



# TOUR GUIDE

How to find Oslo's rivers and streams  
by train, tram, bus and Metro



## OSLO RIVER FORUM

Oslo River Forum (Oslo Elveforum, OE) was founded in the year 2000 as a forum for volunteer groups and associations working for Oslo's ten river catchments.

Our task is to promote to the protection, rehabilitation and re-opening of the rivers and streams in the City's built-up area. We work to make Oslo's waterways clear, clean, open and accessible for citizens and visitors. Riversides are to be protected and turned into green space, with trails along each stream. Waters are to be healthy and aquatic species, including fish, encouraged.

Oslo River Forum submits comments in all plan and zoning cases that concern the streams, protesting when developments are proposed within the 20 and 12 metre limits given in the City's zoning guidelines.

We arrange guided tours along our rivers. And support schools, that adopt a part of their local stream.

In a wet and wilder climate, we actively front the issue of re-opening the buried reaches of Oslo's streams.

*Our vision: Living streams from forest to fjord.*

[www.osloelveforum.no](http://www.osloelveforum.no)

The terms 'river', 'stream', 'brook' or 'creek' each convey the size of a watercourse. In Oslo, three words apply: *elv*, *bekk* and *å*. A distinction is that one can leap over *en bekk* but not *ei elv*. From Danish there is a saying: *Mange bekker små gjør en stor å*. 'Many brooks make a large stream', so *å* is larger than 'bekk'. And remember: *å* is pronounced 'awe'.

A little Norwegian grammar: *En* and *ei* are the masculine and feminine article 'a'. To make 'the' in a Scandinavian language, we put an article at the end; in Norwegian *-en* for masculine and *-a* for feminine. In Oslo, both are used with *elv* for 'river': Akerelva flows through a former factory area; Hoffselsen flows through upmarket residential suburbs.

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**Welcome to Oslo with its ten rivers and streams, and the nature reserve Østensjøvannet. You will find precious natural areas along our waterways, rich in bird, animal and plant life, with good walking trails, places to bathe and parklands, all surrounded by the Capital City's urban bustle.**

## **Tips for an enjoyable walk:**

- Use your senses: look, listen and smell. Take note of your surroundings and follow on the map. A quarter of Oslo's waterways are still underground in pipes and culverts, so there are places where the path simply follows the low ground, perhaps along city streets.
- This guide follows each stream upstream towards its source. The numbering on each map begins with the access point furthest downstream. This has been chosen because most visitors will be staying in or near the city centre and the fjord to which nine of the ten streams flow. Don't let the numbering stop you from choosing to walk downstream.
- The guide takes the public transport hub, Jernbanetorget, at Oslo Central Station (Oslo S) as its starting point (see map page 31). Check with the transport authority for Greater Oslo, Ruter ([www.ruter.no](http://www.ruter.no)), download their app (RuterReise) with live schedules and travel planner, or visit the information

### Legend for the maps:



Train



Metro



Bus



Tram



Information board



River or stream in pipe



River or stream in tunnel



Official trails in Oslo



OE trails by the rivers



Water



Swamp



Forest



Green space

office on Jernbanetorget. Please note that Metro is called T-bane in Norwegian and 'tram' is trikk.

- Public transport in Oslo is convenient and reliable, in part because tickets are not sold on board. The app RuterBillett is now available if you have a mobile phone from Europe. Single, 1-hour tickets are sold at train and Metro stations and kiosks, but not at bus or tram stops. For kr 50, kiosks sell transport cards that can be loaded with a 24-hour, 7-day or 30-day pass, or with travel money that is checked and, if expired, drawn upon when you scan it at a station or on board.
- Not all trails are suitable for wheelchairs, prams or even bicycles.
- Oslo Elveforum is on Facebook and Twitter. Please share your photos on Instagram with #osloelveforum and #(the stream's name).

**Enjoy your walk!**



# LYSAKERELVA

*Flows into Lysaker Fjord at Sollerudstranda*

## A COUNTY LINE WITH WATERFALLS AND GORGES

A major stream in a dramatic landscape forms the boundary in the west between Oslo and the neighbouring borough of Bærum. You will be surprised by its wildness, and get some real exercise climbing along the river's steep banks. There are walking trails on both sides, designated L-1 in Bærum and A1 in Oslo and eleven

footbridges linking them. Along the Lysaker River you will find the ruins of saw mills, corn mills and the remnants of heavy industry. There is abundant birdlife with 102 species registered. Trout are to be taken along the whole stream, and fine sea trout and sizeable salmon run up to spawning grounds below the first high waterfall.



## GETTING THERE:

### 1. Lysaker:

All trains except expresses from Oslo S or Nationaltheatret,  
Bus 31 (Stop: Lysaker stasjon),  
Bus 32 (Stop Lysaker bru)

### 2. Lilleaker:

Bus 32 and 23, Tram 13

### 3. Bjørnsletta/Øraker:

Metro Line 3; Tram 13

### 4. Lysejordet: Bus 32

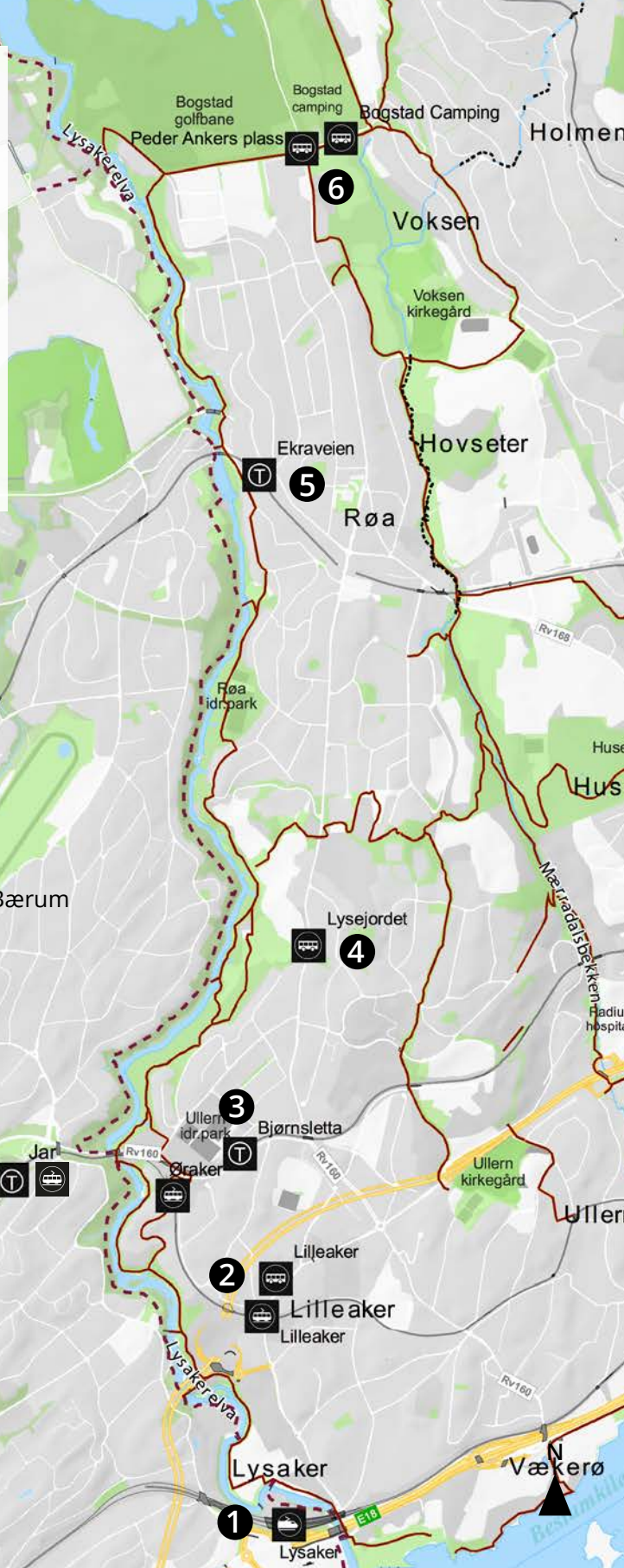
### 5. Ekraveien: Metro Line 2

### 6. Peder Ankers plass/Bogstad camping:

Bus 32 (Bogstad Camping) or  
Bus 41 (Peder Ankers plass)



