



Public participation in urban planning in Denmark

**Lecture for working group / urban planning code
14. september 2023**

BALTZER Urban Consulting v. Peder Baltzer Nielsen, Architect MAA, Denmark

CV

Peder Baltzer Nielsen

Born 1953

Educated Architect (urban planning in 1980)

42 years experience with spatial planning in Denmark and Europe.

1980-1997: Leader of Planning in Municipality of Hirtshals. A small municipality in the northern part of Denmark

1997-2007: Head of Section in Spatial Planning Department in Ministry of Environment. National and regional planning in Denmark and EU.

2007-2010: Chief consultant in the foundation RealDania, Denmark

2010-2022: City Architect in Aalborg, third biggest city in Denmark

2022-- : Self Employed in BALTZER – Urban consulting and planning.



Disposition of to days lecture

1. Background for the Danish - Ukrainian project: Democratic Reconstruction of Ukraine
2. The Planning act in Denmark – history and to day
3. National, Regional and Local Planning
 - Democratic involvement on the different planning level
 - Especially involvement on local level
4. How did we do it in Aalborg (12 years as city architect)
5. A little about architecture and the use of material in the buildings.
6. Concluding remarks

- 1. Background for the Danish - Ukrainian project:
Democratic Reconstruction of Ukraine**

Democratic Reconstruction of Ukraine

The Association of Architects wants to investigate how we, from the Danish side, can best support the work; from a new angle where we both examine the structural (legislation and organization) and cultural (traditions and expectations) prerequisites in Ukraine and then "translate" the Danish knowledge into a model that is operative in Ukraine. **A model for dialogue and involvement with a focus on people, recycling and biodiversity.**



The project in cooperation with Danish Association of Architects and is supported by [Dreyers Foundation](#)

The idea of "building back better" is indisputably good!

However, the important question still remains of what this actually means - what will be the final output from this "building back better" (i.e., rebuilding process). There are, roughly speaking, two options.

This reconstruction could result in (1) a Ukraine that rebuilds what was destroyed during the war with a view to bringing back Ukraine to its capacities prior to the war, or (2) a completely new Ukraine that looks and acts like an EU Member State, capable of becoming a Member State whenever the political decision for this is made.

The goal for the project: Democratic Reconstruction of Ukraine

Written document ultimo November 2023

- Contends (to be considered):
 - Ukraine today – extent of destruction
 - Democratic process of reconstruction Ukraine – Urban planning reform
 - The work with the Urban Planning Code
 - Open window for opportunity
 - How to involve local authority and citizens (public participation)
 - Case study from Denmark – e.g. the democratic process' in Aalborg
 - Case study from Ukraine – e.g. the process with local policy for urban strategy in Mykolaiv.

Audience for the document

- Ministerium in Ukraine
- Local authority in Ukraine
- Organisations working with urban planning and developing etc.
- Ministerium in other countries (e.g. Denmark)
- Business partners
- Other stakeholders

2. The Planning act in Denmark – history and to day

DENMARK

Denmark's land area comprises 43,000 km² (not including the self-governing regions of Greenland and the Faroe Islands). Denmark consists of Jylland (a peninsula) and an archipelago of 406 islands, of which 75 are inhabited.

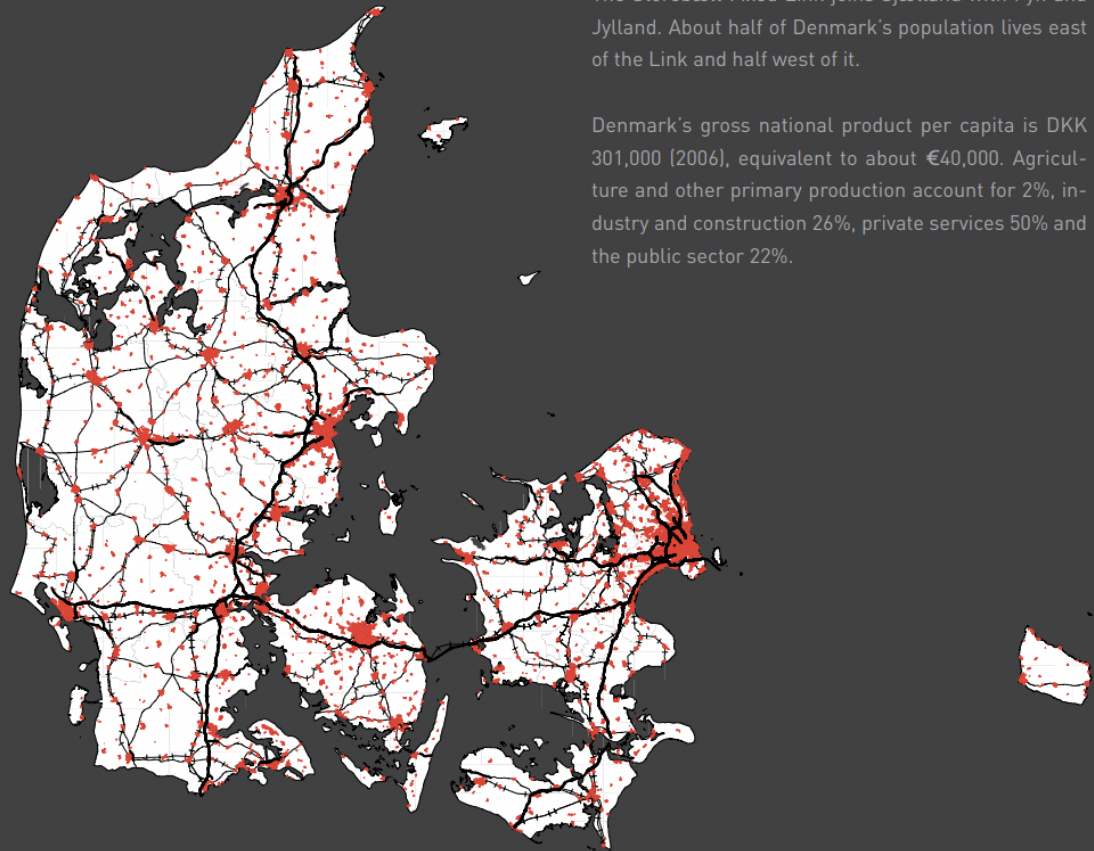
The coast stretches 7300 km. The land is used for agriculture (67%), forests (12%), semi-natural areas (11%) and urban zones and transport installations (10%).

Denmark's population is 5.5 million (2007) and the population density 127 per km². Eighty-six percent of the population lives in settlements with more than 200 inhabitants and 14% in the countryside and in smaller villages.

One third of the population (1.85 million people) lives in Greater Copenhagen. The next four largest cities are Aarhus (population 296,000), Odense (187,000), Aalborg (164,000) and Esbjerg (82,000).

