

# 3. Urban growth and long term planning

## *Strategies and vision for the city of Uppsala – public participation in long term planning*

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## **3.1 DEVELOPING LOCAL DEMOCRACY**

### **3.1.1 The 1990s – mistrust between politicians and the voters**

Sweden was transformed from an agricultural society to an industrialised country at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. It was a time of great social and economic inequalities. Few people received more than four years of elementary education. Industrialisation made injustices even greater. Many groups began to work for change, organising themselves into popular movements, thus starting a long struggle for democracy and justice.

The broad based popular involvement in political development slowly abated during the last few decades, especially during the 1990s. Today it is more common to see mistrust for politicians expressed in many ways, perhaps most clearly in the fact that the number of people joining a political party has been decreasing for many years. There may be several reasons for this. Often mentioned factors include political scandals, the inability of the state to solve immediate problems and fulfil citizen's

needs, the unsuccessful attempts of political parties to involve citizens, and the critical journalism that constantly permeates the political game.

Several factors may be influencing this development. Some political scientists think that the increased number of professional politicians may be a cause. Society needs more “laymen” politicians, individuals that are engaged in politics during their spare time.

At a deeper level, shifting values may be operative. Today it is more common for Swedes to commit themselves to individual topics of interest rather than collective interests. Studies of citizen's attitudes show that there is a trend of changing values towards so-called post-materialism. People currently express to a greater extent than before the following:

- 1) the necessity for beautiful cities and nature,
- 2) the primacy of human thoughts and ideas over money,
- 3) protection of the right to express one's opinion,
- 4) development of a more personal and human society, and
- 5) the right to influence one's own working conditions and residential areas.

### 3. URBAN GROWTH AND LONG TERM PLANNING

#### 3.1.2 The Swedish committee on the development of democracy

In the 1990s, the Swedish committee for the development of democracy proposed measures to increase citizen's opportunities to practice democracy. The measures are based on the following principles:

- equality,
- equal distribution of resources,
- facilitation of public participation by the state and municipalities,
- decision making by the citizens themselves or as close to them as possible,
- democracy assumes freedom of information, free debate and informed citizens, and
- democracy is a constantly changing tool.

Some of the measures proposed include the following:

*Democracy centres.* Creation of democracy centres for meetings, information and openness is one of the committee's suggestions. A democracy centre would not follow any standard model but would run according to the municipality's local conditions.

*Places to meet – a basis for local democracy.* All forms of national support to the local level ought to be more holistically administered in order to make support more efficient. The municipalities also need to co-operate to a higher extent with NGOs to develop democratic infrastructures.

*Broadcasts from the political arenas.* Public political debates ought to become more easily accessible to citizens through regular, non-commentated broadcasts on radio and TV. This would give citizens a fair chance to form their own opinions and arguments on different topics.

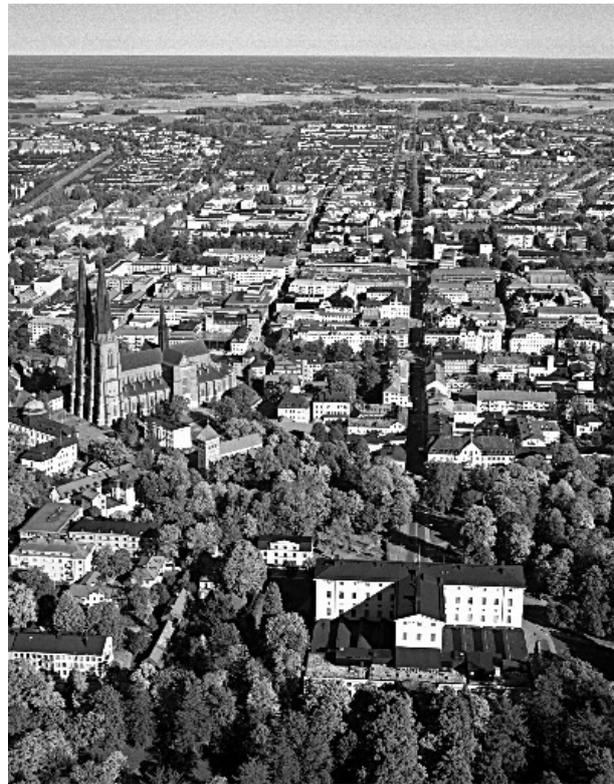
*Easily accessible information.* Through modern technology, citizens have the opportunity to get civic information easily and without charge. The committee requested that this kind of service be developed by the municipalities.