Scale 1:25000







# MÆRRADALSBEKKEN

*Flows into Bestumkilen (Bestum Inlet)*

## **RICHNESS AND DIVERSITY**

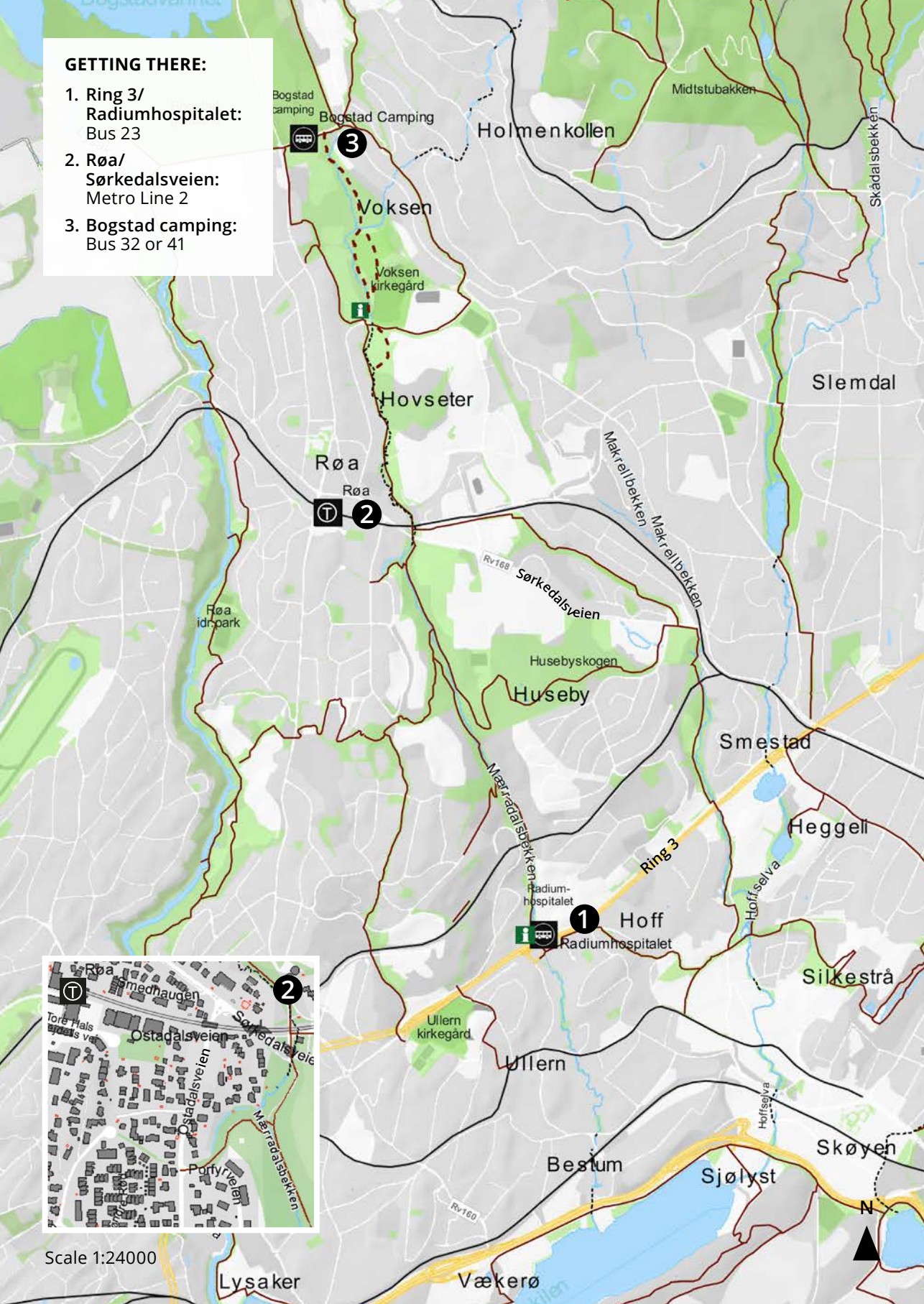
The lower reaches of Mærradalsbekken run through private gardens before entering a culvert under the railway and motorway. That is why we start from the outer ring road (Ring 3) at Radiumhospitalet, Norway's specialist cancer clinic from where an excellent trail proceeds northward through the narrow Mærradalen gorge and up to Sørkedalsveien. This very special landscape supports a rich

variety of plants, especially fungi and mosses, and the birds that depend on them. It is so special that it is classified nationally as a habitat to be protected. North of Sørkedalsveien, the trail follows the wide Hovseterdalen, all the way to Bogstad Camping. The stream was laid in a pipe in the 1970s, but in 2018 the decision was made to re-open it.



### GETTING THERE:

1. Ring 3/  
Radiumhospitalet:  
Bus 23
2. Røa/  
Sørkedalsveien:  
Metro Line 2
3. Bogstad camping:  
Bus 32 or 41



Scale 1:24000





# HOFFSELVEN

*Flows into Bestumkilen (Bestum Inlet)*

## FROM ICE DAM TO ICE DAM

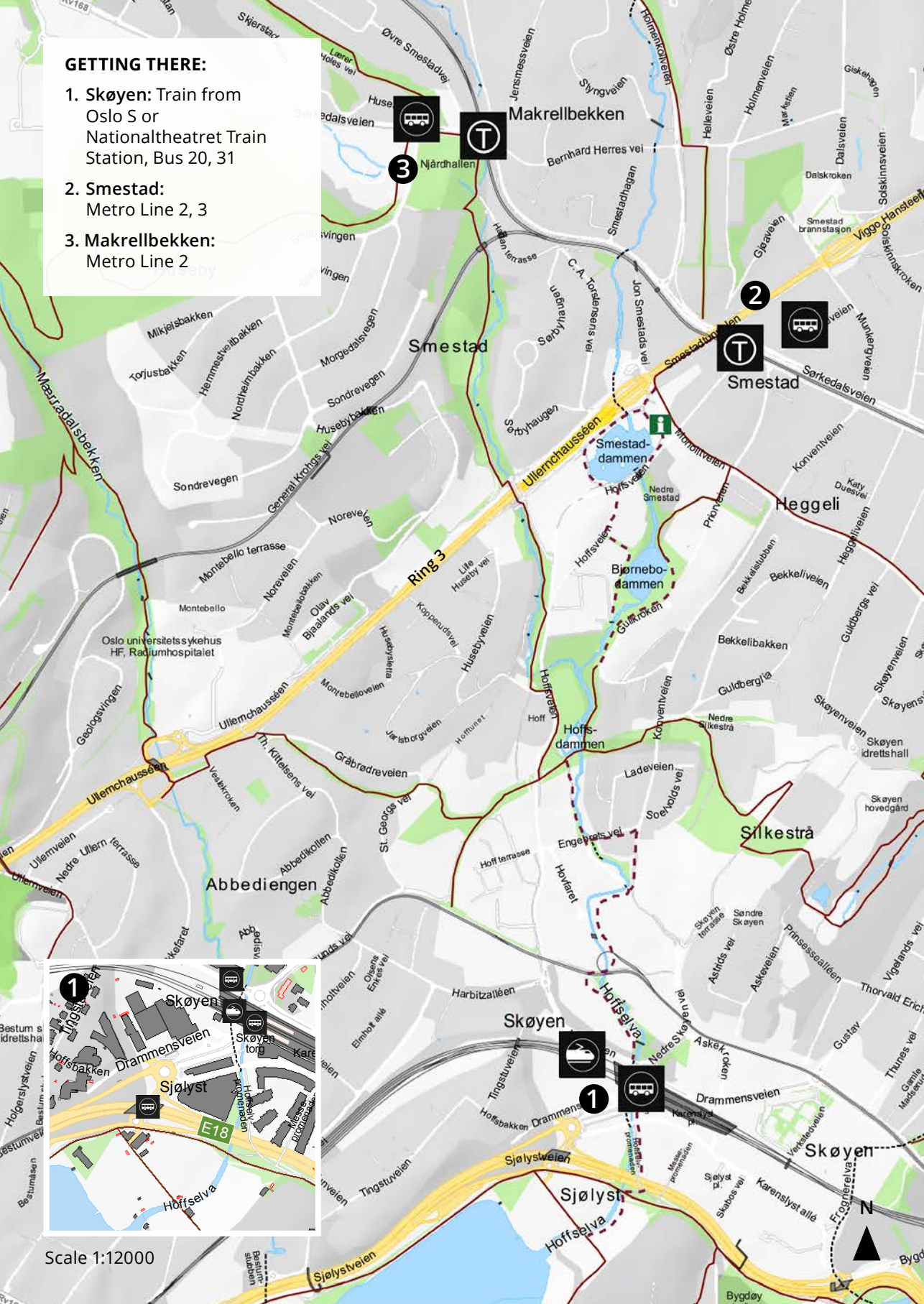
At the end of the 1800s when Oslo supplied Britain and Europe with ice for refrigeration, the owners of the manor farms Hoff, Smestad and Holmen constructed water storages that would freeze each winter to a considerable thickness. Blocks of ice were cut and transported to ships lying in Oslo Fjord, providing winter work and returning the landowners good income. The dams also secured the farms' water supply for stock,

and for firefighting. Bjørnebo Dam, Smestad Dam and Holmen Dam were all ice dams. The path up along the river passes the beautiful, 11-meter high Dronning (Queen's) Falls. Just below these falls lies the confluence where the streams Holmenbekken and Makrellbekken form Hoffselven. Just don't expect to catch mackerel in Makrellbekken! The name is a corruption of 'markskille' or field divider; the stream was the boundary between two ancient farms.