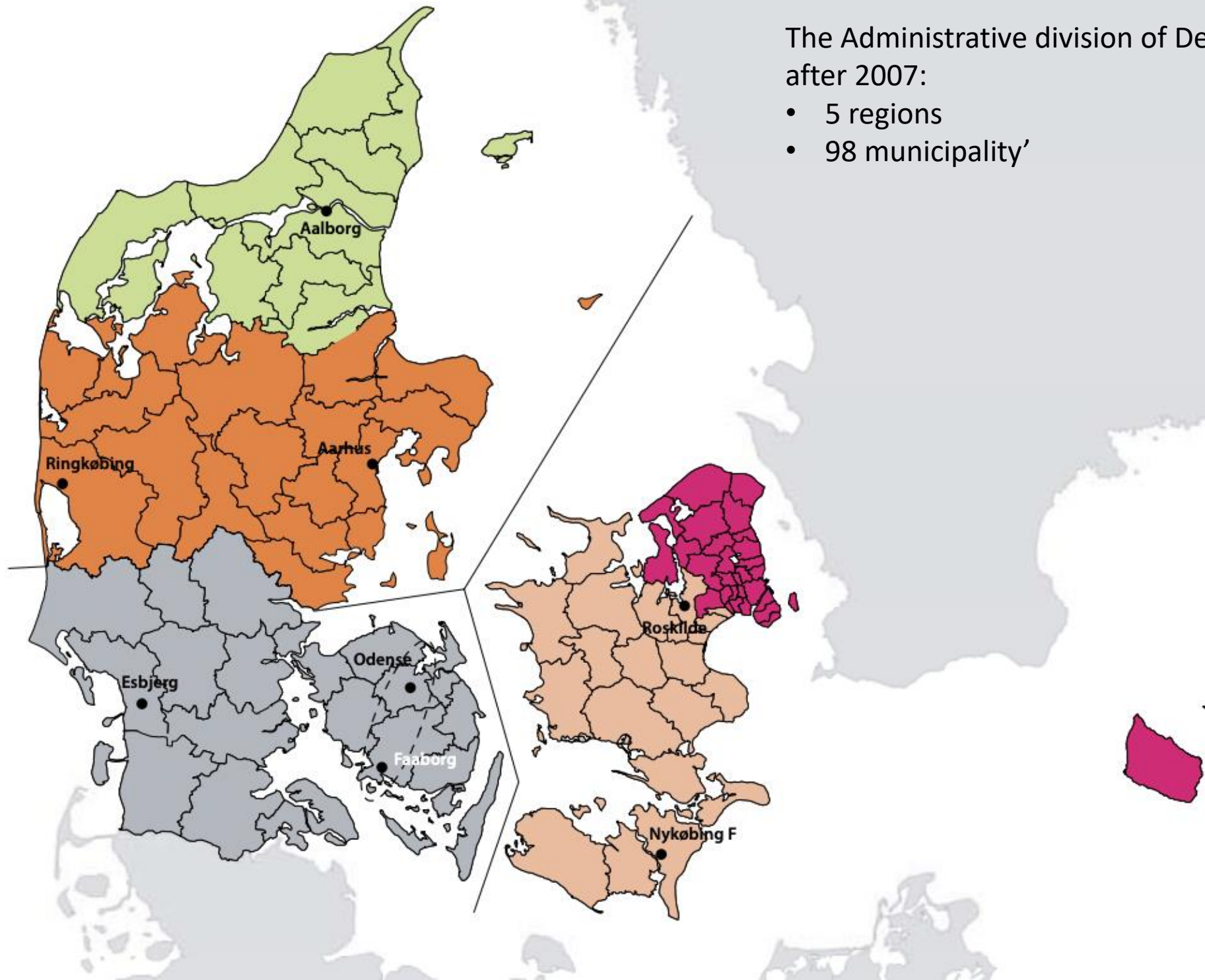
The Storebælt Fixed Link joins Sjælland with Fyn and Jylland. About half of Denmark's population lives east of the Link and half west of it.

Denmark's gross national product per capita is DKK 301,000 (2006), equivalent to about €40,000. Agriculture and other primary production account for 2%, industry and construction 26%, private services 50% and the public sector 22%.



The Administrative division of Denmark after 2007:

- 5 regions
- 98 municipality'



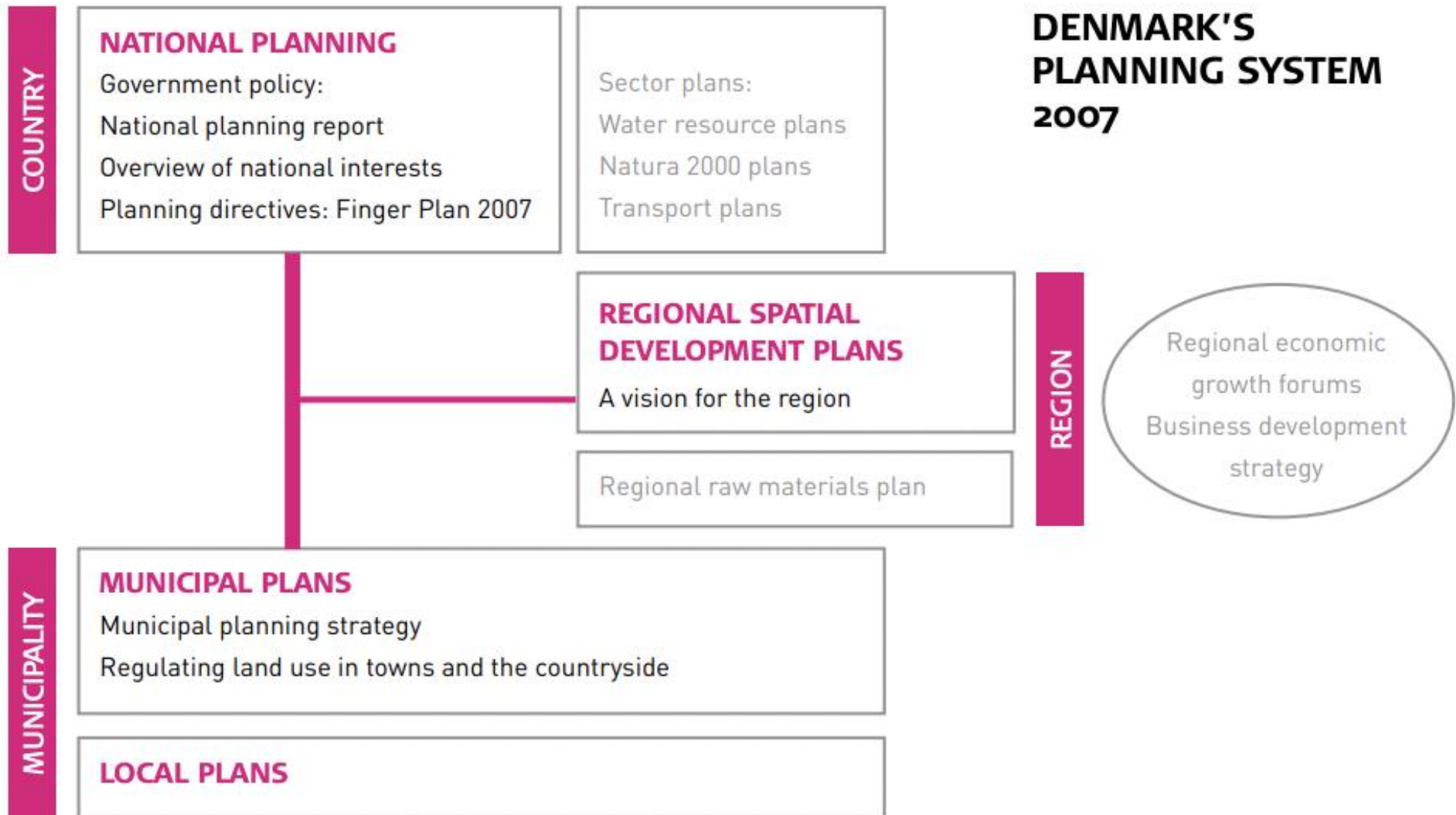
THE PLANNING ACT

Denmark has a simple and clear spatial planning system with a strongly decentralized division of tasks. The municipal councils are responsible for comprehensive land-use regulation at the municipal and local levels with legally binding guidelines for property owners. The regional councils prepare a strategic plan for spatial development in each region. The Minister for the Environment is responsible for upholding national interests through national planning.

Responsibility for national interests change ministry.

Today it is located in the Church Ministry, The Planning and Rural District Agency

DENMARK'S PLANNING SYSTEM 2007



NATIONAL PLANNING

The rules on national planning were introduced in 1974 and strengthened substantially by the 2007 local government reform. National planning is expressed through reports, binding instructions, guidelines and intervention in municipal planning for themes and projects of international, national or regional interest.

