

Summary:

Transport changes in the Romerike region 1998-2020

Romerike is the name of the eastern part of Akershus County consisting of 13 municipalities. Four of the municipalities make a part of the urban area of Oslo.

In the course of few years there has been a great traffic growth in the Romerike region. Local politicians are anxious about the capacity of the roads especially after the relocation of the Oslo Airport from the west side of the city to Gardermoen situated 45 km from the central city in the northern part of Romerike.

According to a prognosis from 1991, the traffic growth has come 15 years too early. Our analysis based on detailed data on settlement and commuting in the Oslo area, shows that one of the main reasons for this has been the regional development with higher population growth than expected in the municipalities close to Oslo and lower growth in the outer parts of the region. Increased population near Oslo results in more commuting to Oslo. In addition, more people than before are commuting to Oslo from the more distant municipalities as well, although there has been a growth of local jobs. At the same time “reverse” commuting (from Oslo to Romerike) has increased. The new jobs in the region are often located in areas where the private car provides better accessibility (than other modes).

The county authorities have proposed a development plan for the region with guidelines on the land use until the year 2020. The guidelines are based on the Dutch ABC-system, called “the right business at the right place”. One of the ideas in the ABC-system is to locate labour-intensive business at sites that have good accessibility with public transport and where car parking is limited. The object is to reduce car traffic and increase travel with public transport (and walking). An earlier study by the Institute of Transport Economics has shown that the ABC-planning principles might be effective. A difficult task within this strategy however is to co-ordinate the land use planning across the municipal borders, which in the case of Romerike means to integrate the planning of 13 municipalities.

Based on expected population growth and future commuting to the new airport at Gardermoen, the total commuting in the area is estimated for year 2020. It is expected that about 20 000 persons will be employed at Gardermoen in 2020. Most of these employees will probably live in the two municipalities surrounding the airport. However, the municipality of Oslo about 45 km apart will probably become almost as important as residential area.

People living in Romerike have a scattered commuting pattern. We expect this pattern to continue, but commuting to Gardermoen will introduce some changes. On the other hand there are similarities between the commuting pattern to the airport

and the ordinary commuting pattern at Romerike. The results show that the commuting traffic will increase with some 50 percent.

The question is whether an ABC-policy may help to reduce the amount of trips with cars. Through a detailed analysis of accessibility both with car and public transport, the model shows that building better public transport may help to reduce the car traffic to some extent. The most important element however is to limit the availability of car parking for the employees at their places of work. The recommendation is to combine a policy of “right business at the right place” with a regional parking policy, and a plan based on increased accessibility with public transport to a limited number of central places in the area.

The new high-speed rail line between Oslo and Gardermoen will give some improvements also for the local and regional train services. The travel time will be reduced with ten minutes or more to the central area of Oslo from many of the stations at Romerike. Still this will not help reducing the car traffic at roads because the use of public transport is already at a high level to the central area of Oslo and because only a limited share of the commuting traffic will be served by the new train services. In the long run the situation may change to some extent due to the fact that it will be more attractive to settle near railway stations which can offer short travel time to jobs in the central parts of Oslo.

The report discusses the possibility of developing the urban settlement of Jessheim east of the new airport as a regional centre. This is meant to be an element of a “corridor strategy” to relieve Oslo from some of its population pressure. Dependent of the willingness to give priority to Jessheim when locating new jobs and to prevent the development of business activities in the corridor between Jessheim and Lillestrøm in the southern part of Romerike, this might be a good idea. In addition it is important to develop good accessibility by train between Jessheim and Oslo by help of the new high-speed line. But unfortunately, it is decided to locate an important regional terminal on that line in the smaller place Kløfta 8 km south of Jessheim. Jessheim thus will gain very few advantages from the new railway line and Kløfta will probably become an attractive place for residents and for locating new business activities.

The conclusion based on this project is that Romerike will face significantly increased road traffic, unless an ABC-policy or a road pricing strategy (or both) is implemented. On the other hand a different regional development from what we have assumed, may cause either more or less traffic than the analysis in this report indicates.