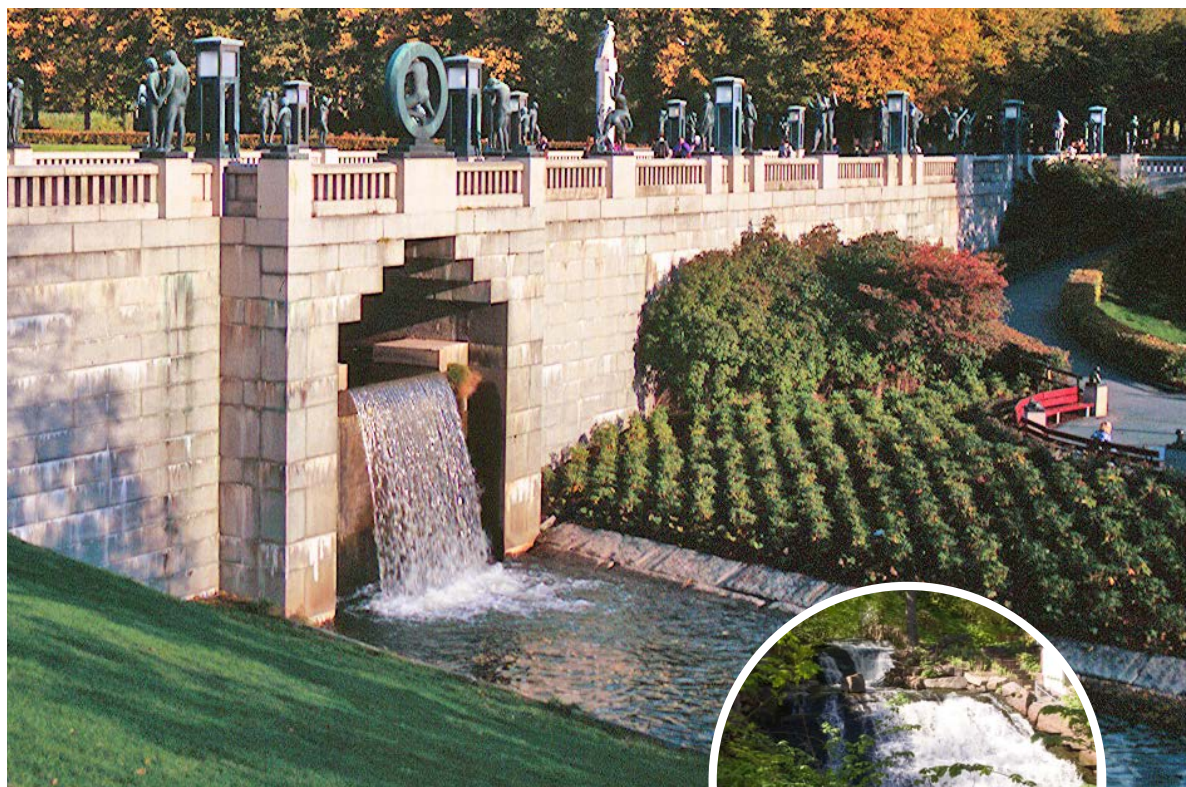
## GETTING THERE:

1. **Skøyen:** Train from Oslo S or Nationaltheatret Train Station, Bus 20, 31
2. **Smestad:** Metro Line 2, 3
3. **Makrellbekken:** Metro Line 2



Scale 1:12000





# FROGNERELVEN

*Flows into Frognerkilen (Frogner Inlet)*

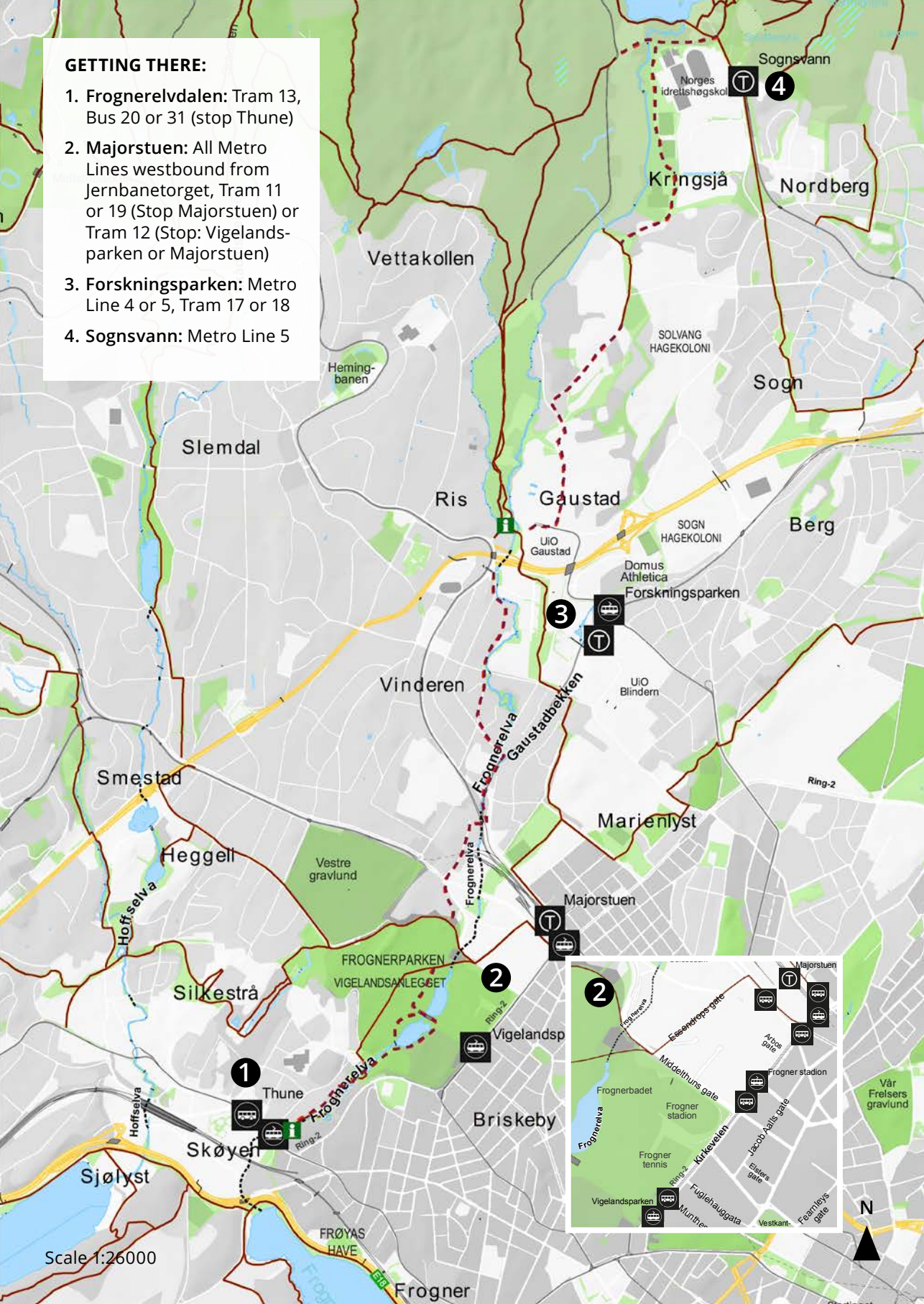
## ACROSS ANCIENT FARMS, THROUGH WOODS AND VIGELAND'S PARK

This river has everything, flowing as it does from the lake Sognsvann by one of Oslo's favourite entrances to the communal forest, Marka, to the inlet Frognerkilen. Starting from Thune you will be surprised by the magnificent deciduous trees in the dale that leads to the famous sculptures in Vigeland's Park where Frognerelven forms a central feature. Above the east bank, Frogner Manor stands proudly, now

the Oslo City Museum. Sognsvannsbekken and Gaustadbekken run together at Frøen after several hundred meters flowing through private gardens. A section of Gaustadbekken between Metro stations Forskningsparken and Blindern was re-opened in 2017. Take Rasmus Winderens vei westward to Sognsvannsbekken, follow a path a short way downstream, and enjoy Vinderenfossen, a wide waterfall in among the houses.



1. **Frognerelvdalen:** Tram 13, Bus 20 or 31 (stop Thune)
2. **Majorstuen:** All Metro Lines westbound from Jernbanetorget, Tram 11 or 19 (Stop Majorstuen) or Tram 12 (Stop: Vigelandsparken or Majorstuen)
3. **Forskningsparken:** Metro Line 4 or 5, Tram 17 or 18
4. **Sognsvann:** Metro Line 5