3. National, Regional and Local Planning

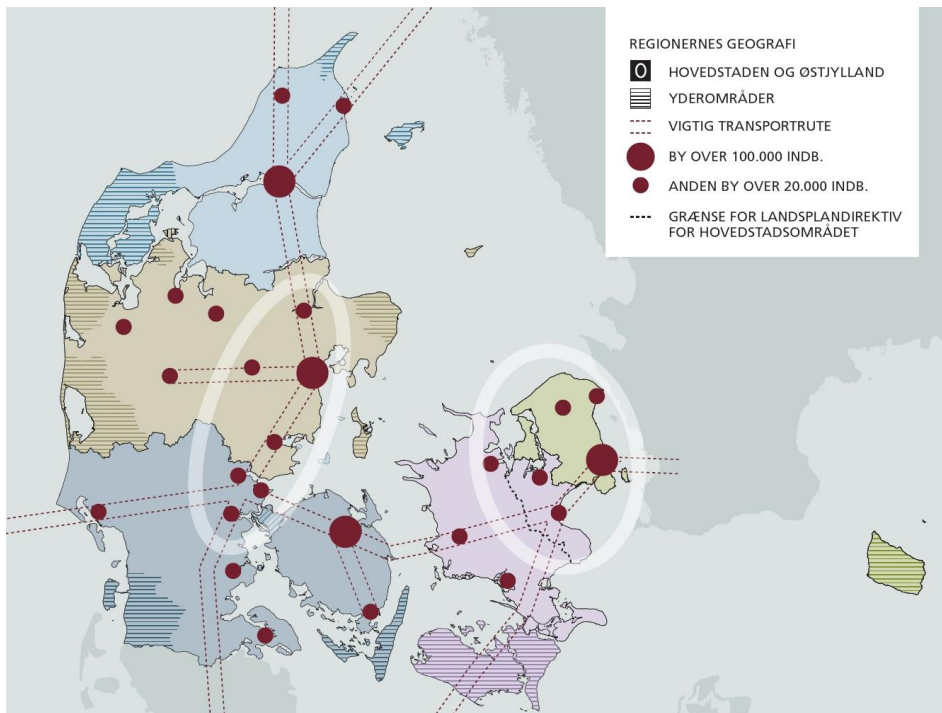
NATIONAL PLANNING

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Democratic planning and public participation on this level: The 5 Regions, the 98 Municipalities, Public and private organisations (e.g. Business organisation's), NGO (e.g. Landscape organisation's), citizens

An example: National Planning Report 2006

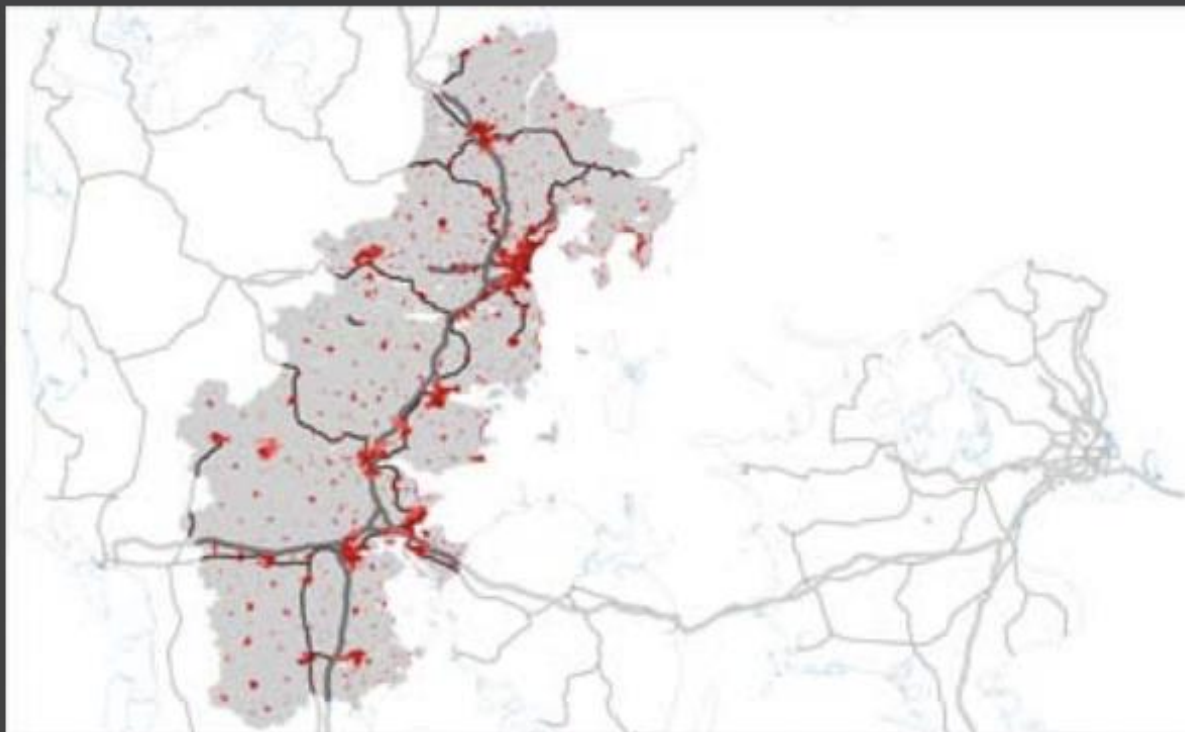
A new **policy** from the government



National planning reports

After each election to the Folketing (parliament), the Minister for the Environment submits a national planning report to be used in regional spatial development planning and municipal planning. The report further covers the special planning considerations for Greater Copenhagen.

The report is submitted as a proposal with potential alternatives, and public debate is solicited before the Minister publishes the report on behalf of the Government. The Folketing traditionally debates the national planning report. The latest reports include visions and perspectives for topical planning themes followed up by an action plan, including projects with municipalities and the private sector.



THE 2006 NATIONAL PLANNING REPORT **Debate on the urban corridor in eastern Jylland**

In the 2006 national planning report, the Ministry of the Environment invited the municipalities to participate in dialogue projects on future development. In eastern Jylland, the invitation is for dialogue on the future development of the urban corridor. The dialogue will focus on how to ensure coordinated and appropriate regulation of land use in this urban corridor given the need to create a new framework for development.

This dialogue will ensure the quality of the landscape and appropriate infrastructure. National interests include ensuring that the open, coherent landscapes between towns are maintained.



Bottom: business construction along a motorway near Horsens.

The Minister Connie Hedegaard



"Dialogue and cooperation obviously do not mean that the state must interfere in the municipalities' case processing.

Our people would like to help to; but the municipalities of course have full responsibility for solving their own tasks.

I think we all need to practice who does what - and that they then do it".

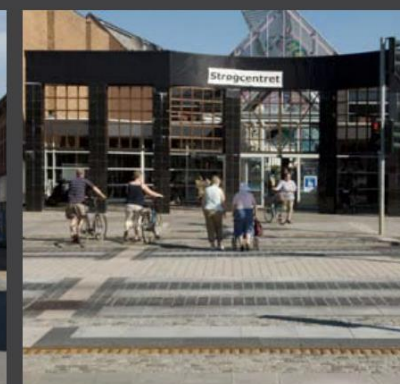
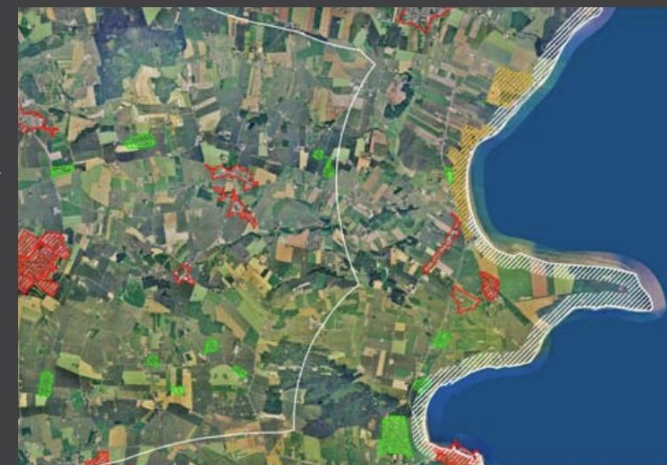
May 2, 2006

Overview of national interests

The Minister may order a municipal council to prepare a plan with a specified content. In special cases, the Minister may assume the authority granted to municipal planning authorities and decide a specific planning dispute. These options are used very rarely: when special national interests necessitate intervening in municipal autonomy.