*Referendums.* About 40 initiatives have been taken by citizens with regard to referendums. None has led to a referendums in practice. The committee suggests adding a complement to the Local Act with a request that a qualified majority in the local council is needed to reject the suggestion for a referendums.

*Citizens right to introduce a bill.* Democracy could be strengthened if citizens had the right to introduce a bill to the municipal council. This could in a radical way open the doors of politics and reduce the distance between citizens and politicians. At the same time, an understanding of the representative democratic way of working would also increase.

*Directly elected local bodies.* The idea of directly elected local bodies has been discussed since the 1980s. The committee on the development of democracy suggests giving the idea a chance. The municipalities that want to establish directly elected local bodies should be welcome to try it.

*Tenants' self administration.* Tenants that contribute to the administration of services needed in a block of flats get a reduced rent. Some obstacles to this have occurred, as the tax administration has equated reduced rent with payment. A suggestion is that tenants who contribute to



**Figure 3.1** The city of Uppsala from above. (photo: PerEric Öberg, Art on trade. Courtesy of Akademiska Hus/Uppsala university.)

self-administration would be free from taxation on rental refunds to a maximum of half of the basic amount per rental contract.

A movement in many Swedish cities is to decentralise politics on the local level to the community level, with the hope of getting more people involved in local politics.

## 3.2 THE PROJECT UPPSALA 2012

### 3.2.1 The long term plan for Uppsala

With the background described, it may be futile to hope for public participation in city affairs. Uppsala Municipality has, however, worked with public participation in the comprehensive planning of the city, as an important measure of the legitimacy of the plan. To this end, in 1997 the city started the project "Uppsala 2012", with the aim of developing a vision and a comprehensive plan for the city.

The background was clear. Uppsala needed a new common ground for the formation of its future – a vision – which accommodated the needs of the 21<sup>st</sup> century and could be a basis for the development of the city. The requirement for a vision is supposed to combine a picture that highlights today's problems and the prospects of a desired future.

The development today is characterised by rapid changes and a great uncertainty about the future. Technical development, the global economy and environmental threats influences the labour market and local living conditions in an often unforeseeable way. The human need to try to reduce uncertainty and create a desired future can not be fulfilled through a dictated plan. Important questions need a common future view - a vision shared by the municipality of Uppsala and the people living and working there.

### 3. URBAN GROWTH AND LONG TERM PLANNING

Against this background, the project “Uppsala 2012” was launched, with the aim of developing a vision and a comprehensive plan for the development of the city of Uppsala. The project work progressed in three steps.

- Step 1* included the production of discussion material and consultation about it.
- Step 2* was to formalise the vision and strategy and to consult about it.
- Step 3* will be to produce and consult about the comprehensive plan for the city.

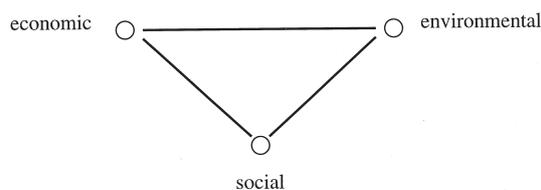
The *process*, aiming at a common future view of the development of Uppsala, is as important as the final vision for the city.

#### 3.2.2 The long term growth of Uppsala

The population of Uppsala has doubled since 1950. The growth rate has been the highest in Sweden for many years. More than half of the population of Uppsala were born outside the region. About 12,000 people commute to Stockholm, which is more than 14% of the working force. A fast growing population is a sign of favourable conditions for development in the community. At the current growth rate, Uppsala will have a population of about 215,000 by the year 2012 and about 270,000 by the year 2045. This requires a well thought out urban policy which will clarify the direction for future expansion of the city with regard to the existing values.

#### 3.2.3 Three perspectives of development

The work to produce a vision and a comprehensive plan for the city of Uppsala started in 1997. In the first step, discussion material was produced - a document called “*Three perspectives on Uppsala 2012.*” Three future perspectives based on the three dimensions of sustainable development – the economic, social, and, environmental – were outlined.



**Figure 3.2** The three dimensions of the sustainability concept.

The report also looked at the role of Uppsala in the globalisation process, Uppsala as a community and the environmental Uppsala. The foremost purpose of the discussion material was to start a debate and to raise questions about the city’s future.

The work with the discussion material was done in cooperation with the different participant actors in Uppsala. Three different groups, representing the three dimensions, economic, social and environmental, and with extensive competence, worked together to penetrate the discussion material.

An important issue from an *economic* perspective has been how to make Uppsala attractive to companies and skilled labour, with the aim of increasing employment.

