

VARBERG FOR LIFE

Varberg

Varberg is a city of creativity, play and everything the beautiful coast has to offer. With this project, we want to celebrate everything that is Varberg, by creating new creative meeting spaces, new ways of handling natural resources and letting inhabitants themselves be innovative with new ways of living.

As we have worked with developing a strategy for the area along Trädlyckevägen we have been intrigued by the potential conflict between Varberg being a growing municipality, yet a city people are moving to because of its small city scale qualities. How can these two directions be joined with a densification for a growing city?

NK608

New housing areas and neighbourhoods, such as Östra Träslöv, are already planned to be developed in Varberg. In our proposal we see a great opportunity in improving the already built environment. Our proposal is adding new values through densification and transformation of Trädlyckevägen. The proposal aims to turn the closed off zone into a thriving recreational stretch, connecting the neighbourhoods of Håsten and Karlberg, the planned development site Östra Träslöv and the city centre.

We see potential in using the area along Trädlyckevägen as a testing ground for the municipality for new ways of developing a neighbourhood. As the land is owned by the municipality, it makes it easier to test new ownership structures and regulations. In our project we want to see Trädlyckevägen and Håstens Torg as an important node and starting point for a circular development of Varberg.

Metabolism

Our physical urban environment is constantly changing - mutating and transforming both itself as well as the relationship between its parts. Striving for sustainable development means striving for a constantly metabolising built and natural environment. This includes how we re-use building materials, create space for natural processes and create adaptable and resilient cities for the future.

In the process we have been interested in understanding what role circularity can play in rethinking how we plan, build and live in our cities. And to understand the importance of how culture and nature is interconnected.

Strategy plan

Trädlyckevägen is a unique opportunity to promote a new strategy for circular development in Varberg. With its key location in the city today, it will only become more important with the new developments of Östra Träslöv to connect the inner city, residential areas and future developments. The vision promotes non-motorized transport, sharing, re-use of materials and ecosystem services. These values are the organizing framework of new social meeting places.

The proposal is based on the principle of the 15-minute, providing the city's inhabitants with key programs within 15 minutes of travel by foot or bike. Håstens Torg is an important, and strategically well connected node in the urban network of Varberg.

A green spine

Varberg's lush green areas provide a unique living environment, with close proximity to a range of activities. With our proposal, these areas are connected and strengthened through a new biodiversity corridor along Trädlyckevägen. The multifunctional green spine invites to an easier flow of movement both along Trädlyckevägen as well as across the street, encouraging the movement between the northern and southern side of the street.

Climate change and heavy rainfall is one of the major challenges cities are battling with today. With better planned and connected urban nature, we can achieve a better climate adaptation, rainwater management, higher biodiversity and a more environmentally friendly city overall. The green spine creates spaces for ecosystem services that have both regulating and supporting services, as well as an added quality of life. The green spine is multifunctional and handles rainwater management and co2 reduction, regulates the microclimate and improves air quality.

The green spine incorporates many of the existing trees and green areas with the addition of a wider range of species to improve biodiversity and create a more varied urban nature. Larger green meeting spaces are placed in existing green areas and important green connections. These areas transform the greenery from closed-off and inaccessible zones, to new public spaces with smaller parks, green playgrounds and urban gardening areas. The green spine creates transparency to the street, making it safer for pedestrians and cyclists.

In the strategy we imagine an incorporated rainwater system, using water as a resource. Rainwater is collected, filtered and re-used for household use, in the new neighbourhood. In the public parks the rainwater has recreational qualities, in the form of rainbeds.

Mobility

The new bike and pedestrian pathways are incorporated in the green spine, creating a new experience for cyclist commuters, children walking to school and families buying groceries at Håstens Torg. Cyclist and pedestrian pathways are placed on both sides of Trädlyckevägen to encourage and facilitate safe mobility for non-motorised transport.

A major part of improving the mobility for all commuters, including cyclists, pedestrians, public transport and cars is to improve the visibility and transparency along Trädlyckevägen. The existing conditions have a clear separation between motor vehicles, pedestrians and cyclists with dense trees and bushes. With better transparency and connection between different modes of transport a safer mobility space is created that encourages people to walk and cycle. The bike paths on each side of the car road function as buffer zones between pedestrians and vehicles.

With new shared zones in important intersections, inhabitants are able to safely cross the street at additional points along Trädlyckevägen, stitching together the northern and southern side of the road.

Vegetation and rainwater harvesting is used as the framework for a new mobility space, bridging the gap between nature and the everyday life of Varberg's inhabitants.

Håstens Torg

Our vision is to transform Håstens Torg into an open and central meeting place for the whole city, a new important node that becomes key as the city grows. Håstens Torg becomes an attractive and functional space for teenagers, families with children as well as the elderly. The proposal is based on the existing conditions and programs, working to preserve as much on the site as possible and transforming it into a dynamic, green public space.

With a new recycling and reparation hub, the new square promotes creativity and sustainable living. The recycling and reparation hub will become a creative heart in Varberg that offers craft workshops for children and youth, an exhibition space to share new creations and a new material library for the whole city where inhabitants can contribute with materials and items no longer of use.

NK608

Håstens Torg is framed by an active edge, promoting the existing small businesses and inviting visitors into the square. Important functions are integrated into the edge, such as bike parking, public seating as well as extended outdoor spaces for small businesses, restaurants and shops.

The green zones, with added vegetation, create a pleasant microclimate for the square, with high transparency from the street and seasonal variations. Higher biodiversity contributes to the experience of being on the square and connects it to the biodiversity corridor along Trädlyckevägen. Day water and urban runoff solutions are incorporated in the green zone, protecting both the square and street, filtering and delaying rainwater.

The center of Håstens Torg is transformed into a creative heart, an important meeting point in Varberg that connects people from the inner city, the housing areas as well as the new development of Östra Träslöv in the future. The new multifunctional square invites new activities and engages the city all year round, with farmers markets, concerts, exhibitions and craft workshops.

Densification

A new circular neighbourhood is created with new housing and mixed programs, stitching together Håsten and Karlberg. The densification along Trädlyckevägen promotes sharing and circularity, with collective facilities, car-sharing programs, recycling facilities and multifunctional green meeting spaces.

A range of housing typologies and forms of tenure makes the new neighbourhood more inclusive and can appeal to a diverse group of tenants. This includes affordable apartments, row houses and plots for self-built housing promoting new forms of living.

In our exploration we have tested a possible transformation of the supermarket and the administration of Varberg Bostads AB. The possibilities might be limited as this is not owned by the municipality, but we see great potential in transforming the square into a mixed use area.

Phasing

Phasing and planning is vital when planning new neighbourhoods. The proposal suggests starting with new connective public spaces - the new material hub at Håstens Torg and the new community house in the centre of the neighbourhood.

The community house will be the starting point for the new housing development, creating a new public space that allows residents to be part of the development and take ownership of its evolution. This will allow for the new neighbourhood to create its own character and activities, making it an attractive neighbourhood also before and during the development and construction. The community house rooms multiple programs, with a learning center that local schools can use, a café and kiosk for teenagers and young adults, a greenhouse to grow vegetables that can be sold at Håstens Torg and a large flexible community space that allows for different events to take place.

Håstens Torg is a more far reaching public space servicing the surrounding neighbourhoods. The two sites represent the project's approach to development, working on a smaller scale and engaging the community from the beginning. Promoting the same fundamental approach as the strategy for the whole of Trädlyckevägen, creating an active urban floor, by tapping into the urban nature of Vargberg, steering it into a circular neighborhood.

NK608