PROTECTING DENMARK'S OPEN COASTS

The open coasts need to be protected. In addition to the 3-km coastal zone stipulated by the Planning Act, the dune conservation line and beach protection line of up to 300 metres mandated by the Protection of Nature Act promote coastal protection.



TOWN CENTRE PLAN

Municipal planning aims to strengthen retail trade in the centre of Denmark's numerous small and medium-sized towns. The goal is to create attractive urban public space and a broad and diverse commercial environment in the numerous towns. Investment in new shops should support the aim of renewing and regenerating the existing commercial districts in the town centre. Photos: town centres in Fjerritslev and Ikast.



REGIONAL SPATIAL DEVELOPMENT PLANNING

The 2007 reform of local government structure created a new type of plan. The new regional councils are preparing regional spatial development plans that will present strategic visions of the development of each region. Regional spatial development plans are a collective project between the municipal councils, businesses, the regional council and the other actors in each region.

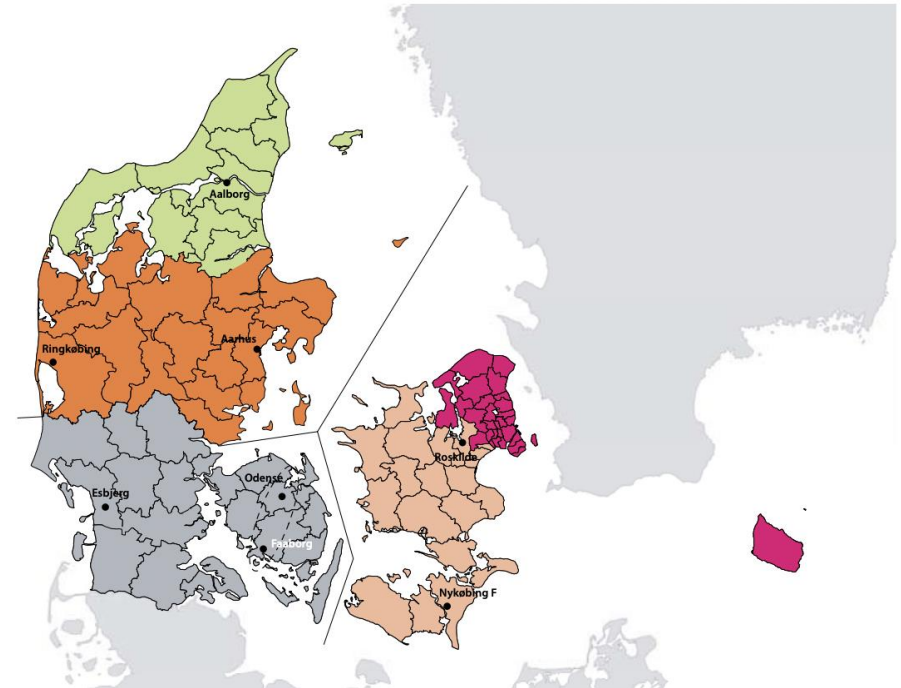
Regional plan for spatial development

A regional spatial development plan comprehensively describes a desired future spatial development for each administrative region's cities and towns, rural districts and small-town (peripheral) regions and for:

- nature and the environment, including recreation;
- business, including tourism;
- employment;
- education and training; and
- culture.

Democratic planning and public participation on this level: The Governemnt, the involved Municipalities from the region, Public and private organisations (e.g. Business organisation's), NGO (e.g. Landscape organisation's), citizens

An example: The Regional Planning for “Region North Jutland” – the green region – on the map...



**Aalborg has a responsibility -
Northern Denmark's growth dynamo**



MUNICIPAL PLANNING

A municipal plan summarizes and concretizes the overall political objectives for the development of a municipality. The municipal council establishes a policy for the development of towns and cities and for the countryside. The municipal plan links national planning and the provisions of local plans on the use and development of each district and between national planning and the specific administration of rural zones. The rules on strategy for planning have strengthened the strategic aspect of municipal planning and the political interest of local communities in municipal planning.

Democratic planning and public participation on this level: The Governemnt, The region, Municipality neighbours, Public and private organisations (e.g. Business organisation's), NGO (e.g. Landscape organisation's), citizens

MUNICIPAL PLANNING PROCESS

1. *Preliminary debate every 4 years*
 - Information on the previous planning
 - Strategy for municipal planning
 - Period of public comment of at least 8 weeks

2. *Municipal plan proposal*
 - Prepared in cooperation with other public authorities, citizens, nongovernmental organizations and others

3. *Publication of municipal plan proposal*
 - Period of public comment of at least 8 weeks
 - Sent to public authorities
 - Minister for the Environment is obligated on behalf of the government to veto proposals contradicting national interests

4. *Municipal plan adopted*
 - Consideration of comments, vetoes, negotiations and proposals

5. *Publication*

6. *Administration of the municipal plan*
 - The municipal council must strive to implement the plan

Framework for local planning

The framework for the content of local plans is the link to local planning and is decisive for the municipal council's competence in preparing local plans. The framework describes what a local plan can and should decide for individual areas to promote a cohesive urban structure and the overall municipal objectives. The framework often illustrates future opportunities.

The municipal plan determines which areas in rural zones may be transferred to urban zones or summer cottage areas. The framework may determine the chronological order for converting land to urban functions and to summer cottage areas.

LOCAL PLANNING

Local plans are the foundation of Denmark's spatial planning system. Local plans concretize the political strategy and objectives of the municipal plan.

A municipal plan provides a comprehensive overview of the development of a municipality and the plans for housing, workplaces, transport, nature and environmental protection and other matters, whereas local plans stipulate how a district may be developed and used. Local plans are legally binding for property owners.

Democratic planning and public participation on this level: CITIZENS, Neighbours to the project, The Government, The region, Other Municipality's, Public and private organisations (e.g. Business organisation's), NGO (e.g. Landscape organisation's)

Mandatory local plans

Implementing major development projects requires a local plan. The concept of “major” is relative. A minor project in Copenhagen may be major in another town. A local plan is required if substantial changes are proposed to the existing environment.

Examples of major development projects include:

- new residential districts;
- a by-pass road in an urban zone;
- construction of high-rise buildings or large blocks of flats;
- a hotel in a summer cottage area;
- major business construction; and
- buildings for public purposes.

The municipal council may adopt a local plan at any time if it complies with the municipal planning framework for local plans.

Involving the public and public authorities

A local plan may not contradict the municipal plan or national planning directives. The municipal council provides at least 8 weeks for public comment on local plan proposals before adopting them. State authorities may veto a local plan proposal during the period of public comment if the proposal contradicts national interests.

The council is required to publish the final plan when adopted, including on PlansystemDK. All municipalities publish their local plans on their web site.