# AKERSELVA

*Flows into Bjørvika*

## RED-BRICK FACTORIES AND CHERISHED URBAN GREEN SPACE

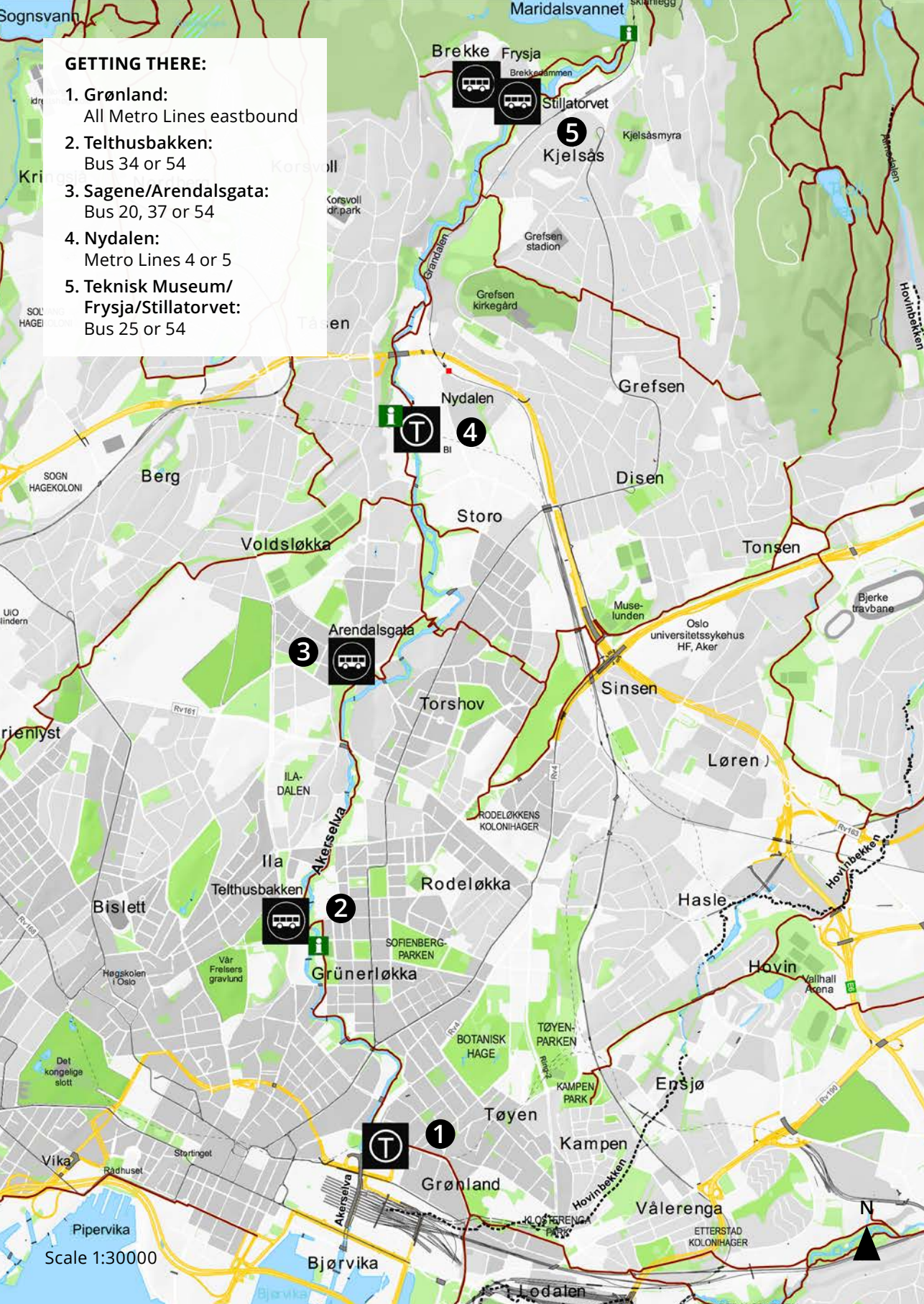
This is Oslo's river, as the Thames is to London and the Seine to Paris, just much smaller. Its waterfalls are great assets that the more famous streams lack. The series of falls were harnessed in the 1840s to launch the industrial revolution in Norway and drive Oslo's explosive growth. A famous song from 1906 lauds the river as "the old and the grey". Once the City Council in 1990 declared the

Akerselva Environment Park, transformation into the riverside parklands began, while preserving the red-brick factories and the history of the labouring poor. The contrast between relaxation today by an idyllic riverside and the hard labour in those mills could not be greater. If you follow the river all the way upstream or down, you will pass 11 waterfalls and cross 50 bridges. And in the autumn, watch salmon run!



## GETTING THERE:

1. Grønland:  
All Metro Lines eastbound
2. Telthusbakken:  
Bus 34 or 54
3. Sagene/Arendalsgata:  
Bus 20, 37 or 54
4. Nydalen:  
Metro Lines 4 or 5
5. Teknisk Museum/  
Frysja/Stillatorvet:  
Bus 25 or 54







# HOVINBEKKEN

*Flows into Bjørvika/lower tract of Akerselva*

## AN AWARD-WINNING URBAN STREAM

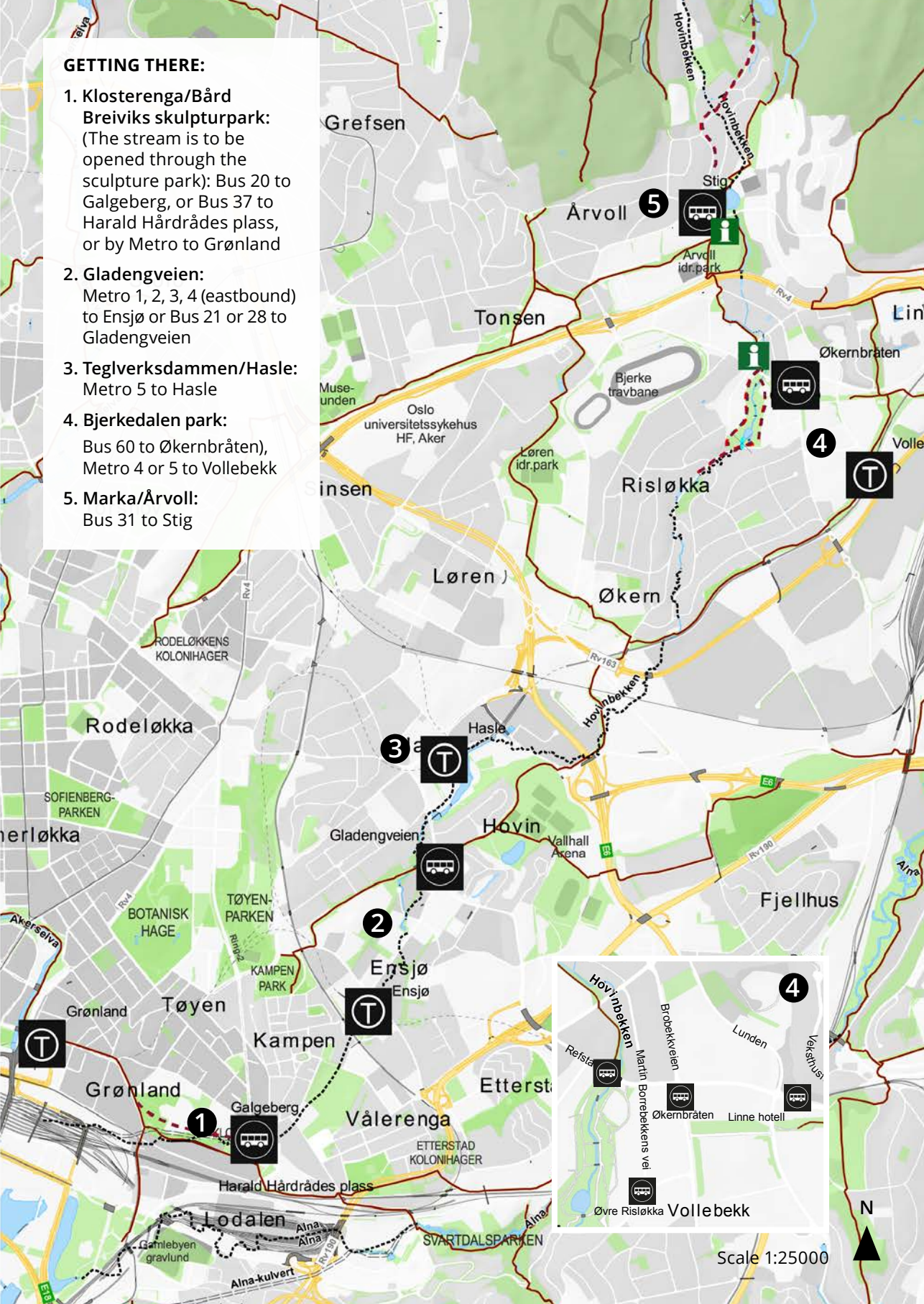
This brook has received a lot of attention from both municipal authorities and river-lovers, yet much of it still runs underground. There is a huge potential for further re-opening. The next is Klosterenga, the strip of parkland between Jordal and Grønland. Here the stream is to be raised up again, through Bård Breivik's sculpture park. The work to re-open the stream by the ice hockey hall, Jordal Amfi, is soon completed. In the past

few years, the City of Oslo has opened the waterway through the now so attractive Bjerkedalen, won awards for this, and for the rehabilitation of Teglverksdammen (Brickworks' Dam) at Hasle and downstream along Gladengveien. Daring re-openings, in districts that were dominated by industry and exhaust fumes. By contrast, a walk along the stream's upper reaches, from the suburb of Årvollen and into Lillomarka, gives a taste of Oslo's famous community forest, Marka.

