enhance each other so that an

extra value is produced.

Connecting roads (secondary roads) They connect neighbourhoods to the net of primary roads.

Conservation areas Areas that have architectural, historical, environmental and/or a general value which call for conservation or protection of some kind.

Conserved buildings Conserved buildings are divided into two groups, A and B. Group A contains houses conserved in their totality.

Group B contains houses and buildings which are only conserved because of their exterior, parts of the exterior or their interior.

Conservation is legally registered as an obligation for the building or construction in question.

Country park (Icel. fólkvangur)

An area protected under the **Nature Preservation Law** as an outdoor area in collaboration with the local communities in the area.

Country plan A plan covering the whole country that deals with the main aspects of land use and infrastructure. Other terms used are national plans and settlement development plans. In Iceland these plans are mostly used for co-ordinating governmental actions and to create a frame for the regional plan level.

Catastrophe areas Areas that are likely to be threatened with a natural disaster such as floods, avalanches, landslides and earthquakes. The word 'risk' is introduced as an assessment is made of what chances and what protective measures should be taken in such areas.

Database Planning makes use of many types of databases, including demography, trade and car ownership.

Detail plans They are made for neighbourhoods or any other sections within the frame of the master plan.

The detail plan accounts for the use of land, the road system, types of residences, occupations and services, housing, institutions, playgrounds, outdoor areas, etc.

Development planning Mostly used for inducing improved developments in older neighbourhoods, sometimes called Urban Renewal Plans.

Ecology The science of how organisms work and interrelate with each other and with the environment. The term human ecology is defined as a parallel.

Eco street Street designed, or redesigned, to increase environmentally friendly qualities. Such streets often give priority to pedestrians. The street paving is varied, and trees and planting introduced.

Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) The law on this is based on a directive from the EU. An impact assessment is required for large scale or dangerous constructions or plans. The method was first developed for the assessment of individual constructions and was primarily carried out after most of the design had taken place. Today the assessment procedure is planned to be introduced earlier in the planning process.

Environmental principles There are four main principles: User Pays Principle, which says that those who use an environment or a resource shall pay for the protection or maintenance of these qualities. Polluter Pays Principle says that those who pollute shall pay for the damage and its rectification. Cooperation Principle says that disagreements shall be resolved among the parties involved. Pre-cautionary Principle: This

principle orders that plans or projects shall not be allowed, or be continued, if an environmental harm is to be expected.

Infrastructure Internal structure in a country, region or town. There are social, economic and technological infrastructures. The most important infrastructure in planning is the road system.

Integration Most planning starts out with separate sector plans. Today there is pressure for integrating such plans into one whole, e.g. sea, road and air transportation into a single transportation plan.

Interface area An area designed to connect areas, like a coastal area designed to connect the ocean and land areas.

Intersection There exist many types of intersections like grade separations, where roads intersect at different levels. Intersections with exit lanes in a soft curve are called diamond intersections, or if they go in a loop, clover leaf intersections.

Land-use categories For instance, areas for residences, industry, shopping, warehousing and outdoor life.

Land utilization The type of function a land area is used for, such as the use of fields for different kinds of crops.

Master plan A plan level beneath a regional plan. Such a plan is made for every community – sometimes for more than one community at a time. Its purpose is to show the main policy of a community in a physical plan, e.g., in terms of how the settlements should develop, what land uses there should be, as well as the placement of the main traffic lines. The master plan gives a frame for the detail plans.

Mixed land use If an area is a mixture of different functions or

building types, it is called mixed land use. Social mixing (integrating) is often used to reduce social problems.

Natural wonders (Icel. náttúruvaetti)

A category, according to the Natural Conservation Law, containing, waterfalls, volcanoes, caves, locations of fossils or rare types of rocks, etc.

Nature conservation area An area where it has been decided that the natural environment should be preserved with as little alteration as possible.

Nature conservation register (Icel. Náttúruminjaskrá) A list of areas and artefacts that have been conserved or where proposals have been made on conservation. The State Treasury has the pre-emptive right of purchase of such areas when those who hold the property, according to the Farmland Act, have waived their right to ownership. A more scientifically based proposal on artefacts and units of conservation was presented in 2003.