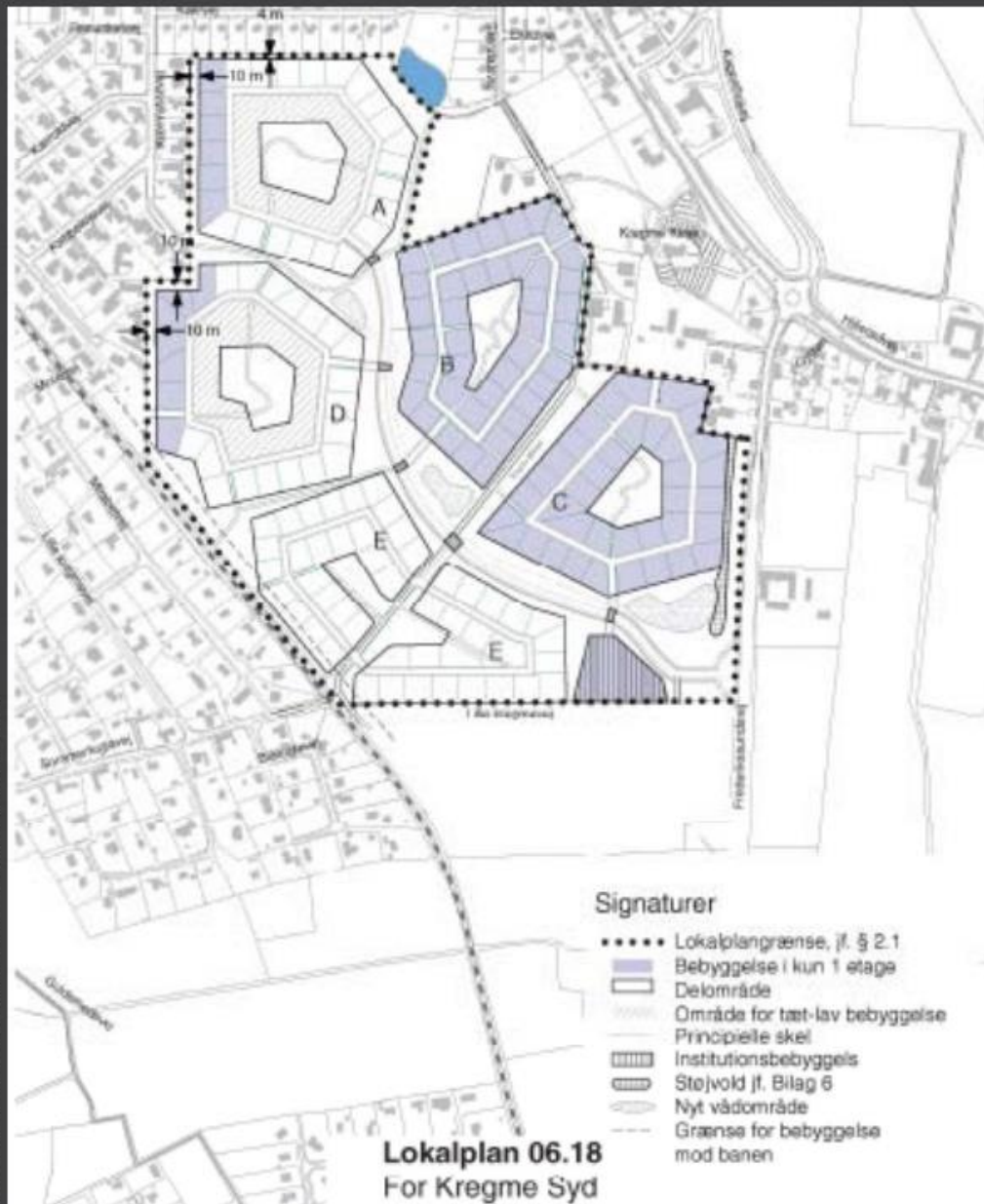
The content of a local plan and the public participation

A local plan establishes rules on how land may be developed and used. A local plan can ensure that the many diverse interests in a local plan area are weighed and discussed.

A local plan is flexible. It may regulate numerous factors related to use, the size and location of buildings, roads and paths and the architectural features of an area. A local plan gives property owners the right to develop and use property in accordance with the local plan. Property owners are not generally entitled to compensation for any perceived loss of property rights.

Property owners may not act in contradiction to a local plan. After a public hearing including neighbours, a municipal council may grant exemptions from a local plan if this does not contradict the principles of the plan as expressed in provisions related to purpose and use.

The matters a local plan regulates often involve many contradictory interests. The interests of property owners may differ from those of their neighbours, and local and national interests may clash. Local planning ensures that the various interests can be expressed



LOCAL PLAN

A local plan for a new residential district near Kregme in the Municipality of Frederiksværk-Hundested. The local plan contains maps and drawings proposing how the new district will be developed. The Ministry of the Environment has prepared guidelines on local plans to help and to inspire municipalities in preparing local plans.



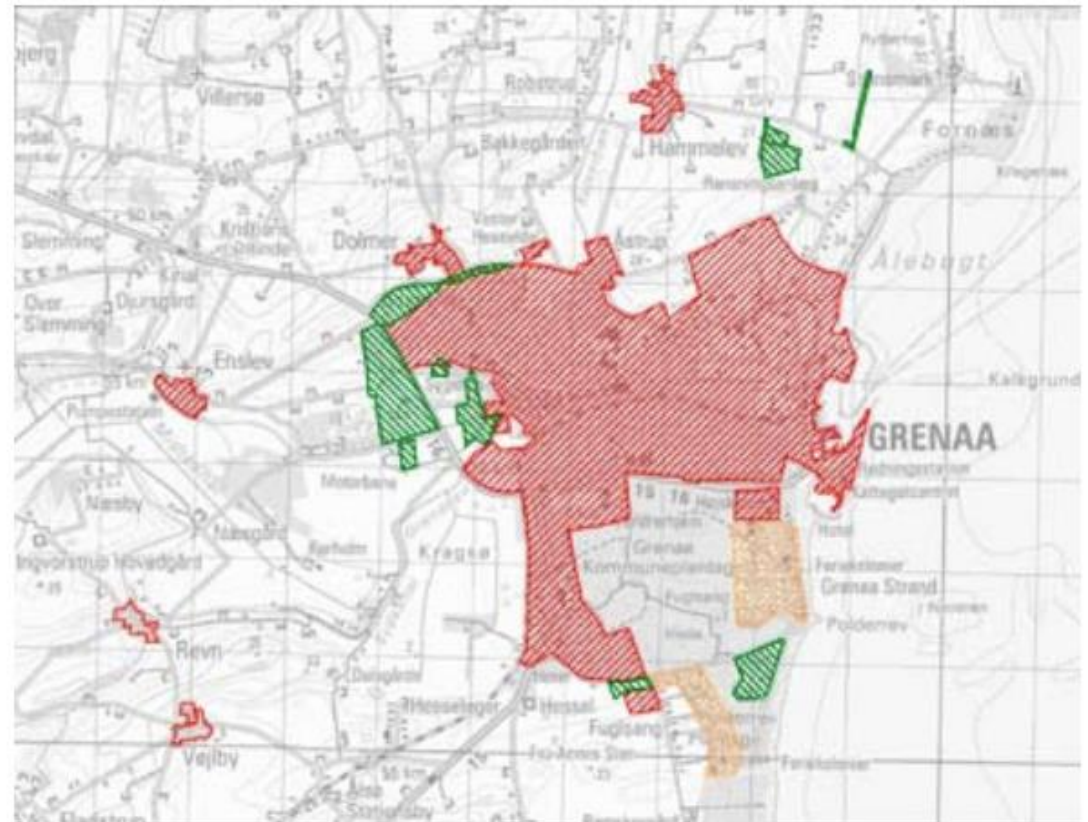
RURAL ZONE ADMINISTRATION

The Planning Act divides Denmark into urban zones, summer cottage areas and rural zones, with special rules for development in rural zones. This is a cornerstone of protecting the countryside by avoiding sprawling and unplanned development. Agriculture and forestry comprise the priority economic activity in rural zones. Zoning creates a clear boundary between urban areas and the countryside. This protects recreational and valuable landscapes and ensures that agriculture retains good production opportunities.

ZONING MAP

PlansystemDK contains information on all urban zones and summer cottage areas in Denmark. About 5.5% of Denmark is urban zones and 1.2% summer cottage areas, and the rest is rural zones.

-  Urban zones
-  Villages with limited development
-  Summer cottage areas
-  Rural zones covered by a local plan



4. How did we do it in Aalborg (12 years as city architect)

AALBORG – an example of how to work with the planning system



Aalborg today

- 222.571 inhabitants (Municipality)
- + 1.500 - 2.000 / year
- Development in the number of jobs
 - Still many jobs in production companies – now related to knowledge
 - But more jobs in knowledge companies
- Many new private investments in high rise apartment buildings
- Big programs for public housing for young students 2010 - 2020





After the financial crisis in 2008:

- Focus on growth
- Also in the region...