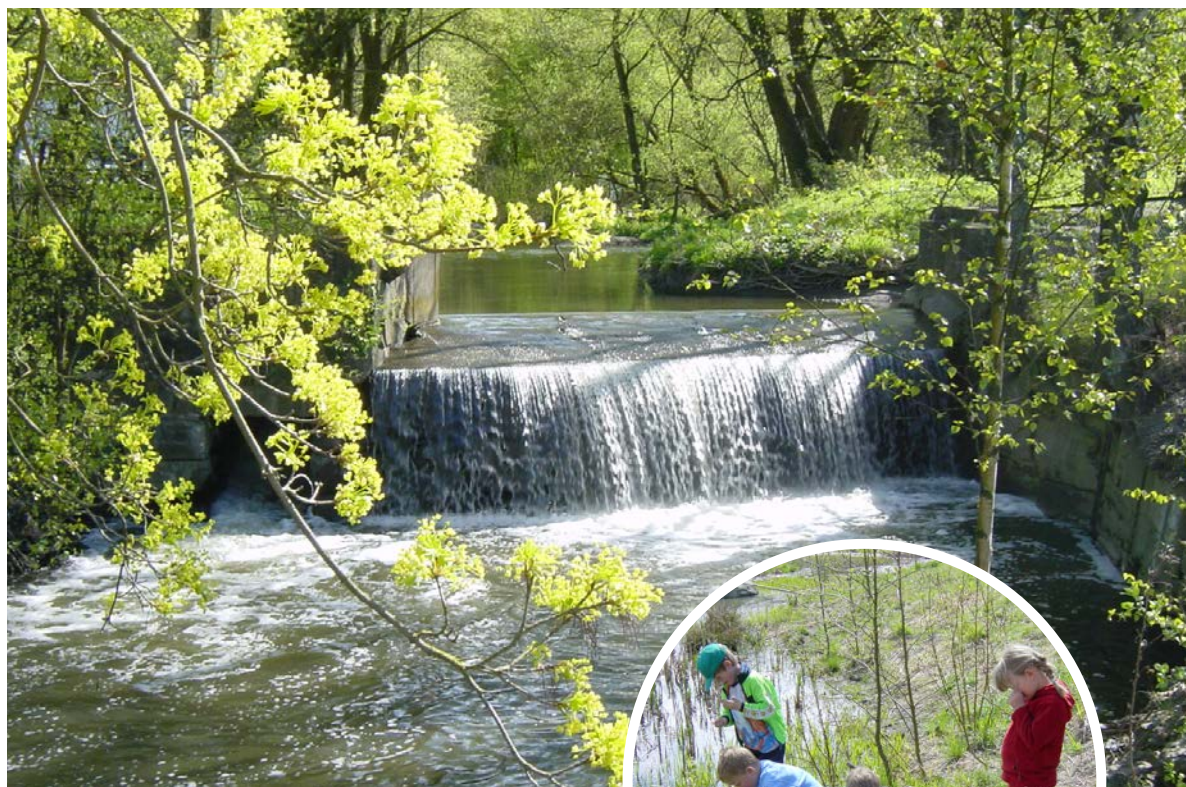


## GETTING THERE:

- 1. Klosterenga/Bård Breiviks skulpturpark:**  
(The stream is to be opened through the sculpture park): Bus 20 to Galgeberg, or Bus 37 to Harald Hårdrådes plass, or by Metro to Grønland
- 2. Gladengveien:**  
Metro 1, 2, 3, 4 (eastbound) to Ensjø or Bus 21 or 28 to Gladengveien
- 3. Teglverksdammen/Hasle:**  
Metro 5 to Hasle
- 4. Bjerkedalen park:**  
Bus 60 to Økernbråten), Metro 4 or 5 to Vollebekk
- 5. Marka/Årvoll:**  
Bus 31 to Stig







# ALNA

*Flows into Oslo Fjord at Kongshavn and the lake in Medieval Park*

## ALL NATURAL!

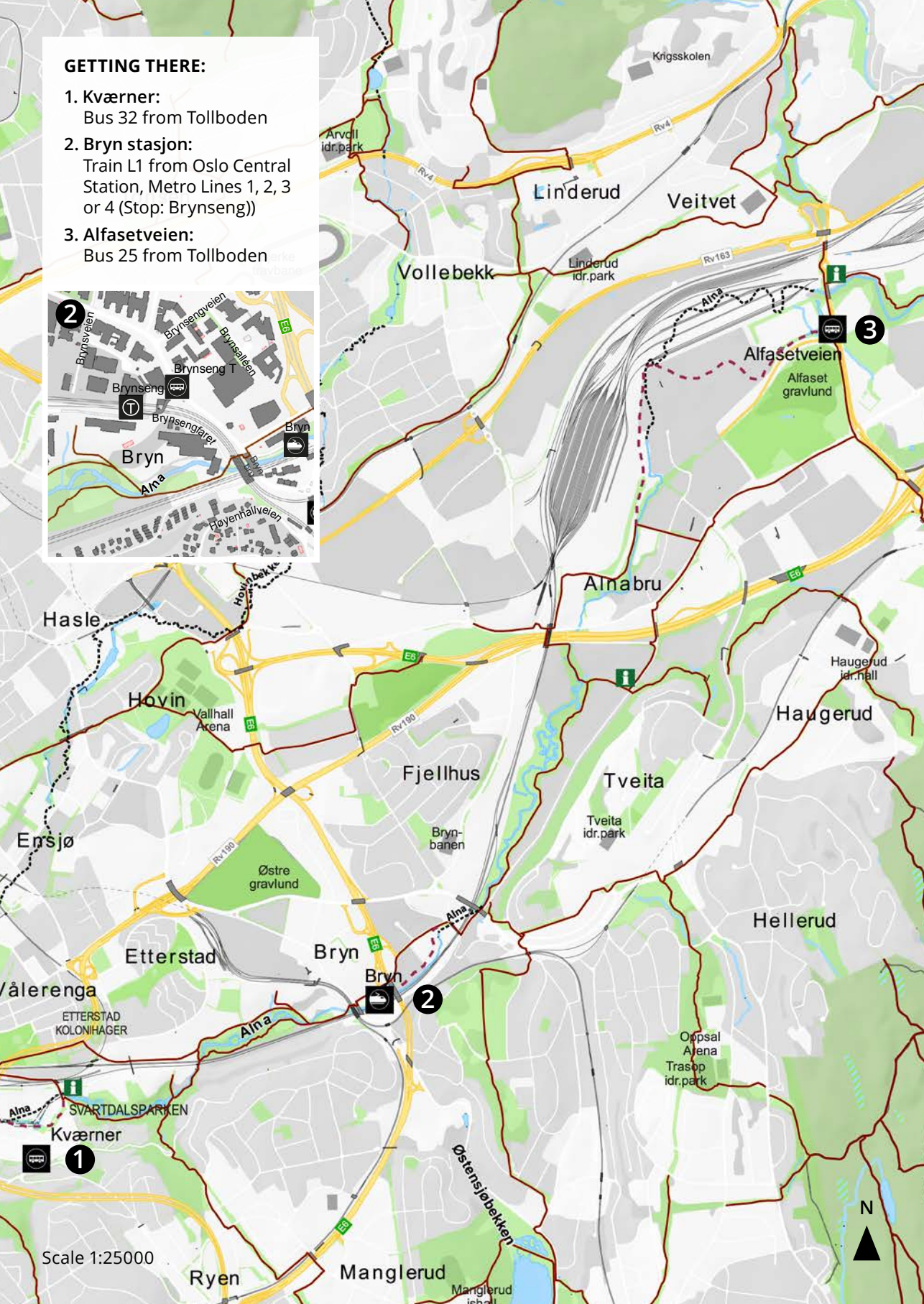
Alna is 15 kilometers long, making it the longest stream in Oslo's built-up area, hence maps on two pages! Historically it was Oslo's southern boundary. The City Council is currently evaluating a plan for returning the river to its original course into the lake in Medieval Park that replicates Oslo's shoreline from the Middle Ages, and further, out to Bjørvika.

Walking upstream, one comes upon the old forest in Svartdalen followed quickly by the suspension bridge along the steep Ekeberg fault line. Continue through Smalvollen where the river meanders, creating a rich wetland. South of Grorud town centre is the impressive Leirfossen, a 14 metre (46 foot) high waterfall. Good and particularly beautiful trails follow the river in sections, notably at Grorud.



## GETTING THERE:

1. Kværner:  
Bus 32 from Tollboden
2. Bryn stasjon:  
Train L1 from Oslo Central Station, Metro Lines 1, 2, 3 or 4 (Stop: Brynseng))
3. Alfasetveien:  
Bus 25 from Tollboden









### GETTING THERE:

#### 3. Alfasetveien:

Bus 25 from Tollboden

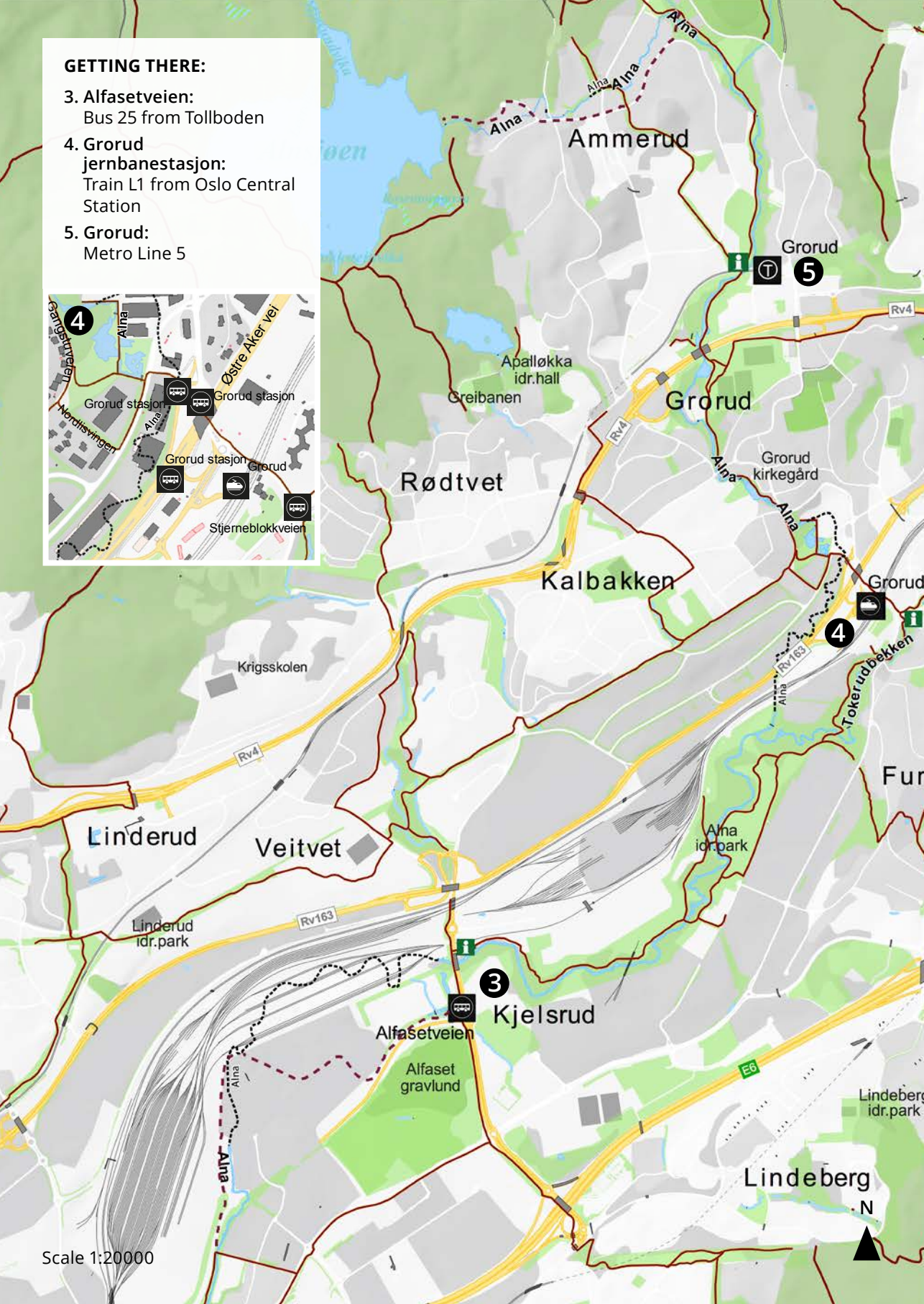
#### 4. Grorud

jernbanestasjon:

Train L1 from Oslo Central  
Station

#### 5. Grorud:

Metro Line 5



Scale 1:20000



# ØSTENSJØVANNET

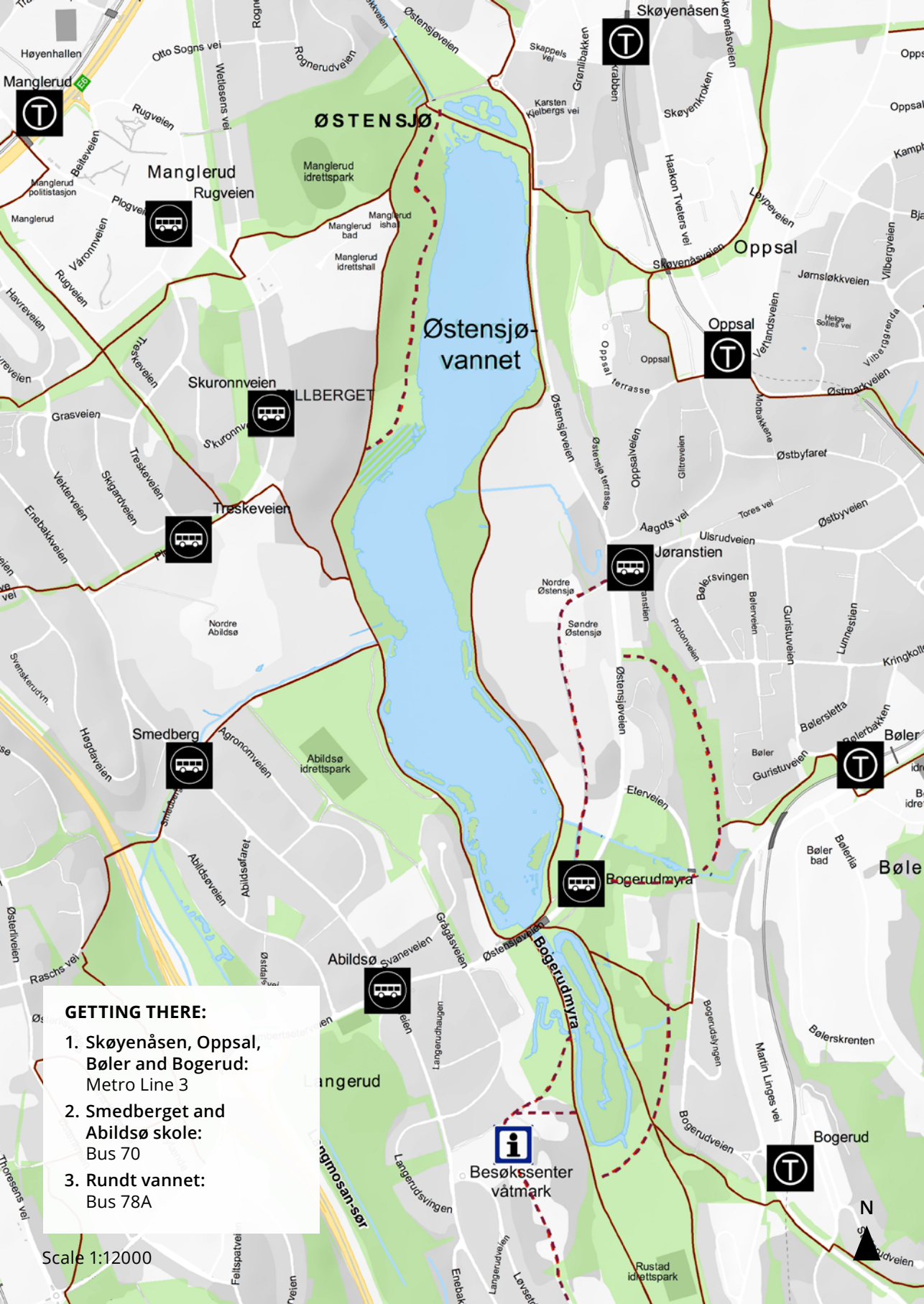
*(Lake Østensjø)*

## FOR THE PROTECTION OF BIRDS

Lake Østensjø and the parklands are both beautiful and bountiful with an exceptional degree of biodiversity. The lake was declared a nature reserve in 1992. 230 bird species have been recorded. Each Spring, the lake and its surroundings are packed with nesting birds. There is a bird hide on the western side. Since 1983, the Friends of Østensjøvannet have looked after the area to preserve the

precious habitat. The visitors' centre, Våtmark Oslo (Wetlands Oslo) is one of the Ministry for the Environment's certified centres for disseminating an understanding and enjoyment of the natural environment, specialising in the ecological value of wetlands. 8500 pupils from schools in Oslo had classes here in 2018. There is an easy footpath around the lake. The parklands receive 250 000 visitors each year.





**GETTING THERE:**

1. Skøyenåsen, Oppsal, Bøler and Bogerud:  
Metro Line 3
2. Smedberget and Abildsø skole:  
Bus 70
3. Rundt vannet:  
Bus 78A

Scale 1:12000



# LJANSELVA

*Flows into Fiskevollbukta (Fiskevoll Bay)*

## GREEN SPACE, OLD FOREST AND HISTORIC REMAINS

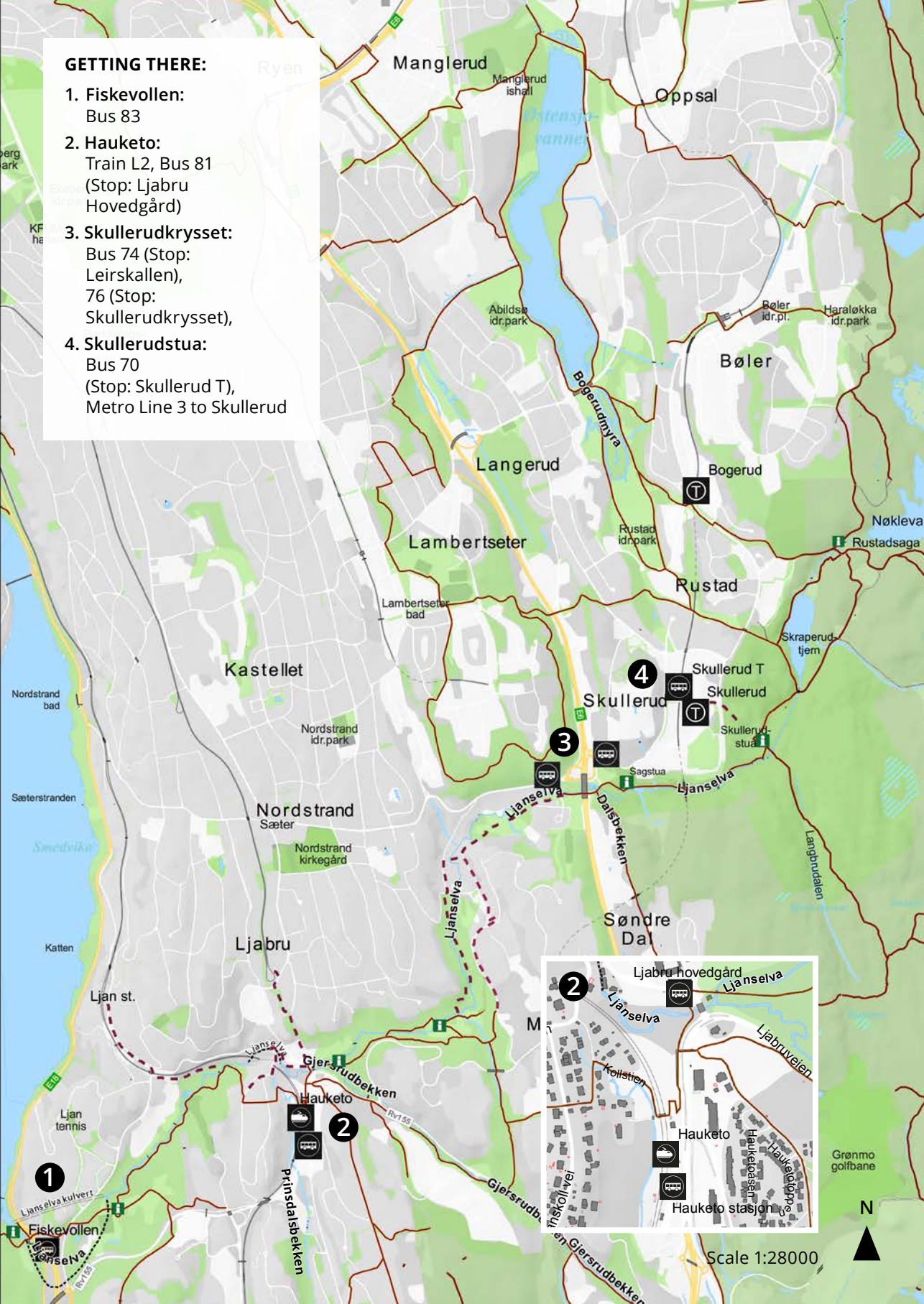
A walk along Ljanselva is a walk through part of Oslo's history. The river has powered corn mills and saw mills for centuries. In Liadalen you will find the remains of a gunpowder factory, smithies, a handcrafts school and the dancing floor where hundreds of people gathered on summer evenings. Ljanselva has been re-directed through Ljanskollen which has to be climbed to re-join the river at Hauketo

where Ljabru Manor stands. The whole trail is well served with informative signs about the river's natural and cultural heritage. The biodiversity found over short distances makes it an ideal place for outdoor schooling. This is largely thanks to the zoning regulations that have reserved a belt 100 metres wide on each side of the stream with one exception, the traffic junction at Hauketo where you may still view the stone-arch bridge, built in 1804, as the traffic roars over.