National park (Icel. thjóðgardur) A conservation area of high value.

Earlier it was a prerequisite that the state was the sole owner of the land.

Nature reserve (Icel. fridland) An area conserved according to law because of the special value of a feature of the landscape, vegetation or zoology.

Neighbourhood unit planning An ideology that says that the neighbourhood should be planned as a society in itself. This type of planning has not been very successful in Iceland.

Official institution area An area primarily intended for state or local government institutions.

Plan (incl. programme) A plan, with a programme, created to guide the development in an area, community, region or part of a community. It is

presented with maps, special drawings and reports. There are five types of plans: country plan, regional plan, master plan, neighbourhood plan and detail plan.

Planning period The period that a plan is intended to cover. The period of a master plan is commonly between twelve and twenty years.

Planning process How work on a plan proceeds. It includes preparatory work, development of aspects, collecting and analysing of data, creation of alternatives, policy making, and co-operation with the government in question as well as with the public. The final steps are: decision making, advertising, environmental impact assessment, governing of the plan and review. Lately, there is much growth in the inclusion of interest groups and the public, called participatory planning.

Playgrounds They divide into many categories according to what age groups they are meant to serve, their general nature and the distances from homes.

Ratio There are different types of ratios. The most commonly known is the lot ratio, which is the ratio between the total number of square meters in a building and the area of the lot. In addition, there is the ratio of a square area in terms of various types of activities. The ratios are also often presented as units per area, such as the number of flats per hectare.

Recreational areas There are many types of recreational areas according to the type of activity they are meant to serve, how large an area they are intended to serve, etc

Regional plan Such a plan covers at least two communities. The goal of a regional plan is to create a co-ordinated policy on the development of

settlement and infrastructure in a region, and to support economical development. The regional plan is the frame for the master plan level.

Strategic Environmental

Assessment (SEA) A new directive from the EU implemented in Iceland in 2004. The SEA is a further development of EIA that takes this type of thinking to a higher level of law, and of the creation of law, strategy and plans. The main idea is that environmental goals and concerns are introduced at the initial stages of every project and at the creation of the plan will be worked on in close co-ordination with the environmental values.

Street side drawing A drawing that shows rows of houses on one side of a street. The designing of street sides follows aesthetical or other points of view.

Summerhouse area An area planned for summerhouses outside towns. Their use in winter has increased so they are often called leisure houses or even second homes, as now the concept of double residency has started to evolve in Iceland.

Sustainable development A principle that proclaims that the use of resources should not damage or reduce their capacity. Only in this way can their utilization become sustainable. This principle not only covers the natural environment but it also points out the need for the same type of thought in conceiving and analysing social and economic environments because all of these three elements are interdependent.

Threshold limit The limit where the use of, or the tolerance of, environmental features reaches its

breaking point. In tourism, the term carrying capacity is used.

Topological map A map that shows the main features of a land or a territory, whether natural or man-made. It contains, for example, demarcations of communities, streets, lines of elevation, etc. Such maps are the basis for physical planning. In addition, many thematic maps are created for planning purposes.

Trading station rights The first urban villages in Iceland were given certain rights or privileges, the first six of them in 1786. The various types of urban centres are assigned certain rights, each of them according to their status.

Traffic surveys They are conducted to investigate the nature, volume and combination of traffic. The data collected in this way provide the basic information for traffic modelling.

Trends Investigations are conducted into various types of trends, such as the need for certain types of residences. Such surveys are used as a foundation for predictions of the need for certain types of land use in the preparatory phase of a plan.

Urban sociology The sociology of urban communities: the development of communities in towns and their characteristics, e.g., age and income structure.

Urban Studies Centre (Icel. Borgarfraedasetur) Established in cooperation with the University of Iceland and the City of Reykjavík in 2001. A primary emphasis is put on urban sociology and participatory planning.

Visual axis planning (Fr. point de vue) The method of letting the visual features guide some of the main lines of the plan, like letting the axis of a

main street or an open area be directed towards a monument, as in the planning of Washington DC and Paris.

Zoning The division of functions in an urban area into detached spaces so that they do not disturb each other.

Example: the separation of polluting industries from residential areas.