Aalborg is the growth dynamo for North Denmark

Norrdanmarks vækstdynamo

Planstrategi 2011



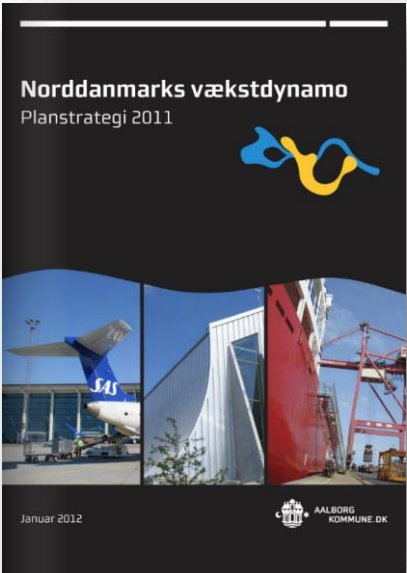
Januar 2012



AALBORG
KOMMUNE.DK

The basis for Aalborg's Strategic Urban Development is the Planning Strategies

2011



2016



2019



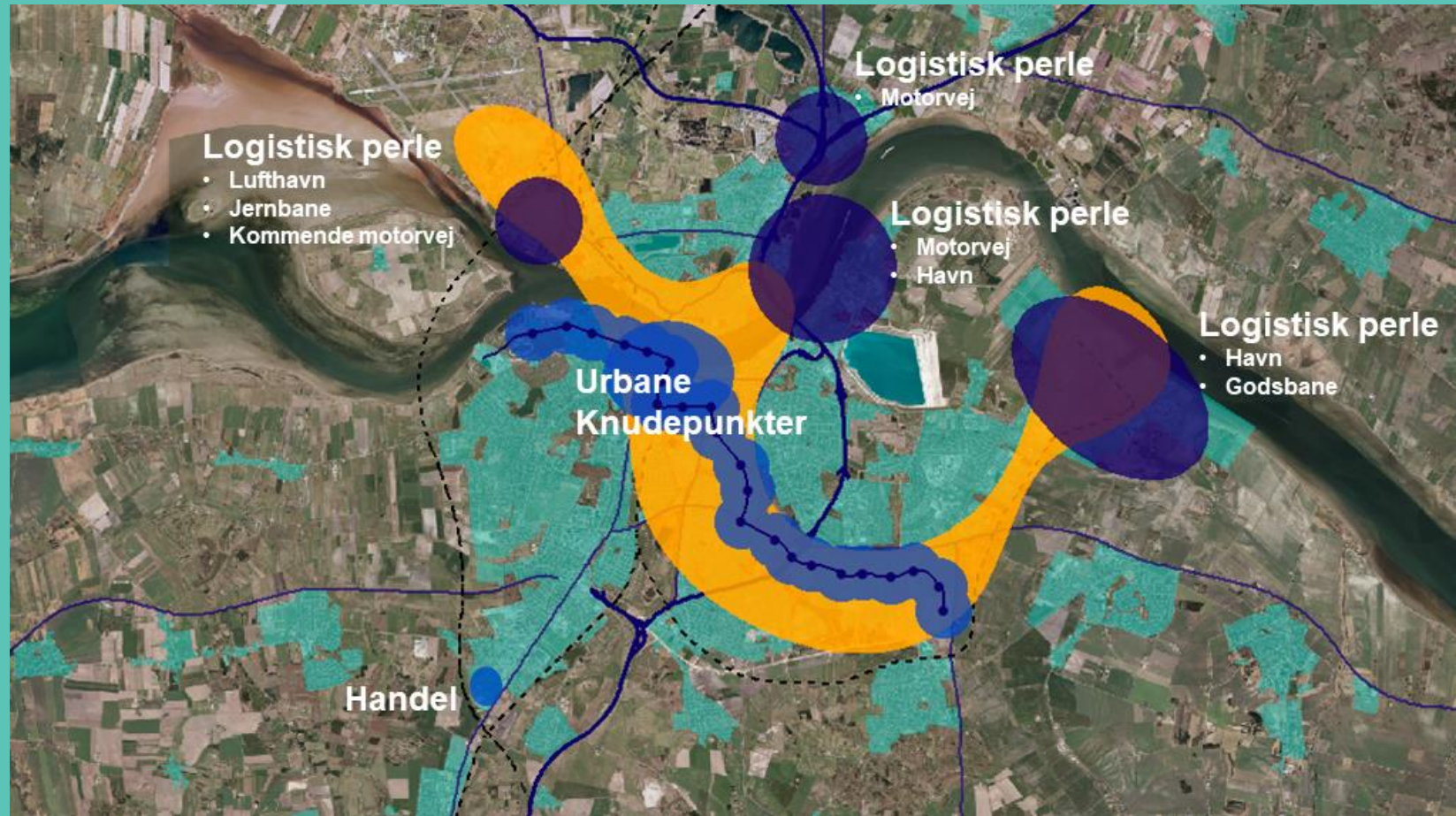
The direction is set by the City Council. This gives Citizens understanding of the urban developing and Investment security for the privat sector.

The Municipality plan (the general plan) is the guideline for urban development (a political document)



Understandable vision (the growth axis) followed by a common picture of urban development

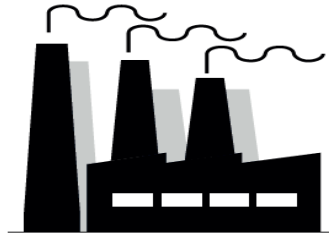
- BRT / tram
- Urban densification
- Housing
- Urban businesses
- Industriel business
- Culture
- Urban spaces



Aalborg – from market city and industrial city into a city for people



1 RIG KØBSTAD



2 INDUSTRIBYEN (1900 -70)



3 STORBYEN



4 EN STORBY FOR MENNESKER?



The most successful example is the waterfront area.



Regeneration of the central harbourfront

- Investments in affordable housing
- Architecture and quality
- Urban spaces connected to inner city
- Liveability – urban living
- New identity to the city

- Big discussions for many years – especially about infrastructure

900 youth accommodations on the harbourfront (with financial support from Aalborg Municipality – based on tax collection)
- neighbors to expensive apartments = **mixed city**

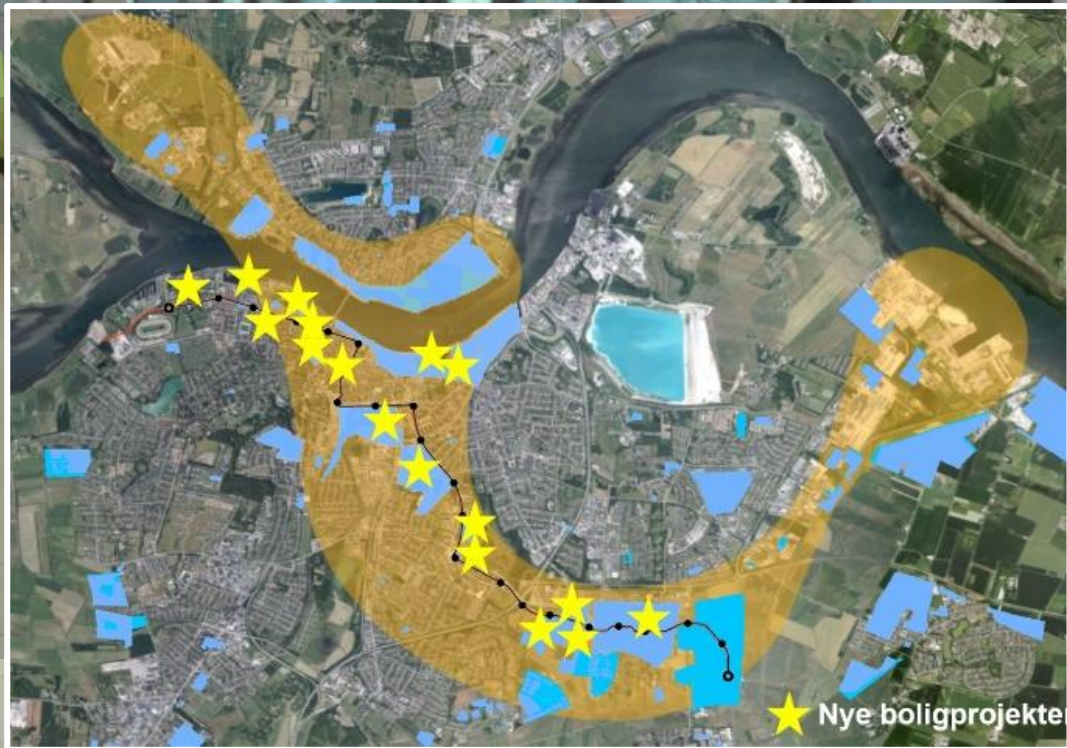


The Waterfront in Aalborg

Urban spaces with identity facilitating diversity and social integration - avoid building on all the areas at the waterfront - make room for green urban spaces