The importance of creating diversified industry, developing infrastructure, and co-operating with other regions; for example the Stockholm - Mälars region, around the Baltic Sea and within the European Community, are other issues to deal with in the future planning of the city. Public consulting partners for the economic perspective included among others, the universities, the county council, the labour market organisation, and the chamber of commerce.

The *social* perspective deals with Uppsala as a living environment for the inhabitants and a public space for the users. Public healthcare is an important issue as are the goals of democracy. It deals with how different categories of inhabitants – young, old, men and women, ethnic minorities, etc. – can participate in the planning process. The partnership ideas in accordance with the Habitat Agenda, have a special meaning. Living and service issues related to segregation trends and the characteristics of the different parts of the city are important aspects of the social perspective as are culture and the physical environment from a social point of view. Public consulting partners for the social perspective included consumers and their organisations, senior citizen organisations, organisations for the disabled, minority organisation, etc.

*Environmental* Uppsala is e.g. referring to technical systems for water drainage, waste, traffic, etc., which need to be adapted to environmental requirements. The biggest source of air pollution in Uppsala today is traffic, hence a new system for public transportation is needed. Another important issue, from the environmental perspective, is that individuals need to change their behaviour and renounce individual comfort – reduce the consumption of water and electricity, etc. Public consultant partners for the environmental perspective included environmental protection organisations, landowners, and representatives from the university and local industry.

### 3.3 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION IN THE PLANNING PROCESS

#### 3.3.1 Questionnaire and city walks

A variety of studies were carried out in conjunction with the discussion material. A questionnaire in the form of a map of central Uppsala was designed on which the questionnaire’s respondents placed different symbols according to their thoughts about a particular place. The questionnaire was directed towards groups that usually do not make themselves heard, e.g. immigrants, senior citizens, and children.

The inhabitants of Uppsala were invited through different organisations to participate in city walks in the centre of Uppsala. The purpose of the *city walks* was to evaluate different places in the centre and to get the perspective and comments of users. The participants were asked to list both positive and negative characteristics of the places they visited. They were also asked whether they thought a particular place serves as a meeting point or not. Information gathered from the questionnaires was analysed and used in the formation of the discussion material.

### 3. URBAN GROWTH AND LONG TERM PLANNING

#### 3.3.2 Methods of consultation with the public

How to involve the public in the planning process is a very important issue. In general, there exist some formal channels for public participation in the planning process, such as exhibitions and consultation, etc., but the municipality of Uppsala has developed new methods to insure a wider public participation in urban planning. The discussion material has been published in the form of a booklet, “*Three perspectives on Uppsala 2012.*” It addressed as wide a group of Uppsala inhabitants as possible.

Besides consideration and consultation with representatives from the municipality and different interest groups in the city, the project tried to reach as many inhabitants of Uppsala as possible, for example through *citizen discussion panels*. About 1,000 randomly selected citizens of Uppsala were invited to discuss the future of the city together with the politicians of Uppsala. Of the 1,000 invited 66 chose to participate. The citizen panels were held in small groups of about 10 people with 3 politicians in every group. The role of the politician was to listen and to have a dialogue with the invited citizens, instead of stating their own opinions.

The group of 66 people who responded to the invitation were not representative of the population. It was primarily people who were used to getting involved and bringing forward their opinions who chose to come. It was difficult to involve all the different population groups in Uppsala in the citizen panel, especially people born outside of Sweden.

Another way of getting inhabitants’ viewpoints about the future of Uppsala was to develop a simpler version of “*Three perspectives on Uppsala 2012.*” It was available

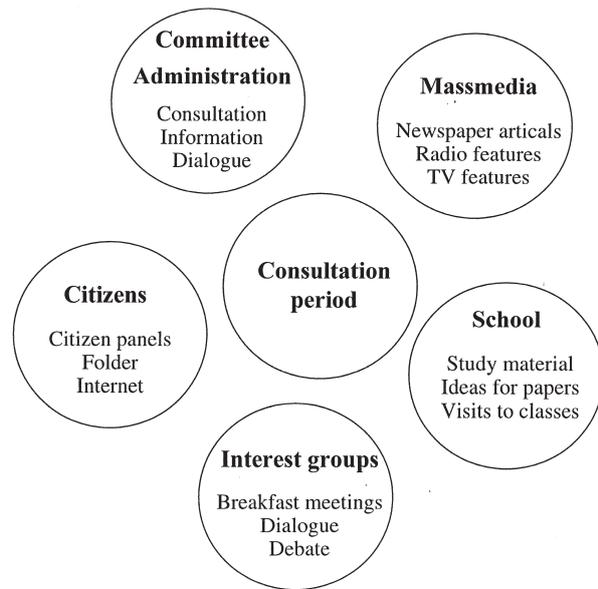


Figure 3.4 The consultation process.

during the consultation period at various public places, for example at shopping malls, libraries and train stations. The folders had attached reply forms, on which the citizens could write their opinions regarding the future of Uppsala.