## GETTING THERE:

1. Fiskevollen:  
Bus 83
2. Hauketo:  
Train L2, Bus 81  
(Stop: Ljabru  
Hovedgård)
3. Skullerudkrysset:  
Bus 74 (Stop:  
Leirskallen),  
76 (Stop:  
Skullerudkrysset),
4. Skullerudstua:  
Bus 70  
(Stop: Skullerud T),  
Metro Line 3 to Skullerud



Scale 1:28000







# GJERSJØELVA

*Flows into Oslo Fjord at Ljansbruket*

## RIVER HISTORY WITH A WORKING MILL AND PIT SAW

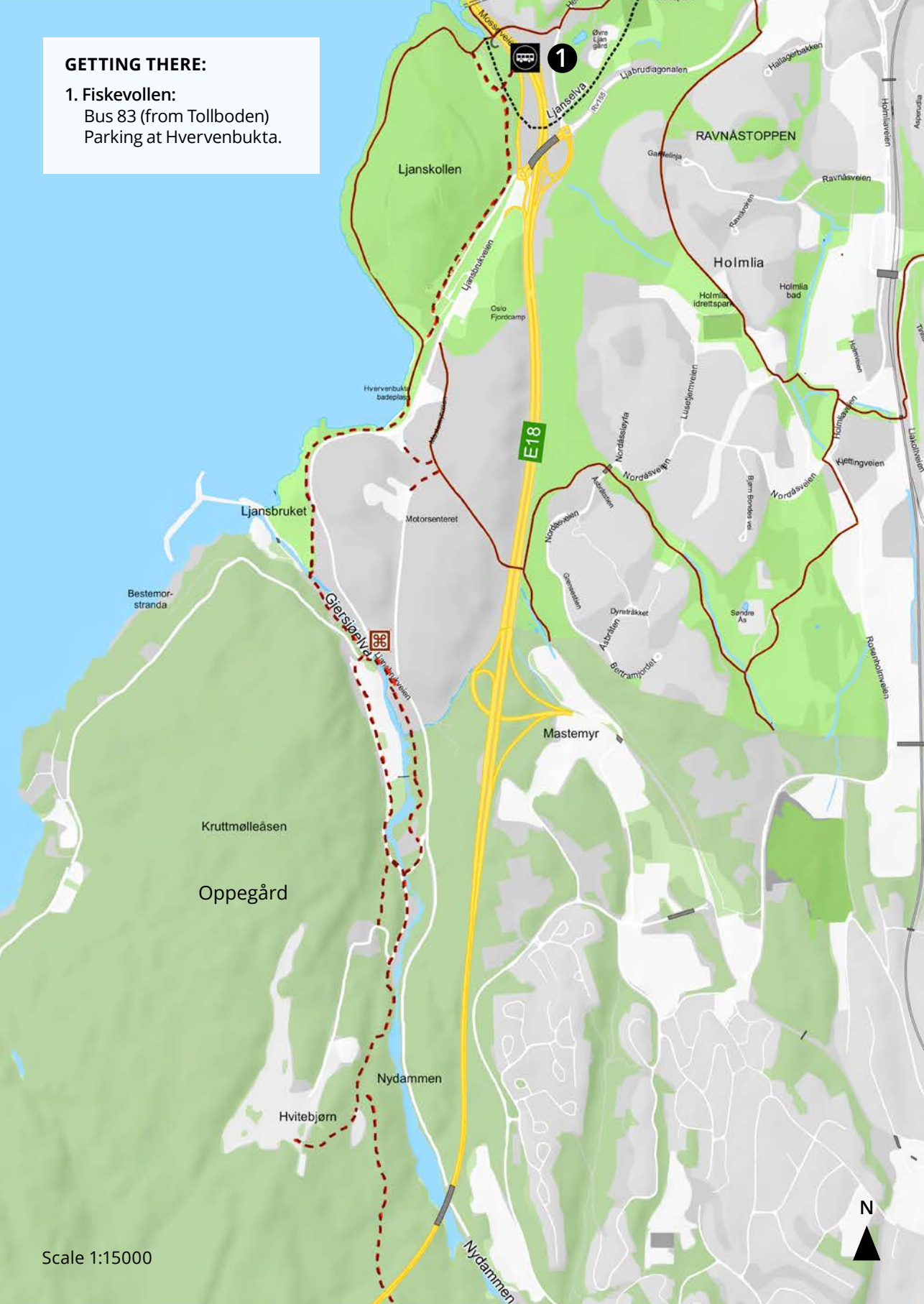
By the river which divides Oslo from the borough of Oppegård to the south, you can visit a centre with demonstrations of water power in action. By this beautiful stream, not far from its mouth, lie both the ruins of old mills and a reconstructed pit saw and quern. The pit saw brought timber milling to Norway in the 1500s. By exporting sawn timber, jobs and enormous wealth were created.

Today, an enthusiastic band of volunteers is recreating the old times, and improving the stream for fish running up the river. There is also the Long House, workers' accommodation built in Russian style. We are not far from one of Oslo Fjord's best bathing spots. Just a kilometre from the river mouth you will find traces of the manor Stubljan, home to a timber baron. A wonderful place to combine history and recreation.



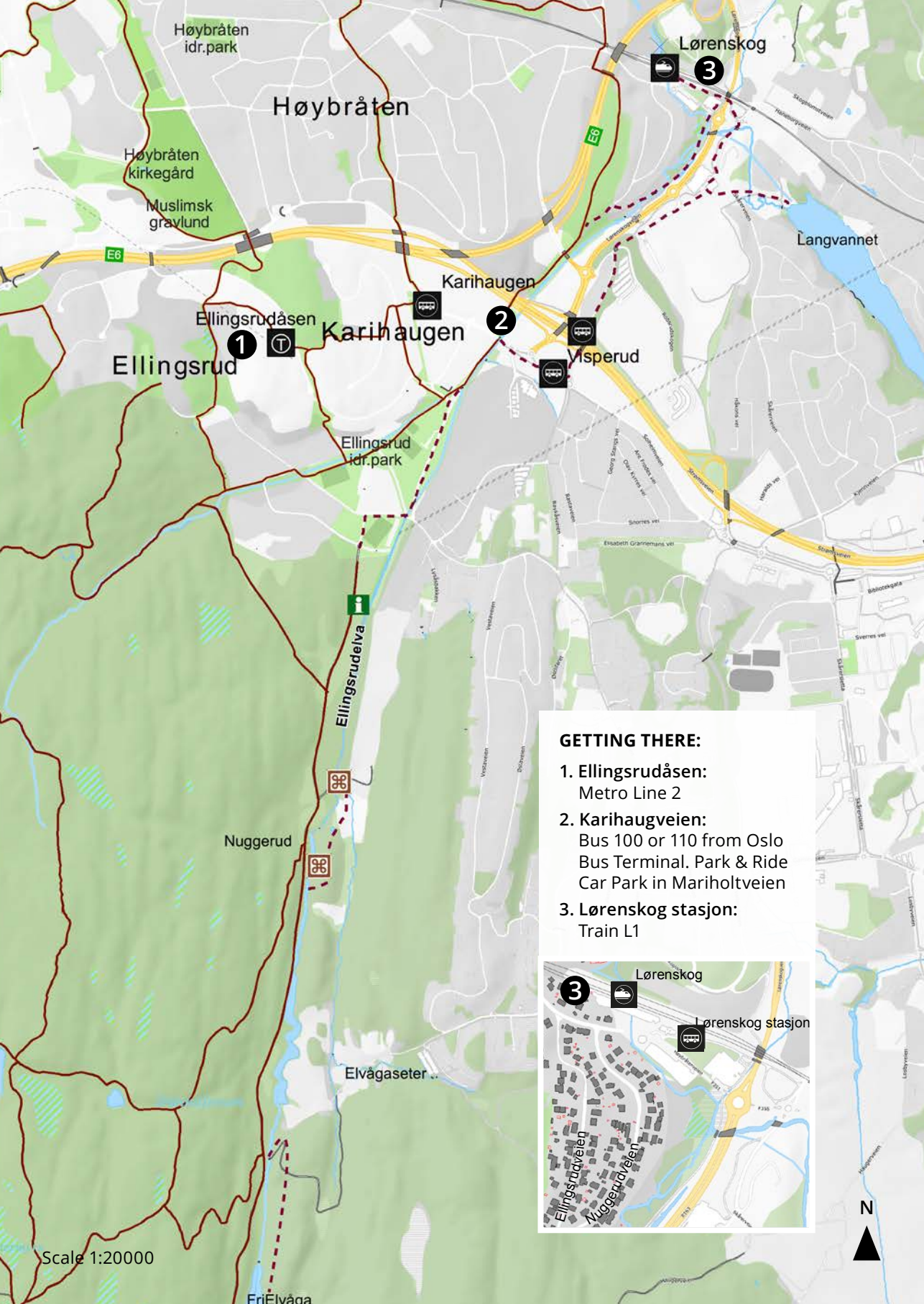
**GETTING THERE:**

1. Fiskevollen:  
Bus 83 (from Tollboden)  
Parking at Hvervenbukta.









### GETTING THERE:

1. Ellingsrudåsen:  
Metro Line 2
2. Karihaugveien:  
Bus 100 or 110 from Oslo  
Bus Terminal. Park & Ride  
Car Park in Mariholtveien
3. Lørenskog stasjon:  
Train L1