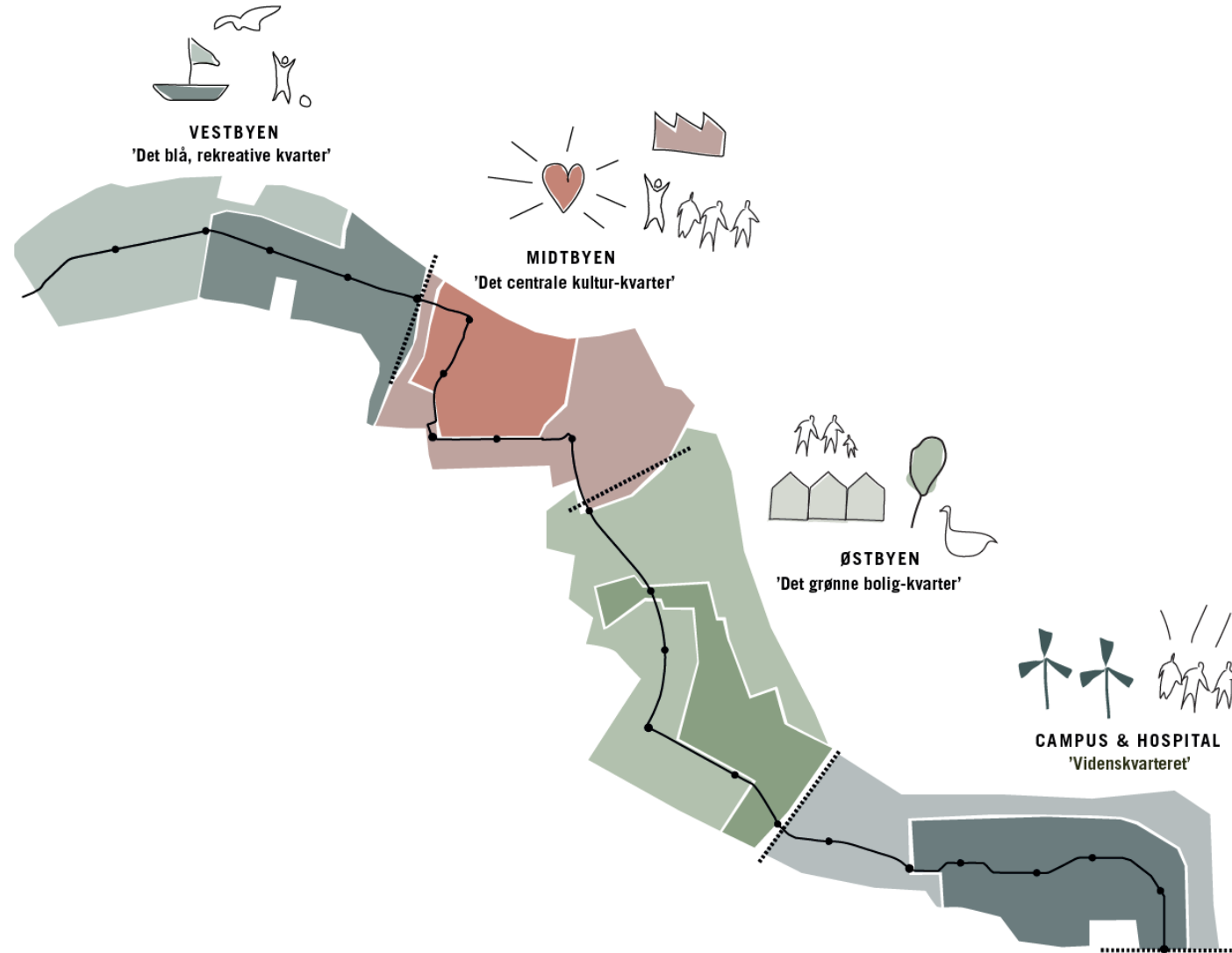


BRT or Tram – backbone for urban Development – not only a question of transport from A to B, but also an investment in strategic planning



Stakeholders - BRT

- BRT is not only mobility from A to B, but also urban developing
- Renew urban spaces and areas
- Focus on different quarters identity
- BRT – an urban connection between districts in Aalborg
- Densification with housing, businesses, institutions etc. (high density around the station in the masterplan)
- Green qualities and attractions



BRT gives possibilities to convert to high quality in urban spaces around the bus stations



J.F. Kennedys Plads



Democratic involvement – “don’t change the square” – “is the new design OK”?

J.F. Kennedys Plads







Shaping the framework of urban life



BUDOLFI PLADS

Green Square in the centre of Aalborg



2015







Budolfi Plads 2018

What we did was:

- Public participation / democratic involvement of citizen starting in 2010
 - “we want a green square – not a warehouse”
- Define the green structure up front before architect competition
- Put that in to the programme for the competition
- Make a competition on price and project (quality)
- Demand, that the winner makes it possible that e.g. a café can get a low rent...
- That gives possibility for liveability