Furthermore, public meetings were held in different places in the city, where citizens could meet and discuss with the politicians and civil servants of Uppsala. A total of 67 reply forms were collected and 58 out of 125 contributed statements of opinions replied.

Place the letters on the map where you think they best belong .  
Letters may be written on the map more than once or not at all.

- A) A place where I go to meet people.
- A place which I consider to be:
  - B) beautiful
  - C) nice.
  - D) less enjoyable.
  - E) dangerous.
  - F) in need of improvement.
  - G) troublesome for a baby carriage or wheel chair.
- A place where there should be a:
  - H) park bench.
  - I) buss stop.
  - J) playground.
  - K) other: .....
- L) The place I like best
- An area which should be more accessible for:
  - M) pedestrians.
  - N) cyclists.
  - O) cars.

Please write on the back of the paper:  
 1) What you consider best about living in Uppsala.  
 2) What you consider worst about living in Uppsala.

Please add other comments or thoughts that you may have on Uppsala city today and in the future.

<b>Information about yourself:</b>	Male	Female
<b>Age group</b>	10-15    15-20    20-30    30-45    45-65    65-	
<b>I live in:</b>	central Uppsala	other area in Uppsala    outside Uppsala

Figure 3.3 Questionnaire form for the city walk.

### 3. URBAN GROWTH AND LONG TERM PLANNING

The discussion material “Three perspectives on Uppsala 2012” was also presented at a press conference and the leading local papers debated the question of the future of Uppsala during the consultation period.

To get opinions from youth, the discussion material was presented at several Head Principal’s conferences and schools were invited to work with the material and respond to the issues. Civil servants who have been working with the project “Uppsala 2012” have together with the Children’s Ombudsman visited schools in Uppsala to discuss the future of the city. One ninth grade school class was invited to a meeting with the leading politicians of Uppsala.

#### 3.4 THE RESULT - VISION AND STRATEGY FOR 2012

##### 3.4.1 Three perspectives of Uppsala 2012

The result of the consultation, the three perspectives from the document, *Three perspectives of Uppsala 2012* (Feb. 1998), were compiled to form a strategy proposal for the City of Uppsala - a document called *Vision and strategy for Uppsala City* (Oct. 1999). Some of the major findings in the document are summarised below.

*Less commuting and more multi-functionality.* Uppsala is today a divided city with different areas for living and

working, and that means that many inhabitants have to commute to and from work. A person might work in one area, shop in a second, pick up their children in a third area and live in a fourth. This is not a sustainable structure, neither from a social nor from an environmental or economic perspective. It means long travel distances and dependency on cars, with increased air pollution as a result. A way to create a more sustainable city is to decrease distances and to integrate the different functions – working areas, living areas and city functions.

*Building in the city.* Instead of meeting the housing shortage by adding new suburbs to the city, new houses and apartments could be placed inside the city boundary as a complement to existing buildings. Some unexploited land, for example open spaces, could be used for construction whereas other parts could be cleaned up and made into attractive parks. This strategy would mean an increase of air pollution and noise in the city centre, but would contribute to an overall decrease of pollution in the municipality and the region and a more long-term sustainable development in accordance with Agenda 21. A well functioning public transport system is one important part of this strategy.

*Economic development.* Other important aspects of the vision are to mobilise the potential of the two universities and strengthen their bonds with local business and industry. The opportunities for economic development are strengthened by Uppsala’s advantageous geographical location, its proximity to Arlanda, the national airport in Sweden, via the main highway, E4, and the northern railway.

*Diversity and equal opportunities.* A third focus of the vision for Uppsala is to create a city with diversity and equal opportunities. Everyone should have the right to equal access to education and health care independent of where they live in the city. Everyone should have the opportunity to have good living conditions despite income variations in the population and Uppsala should be a city where inhabitants feel safe. Co-operation is a key word. It is not just the municipality that should stand for safety in the future Uppsala. To achieve positive development, the people of Uppsala have to work for common interests, which requires a dialogue among the different actors in the city.