Scale 1:20000



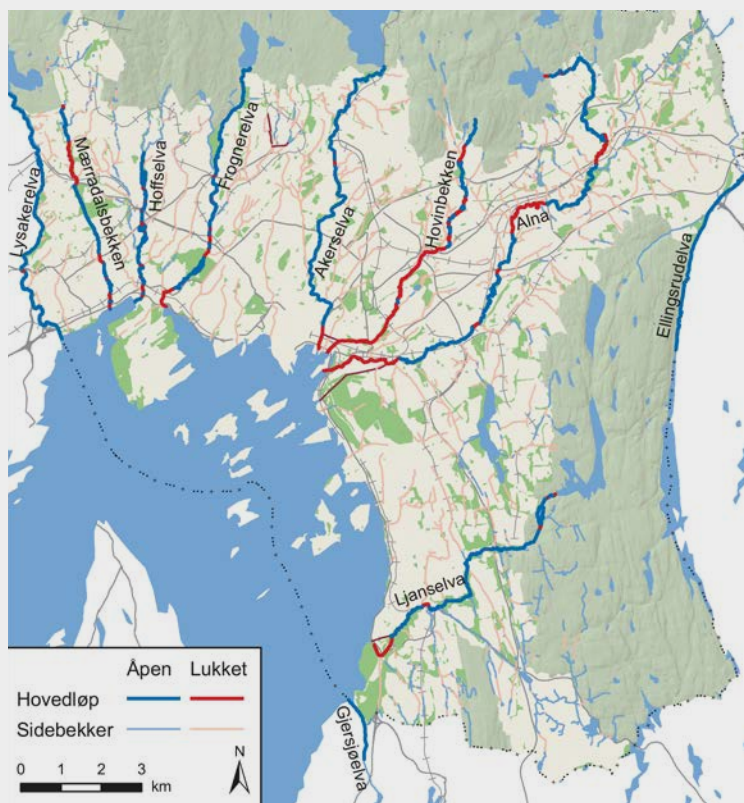
## THE CITY OF OSLO IS RE-OPENING OSLO'S RIVERS AND STREAMS

"There lies a land by the endless snow, in rifts alone is there life to show," wrote the Norwegian poet Bjørnstjerne Bjørnson. "In rifts" – that is where the rivers and streams run. It is here people originally settled; Oslo in the Middle Ages lay between Hovinbekken and Alna.

Industrialisation and increasing population turned our rivers and streams into drains polluted with waste. The water stank, and could be poisonous. To remove the danger, many of our waterways were buried in underground pipes.

Over the past decades attitudes have changed. The water in our rivers and streams is now clearer and cleaner. As in many other cities, clean running water has taken on a new role in Oslo. Riversides have become vital recreation areas, and green spaces that support a wealth of bird animal and plant life.

Oslo has been chosen as the Green Capital of



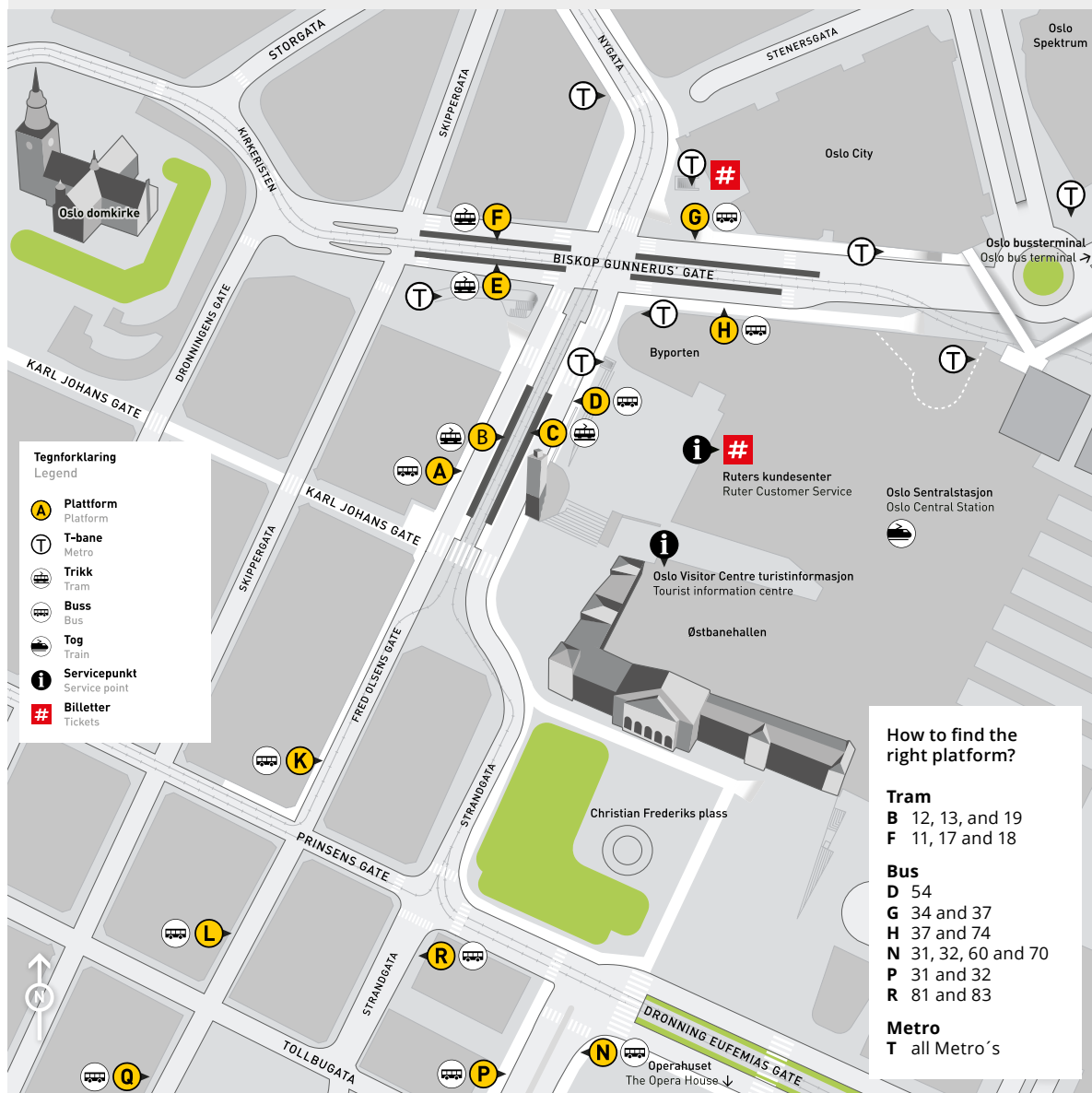
Europe for 2019. One reason given is that Oslo has begun to re-open its buried rivers and streams. While at least a quarter of streams in the ten catchments remain buried, Oslo has an ambitious programme for re-opening them. And Oslo River Forum is a driving force. Our current goal is to have the City mandate a 20-meter wide belt along our major streams, and 12

meters from the tributaries, as open areas. We have to protect our riverside parks!

The re-opening of rivers and streams is also important in a climate perspective. In steadily wilder and wetter weather, open rivers and streams cope better with greater volumes of water, so that damage on buildings and infrastructure is minimized.



# Ruter's public transport hub Jernbanetorget/Tollboden/Oslo S



More information and travel planner:  
[ruter.no](http://ruter.no) or the app RuterReise

**Ruter#**

**Editors:**

Trine Johnsen, Julie M. Løddesøl, John E. Tibballs  
Updated to March 2019

**Sources:**

"Elvelangs, Ida Hvoslef m.fl Aschehoug 2004, "Blågrønn hovedstad, Jubel og gråt over Oslos elver og bekker", Oslo Elveforum 2010, "Bjerkedalen Park" Sidsel Andersen og Rainer Stange, Dronninga landskap 2018.  
[www.osloelveforum.no](http://www.osloelveforum.no)

**Photos:**

Oslo Elveforum

**This booklet is prepared by Oslo Elveforum**

Thank you to The Savings Bank Foundation DNB for generous financial support. Thanks also to The City of Oslo's Water Department for the mapping; Oslo Elveforum has added local tracks and footpaths. Our thanks also to our groups of volunteers.

This guide is provided without charge.

Oslo Elveforum is a partner in Oslo European Green Capital 2019.



Oslo kommune