

LIFELINE · Varberg (SE)

Varberg's closeby periphery is today an aggregation of housing units connected by an efficient road infrastructure. Trädlyckevägen, Österängsvägen, Vastkustvägen and Värnamovägen work as the main accesses from Österleden to the historical heart of the city. However, these *lines* are not liveable lines, as they do not work as real meeting places for the residential areas. They are high-speed routes for cars and bicycles, but not living streets for the community.

During the second half of the 20th Century, Varberg developed a modernist-like urban layout, prioritizing the separation of transport modes, the monofunctionalism of each urban piece and the distancing of the urban elements according to security and hygienic standards. These long distances between the elements caused a clear sense of segregation, insecurity and, subsequently, the emptiness of the public space. No eyes are on the street, as no houses directly face these lines.

However, if we look carefully at the road infrastructure, it is worth noting that both Trädlyckevägen and Österängsvägen do not have direct connection from the E6 highway. In consequence, and despite its road-like use, these accesses might be considered future living streets, bringing people together and giving a second-life to Håstens Torg: a new center in the center. Our project aims to give a new character to Trädlyckevägen, transforming it into a living and active street towards Varberg's city center, a LIFELINE.

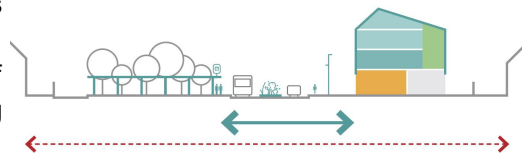


MAIN STRATEGIES

In order to transform a highway-like axis into a street, five main intervention goals are proposed:

1. Closer distances

Liveability and activity in cities are a direct consequence of *narrow distances*. Short distances multiply the possibilities of interaction between people and, paradoxically, increase the sense of security. To do so, our project proposes a new living façade along Trädlyckevägen, recovering a living frontline for this street and saving the consolidated vegetation of the area. *Liveable cities are played in short distances.*



2. More mixed uses and higher density

Modern movement developed a monofunctional urbanism, spreading housing, leisure and industrial areas around the territory. Today we acknowledge that, as in the historic centers, mix-used programmes provoke less necessary movements, more social interaction and, therefore, increase live quality. Housing, storage, retail, offices, public facilities and production can be integrated in the same typology, thus reinterpreting the existing typologies. Finally, the project highlights mixed uses by strategically adding more density at the edge of Trädlyckevägen, because enhancing *liveability is a consequence of people living along the street.*

3. Better connections: grid-like configuration

Karlberg, Trädlyckan and Håsten were originally designed in "cul-de-sac" closed-ends road structure. Although bicycles and pedestrians gradually produced a soft grid-structure within the green areas, paths were separated 150m. Our proposal aims to consolidate and improve this grid-structure around Trädlyckevägen by extending the existing sidewalks of the neighbourhoods and green areas, making them reach the new street. The result recalls Varberg's city center scale, with streets every 60m.

4. Reinfostering centralities

Varberg’s periphery already has a number of ‘micro centralities’ located at the main crossroads. Håstens Torg, at the meeting point of Trädlyckevägen and Äckregårdsvägen, concentrates today a supermarket, restaurants, health center, religious services, bank office and a petrol station. A large car park enables easy access from people around. Our project aims to strengthen this centrality by activating a participatory process to rethink the large car-park and to include *new uses in a new public facility* facing Trädlyckevägen. Along with this major (new) center, other ‘micro centralities’ are proposed, in connection with the entry to the cemetery-park, the edge of Trädlyckan, the bus stops or the existing community squares. A vibrant street made of micro nodes.



View of Håstens Torg

5. Prioritizing soft and sustainable modes of transport

Active mobility

■ **Multiplying at-grade crossings**

It is necessary to multiply ways of crossing Trädlyckevägen in order to promote the use by pedestrians and to induce a low-speed character of the route. At-grade crossings are a simple yet effective way of reclaiming a car-oriented line for pedestrians.

■ **Last-mile intermodality**

Bike and electric scooter parkings are located alongside bus stops and in retail areas to ensure they are the easiest option for the last mile movement.

Public transport

■ **Bus stops as urban connectors**

Bus stops are thought as linear elements that foster the connection between neighborhoods and the street, offering shelter and lightning with an appealing landmark design. Bus stops thus work as secure connections from the domestic scale to Trädlyckevägen.

