

= Ringerike Line =

The Ringerike Line (Norwegian : Ringeriksbanen or Ringeriksbana) is a proposed 40 @-@ kilometre (25 mi) extension of the Bergen Line from Hønefoss to Sandvika , Norway . It would reduce travel from Oslo to Bergen by 60 kilometres (37 mi) and 50 minutes . Currently trains from the Bergen Line to Oslo must run via Drammen on the Randsfjord Line and the Drammen Line , or via Roa on the Roa ? Hønefoss Line and the Gjøvik Line .

The project was presented as part of the original proposal of the Bergen Line when approved by Parliament in 1894 , but due to the narrow gauge on the Drammen Line at the time , a temporary solution via Roa was chosen instead . Later proposals have been launched , and parliament has voted over it in 1954 , 1978 , 1984 and 1992 ; only the last being passed , but not followed up by funding , and the Norwegian National Rail Administration has not allocated any date to start construction ; detailed plans have however been produced .

= = Route = =

The line would branch off from the Asker Line just west of Sandvika Station , and continue mostly in tunnel to Hønefoss Station , with an intermediate station at Sundvollen . While only single track , sufficient passing loops every six to eight kilometers , each at 750 metres (2 @,@ 460 ft) , would be built allowing 600 metres (2 @,@ 000 ft) long freight trains . Capacity would be eight trains per hour operating at 200 kilometres per hour (120 mph) permitting both freight and passenger trains through 22 @.@ 5 tonne axle load and maximum 1 @.@ 2 % gradient ; electrification would be at the Norwegian standard 15 kV 16 2 ? 3 Hz AC . In 2002 a route over Åsa was preferred to a route over Kroksund by parliament ; despite less passenger potential for local traffic and NOK 700 million more expensive , this would give a smaller environmental impact . Travel time for the quickest trains from Hønefoss to Oslo would be 30 minutes , compared to 60 minutes by bus or 95 minutes by current trains .

The Norwegian National Rail Administration has proposed a number of upgrades to the Bergen Line that would allow total travel time between the termini to reduce to four and a half hours . The Ringerike Line is seen as the hallmark of this attempt , that was first launched by the director of NSB in 1954 ; sixty years later travel time remains at six and a half hours . The project is estimated to cost NOK 7 billion , of which NOK 4 billion would be for the line .

Prior to 1989 there were four local trains in each direction from Oslo to Hønefoss ; followed by on rush hour service each , but this single service has since been terminated ; mainly due to quicker travel times by coaches . The Ringerike Line would allow the Oslo Commuter Rail once again to serve Ringerike ; other places served usually have one hourly service , with additional services in rush hour . Reducing travel time from Hønefoss to Oslo to 30 minutes would probably cause larger population growth in Ringerike .

= = History = =

Initial proposals for the Bergens Line route went from Hønefoss via Sandvika to Oslo Vestbanestasjon (Oslo V) , but the proposal met technical and political restrictions . At the time Norway had two rail gauges : 1 @,@ 435 mm (4 ft 8 1 ? 2 in) standard gauge and narrow gauge 3 ft 6 in (1 @,@ 067 mm) . The former was taking predominance over the latter , with among others the Voss Line , the initial stage of the Bergen Line from Bergen to Voss , being converted from narrow to standard gauge . Drammenbanen , that connected Sandvika to Oslo , was narrow gauge , as was most of the rest of the western network , including the Vestfold Line ; hundreds of kilometers of railway would have to be converted .

On the other side of Oslo , the North Line (now named the Gjøvik Line) was being built as standard gauge ; it was considered the new mainline northwards , and was to be connected to the mainline through Gudbrandsdalen . By building a branch line from Roa to Hønefoss , the Bergens Line could be connected to Nordbanen , allowing standard gauge trackage all the way to Oslo

Østbanestasjon (Oslo Ø) . This also gave another advantage , as Oslo Ø was seen as superior to Oslo V ; the latter only served limited commuter routes west of town while Oslo Ø was the main station for long @-@ distance trains to Trondheim , as well as Gothenburg and Stockholm in Sweden , with whom Norway was in a union with at the time . Only by terminating at Oslo Ø would direct transfer to trains to other parts of the country be possible .

When parliament passed the building of the Bergen Line in 1894 , the Roa ? Hønefoss branch line was made part of the plans ; but the line was given a separate name indicating that the Bergen Line would continue from Hønefoss to Oslo in a more direct route . But after the finish of the Bergen Line , other important mainline routes , in particular the Dovre Line , Sørland Line and Nordland Line , combined with the effort to convert narrow gauge line , took precedence . Ideas for the additional construction of the Ringerike Line were pressed by commercial interests in Ringerike in both 1890 and 1906 , but failed both times .

In 1955 the Bergen businessperson Fritz Rieber launched an idea for the shortening of Bergensbanen ; the Ulriken Tunnel through the Bergen mountains , electrification from Voss to Bergen , and the construction of the Ringerike Line . Private financing would be provided through a dedicated limited company taking a surcharge on tickets , equal to the reduction in fare induced by the shorter line ; within twenty years the debt would be covered . Passed by parliament in 1955 , a year later they had changed their minds and only the investments around Bergen were supported ; removing the support for Ringerike . Prime Minister Trygve Bratteli commented that private debt financing would have to compete with the debt taken up by the government on other railway projects , since politicians had to see the national economy as a whole , and that private financing would not allow more lines to be built . The cost was estimated at NOK 100 million .

New proposals were debated in parliament in 1978 , and again in 1984 , but failing to be passed . The final decision to build the line was taken in 1992 as part of a political swap between the Labour Party and the Socialist Left Party ; the Labour Party would support the line if the Socialist Left Party would support building European route E16 via the Lærdal Tunnel and Valdres , instead of via Hol or Eidfjord . Initially the agreement involved the completion of the Ringerike Line in 1997 , but as of 2008 no date or funding has been set . Director of the Rail Administration , Steinar Killi , stated in 2008 that the period 2010 @-@ 19 would be a natural time for completion , but only if more overall funding for railway infrastructure is provided . As either an alternative or supplement to the line , expansion of European Road E16 from Sandvika to Hønefoss has been proposed . It would involve increasing from two to four lanes on the first 17 kilometres (11 mi) from Bjørum to Hvervenmoen , estimating to cost NOK 3 @.@ 5 billion ; local politicians have suggested toll road financing .

The Ministry of Transport and Communications started an evaluation of the Ringerike Line , carried out by the National Rail Administration , in 2006 . The first edition was completed in 2009 , but was found to be insufficient , resulting in the process being restarted . A new report was published in June 2011 . In September 2012 , the ministry concluded that also the second report was insufficient and that it would be discarded . There were two main concerns with the report . Firstly , it was based on a single @-@ track line which would not be built to the standards of high @-@ speed rail . The ministry stated that all new railway plans in Norway were to have double track and be optimized for high @-@ speed rail . Secondly , the report had a simplified economic analysis which was not sufficient to be used for political evaluation . The result of the discard was that the planning of E16 was no longer tied to the planning of the railway .