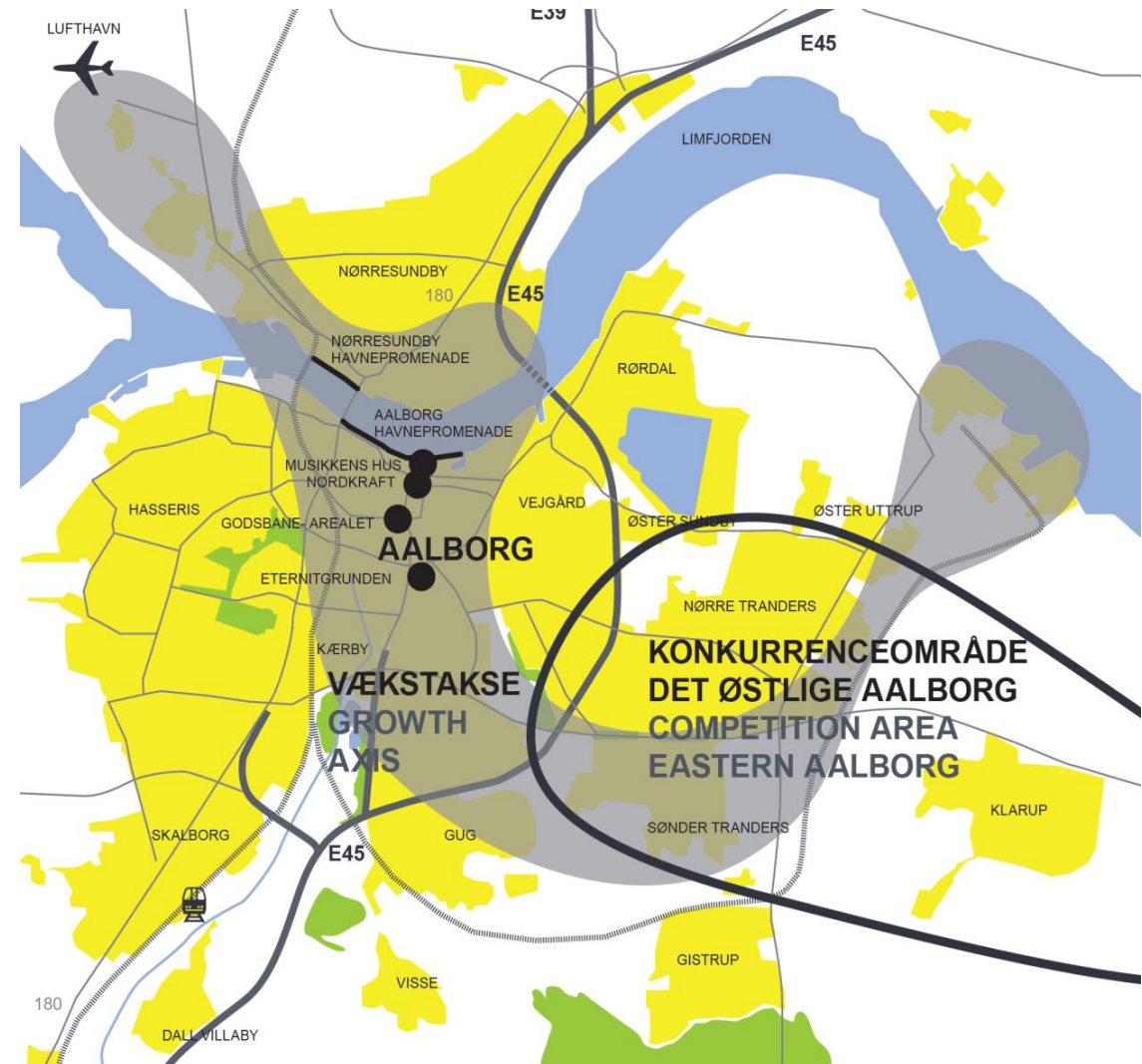




City in between – a renewal of the suburb in the eastern part of Aalborg

- **University Hospital**
- **+ 5.000 workplaces ,**
- **refurbishment**
- **social housing-area,**
- **growth in the industrial area,**
- **the Harbour,**
- **University...**

- **Several democratic involvement on different levels**



Collaboration between many stakeholders in an area with many public housing (association of social housing / affordable housing)



The area – many public housing – democratic involvement e.g. via competitions (architecture and / or urban planning)



Separation of traffic (the modern planning for suburbs in 1960) - led to unsafe environment



Designing new infrastructure – the vision / dream came through



City in Between

The opening image as a working model for discussion with citizen and politician / the importance of architecture





The outcome of the strategy:

- Household income has increased
- Criminality has decreased
- School grades have increased
- People take pride in living there

5. A little about architecture and the use of material in the buildings.



Copenhagen



Copenhagen



Stockholm



HAIR
STODENEN

Stockholm

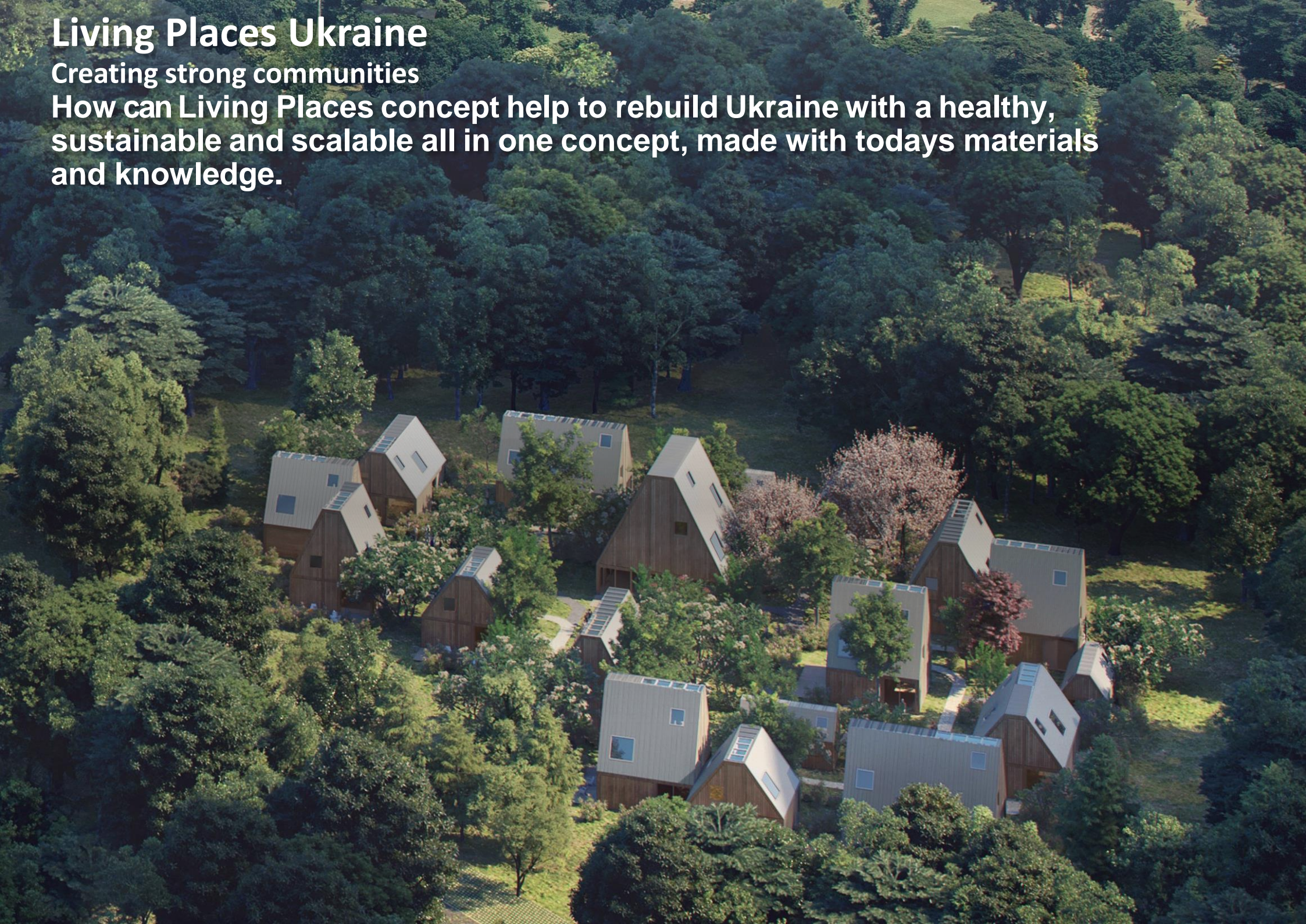


Stockholm

Living Places Ukraine

Creating strong communities

How can Living Places concept help to rebuild Ukraine with a healthy, sustainable and scalable all in one concept, made with today's materials and knowledge.



Living Places Ukraine

The NGO organisation "SOS Børnebyerne" (SOS Children's Village) together with Velux are planning to build a home for children in Western Ukraine under the concept "living places"



6. Concluding remarks



'The Art of City Building'

You have to keep an eye on everything and act in chaos.

Politics and planning are city management, and city planners are leaders.

A leadership that must be carried out in interaction with the political leadership and the citizens in a popular and democratic process - in co-creation!

Citat: The Art of City Building, Nordic City Network 2018

It's about daring to make some demands and having some expectations as a municipality. To have some visions with the dynamic urban development and to dare to stand by them. **It is the municipalities that must lead the way in the triangle of responsibility with architects and builders** - the path that has hopefully been discussed in advance with citizens and politicians in, for example, the individual municipality's architecture policy, he says.



The municipality as facilitator in Denmark

- The municipality is increasingly a facilitator of local community development
- How do we ensure that the housing supply matches population development, demand and new trends? The market does not regulate alone
- Mixed residential areas will be a challenge in the future. Affordable housing together with expency appartements. That forms the livable city.
- The Excel sheet decides. It is thought from the point of view of what is most buildable.
- The municipality will be the sparring partner...
- The municipality ensures community interests such as sustainability, public health, etc.
- The municipality ensures democratic rebuilding / puplic participation

The plan does not determine the policy

Politics decides the plan

DIALOGUE



Democratic Reconstruction of Ukraine

The Association of Architects wants to investigate how we, from the Danish side, can best support the work; from a new angle where we both examine the structural (legislation and organization) and cultural (traditions and expectations) prerequisites in Ukraine and then "translate" the Danish knowledge into a model that is operative in Ukraine. **A model for dialogue and involvement with a focus on people, recycling and biodiversity.**



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