■ **Håstens Torg as a ‘micro hub’.** Along with the transformation of the square and car-park into a living center, we advocate for a micro-hub of mobility configured by a new bus interchange.

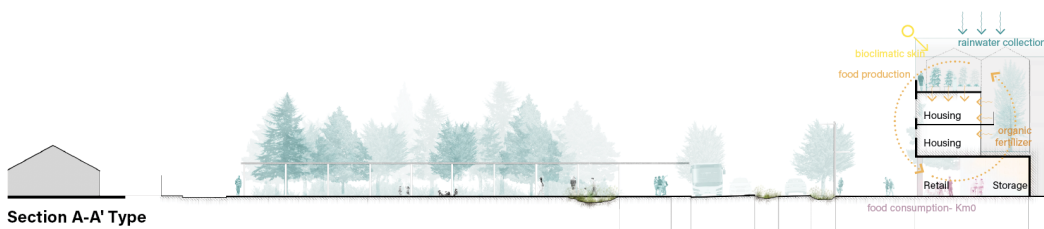
Motorised vehicles

■ **Human scale intersections**

Roundabouts provide easy crossing of cars without stops. However, the large circular shape of this engineering solution does not usually go hand in hand with the more direct itineraries of people. We claim a roundabouts-free Trädlyckevägen, where pedestrians and bikes have fast and straight connections.

■ **One-time parking**

A concentrated, underground parking allows for more building and public space, while promoting pedestrian flows between several destinations at Trädlyckevägen.



CO-CREATION PROCESS

Building a community <=> shaping a place

Public involvement is key: building a thriving community will shape the place, and vice versa.

To do so, the stakeholders will be organised in two groups: a **core group**, which will offer technical support to the process, and a **co-creation group** formed by all kinds of civic actors, which will decide on key issues for the future of the place.

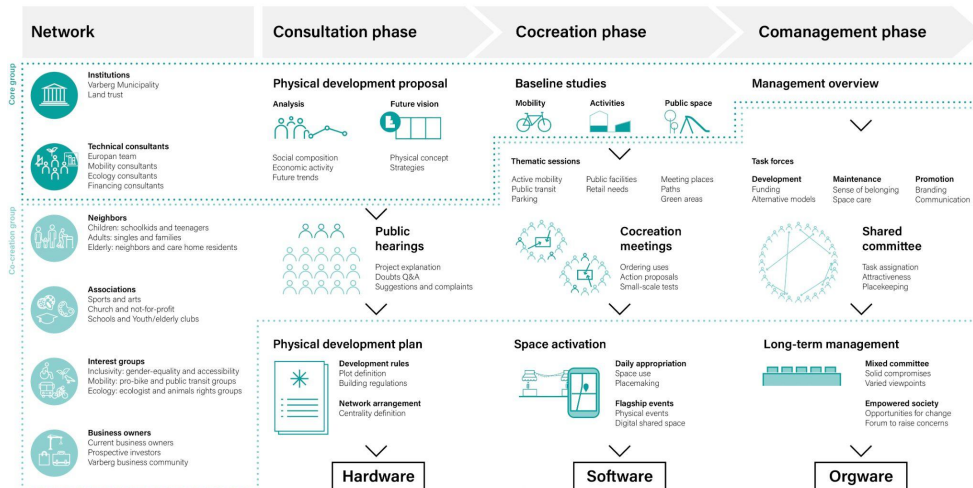
The process has three phases:

- **Consultation phase:** where physical developments are presented by the core group to the public, resulting in the final configuration of the 'Hardware', the physical design.
- **Cocreation phase:** where under the counseling of the core group, the stakeholders will propose the activities and uses they want in the area.
- **Comanagement phase:** the stakeholders will take over the management of the area, by collaborating for its proper development and maintenance.

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The goal is to have an increasing participation of the local stakeholders, making them more involved in every stage, until they can manage the area almost autonomously.

In doing so, the neighbours will develop a sense of ownership and pride over the place, which will enhance the ties between the network. Therefore, the result will not be a space, but a place - and not a neighbourhood, but a community.



PHASING: A PROJECT MADE OF SMALL PROJECTS

The transformation of Trädlyckevägen could be done in different phases organized in five main interventions:

Phase 1. Soft intervention. First steps in the project will focus on traffic calming, multiplying crossings for pedestrians, narrowing lane width and lowering speed. The results of the participatory process for the renewal of Håstens Torg will be translated into ephemeral interventions in the public space.

Phase 2. Infrastructure changes. In this phase major works on urbanization and lanes are consolidated. New sidewalks, bike lanes, bus stops and a water system are built. Roundabouts are transformed into normal ad-grade crossings for pedestrians. The idea is to transform a segregated Trädlyckevägen into a hybrid multi-use street, where people necessarily come together in a pacified environment.

Phase 3. New urban centre. The new centre is aimed at providing new urbanity to this place, i.e., a rich interrelationship between different urban things. Along with the co-creation process a multifunctional public space for the community, a new mix-use public facility, new housing and civic centre are erected in this phase.

Phase 4. Street densification. During the last phase of the project new mix-used buildings are built along the Håsten neighborhood and other strategic corners. The idea is that new dwellings, shops, storage and productive greenhouse consolidates Trädlyckevägen as the new street.

BUILDING TYPOLOGIES. Stacking the existing and adding life

Despite the large variety of housing typologies at Varberg's periphery, most of them do not incorporate storage or covered car-park within the same building. In turn, today it is very common to find blank facades from storages blocking the views and causing insecurity to pedestrians.

The new buildings at Trädlyckevägen are a hybrid new typology, stacking storage spaces and housing, but also adding active ground-floors and productive uses at different levels. This solution limits the land occupation of the new uses but, at the same time, clearly contributes to the liveability of Trädlyckevägen.

SUSTAINABLE STRATEGIES. Enhancing the natural values of the place

Trädlyckevägen will be not only a new street but it can also work as a laboratory to achieve sustainable goals.

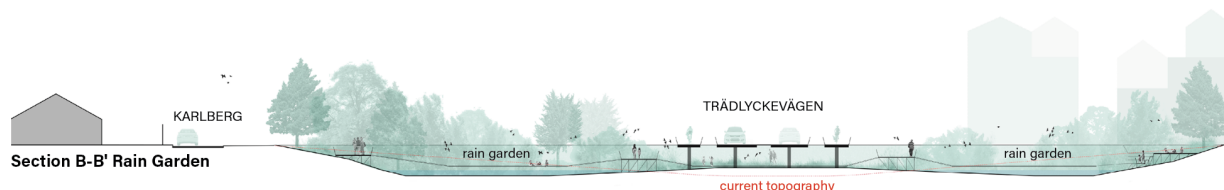
A linear park 970 meters long

The southern part Trädlyckevägen is consolidated as a *new linear park of 970m long working as a green corridor and leisure area for the city*. The areas with lush vegetation are kept untouched, as a rich area for biodiversity. New plantations of trees complete the empty areas and improve the green corridor between Brunnsberg and Nedregården / Östra Träslöv.

Sustainable draining

The new linear park manages to handle heavy rainfall and floods by transforming the existing -and isolated- underpasses as new rain gardens, compensating the non-pervious soil occupied by new buildings. With a slight modification of its actual topography and the removal of the asphalt, these pedestrian underpasses are transformed into biodiversity nexuses. This transformation is possible because all the pedestrian and road connexions are handled at the city level.

In these rain gardens, the water purification of the surrounding houses is carried out. At the same time, water from the rain gardens can be used for the irrigation of greenhouses on the rooftops, creating a natural cyclic process which minimizes the environmental footprint.



Building orientation and energy production

Buildings are located north of the street, in order to ensure adequate sunlight in public space. New porticoes with shops will protect pedestrians from rain and allow the location of terraces and restaurants. Clean energy production -geothermal, solar panels or wind turbines- will be incorporated into the architecture.

Circular economy and local production

Food production spaces in buildings, food retail, selective waste disposal and biomass energy and compost generation lead to a circular goods flow. New greenhouses will be located at the rooftops, stimulating km0 food production

As a result, Trädlyckevägen's territory and resources will reconnect the city with the cycles and rhythms of the living nature. To sum up, Trädlyckevägen's character will regenerate:

from infrastructure into street // from unoccupied to livable // from anthropocene to future
from city to nature // from nature to city // from speedline to lifeline

On these sites, the impetus for the transformation comes from the territory and from the use of all the resources (natural, ecological, infrastructural) to regenerate them, using the evolution of the networks integrating a new logic of mobility as a starter for change.

In sum, the holistic and integrative approach of the project creates a human-scale realm that brings the area back to life. Therefore, we are offering Varberg the **LIFELINE** it needs to keep growing as a vibrant and liveable city.