*A city centre for citizens.* The vision for the city centre is that it should be attractive and that the unique cultural environment should be preserved. Pedestrians, cars, bicycles, and public transport should exist in symbiosis in the city centre. One of the most important roles of the city centre is to function as a meeting point for the citizens of Uppsala. It has become more popular to live in the city centre, and by re-building office spaces into apartments Uppsala can meet the increased demand. It is a positive trend that people want to live in the city centre, because that creates a city centre which is alive 24 hours a day. The more “alive” a place is, the safer it is perceived to be.

*The districts.* The vision for the city also deals with the development of the different districts of Uppsala - how every district could be developed so that they would all have an equal share of living premises, office environments and service facilities. Every district has its own characteristics and it would take a different course of action to

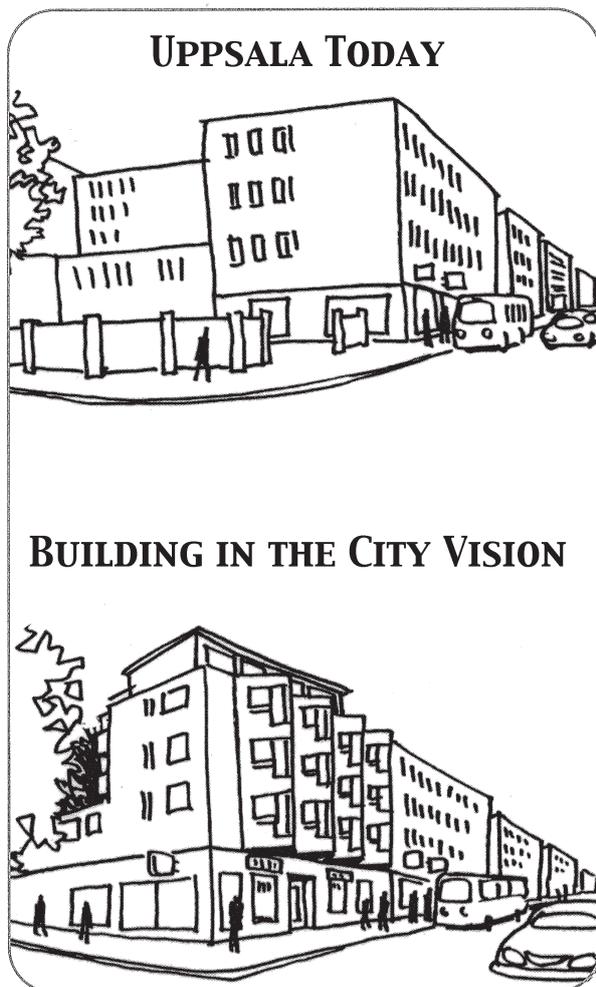


Figure 3.5 Vision Uppsala 2012. The drawing shows a possible result of a so called “urban healing”, building on a non-used area.

### 3. URBAN GROWTH AND LONG TERM PLANNING

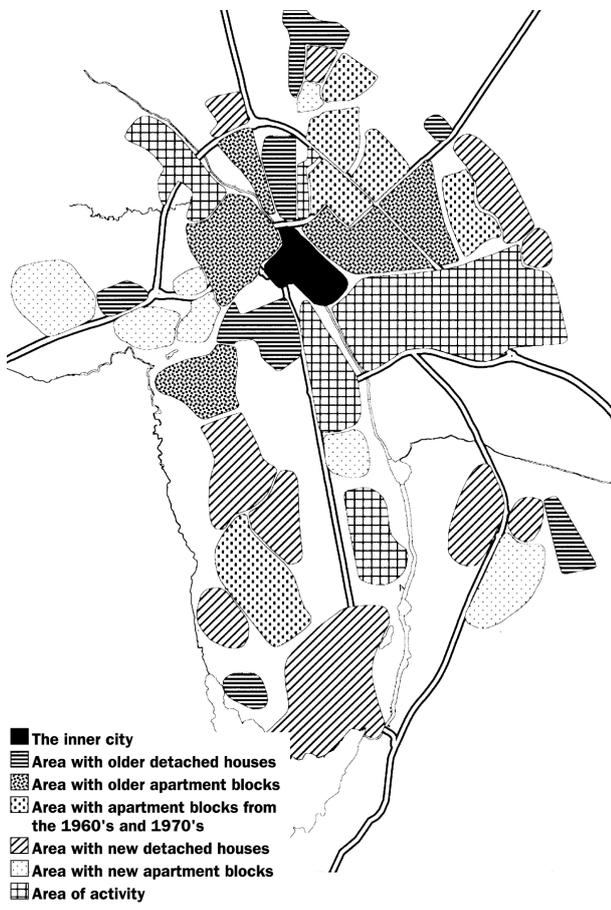
develop each one. People living and working in the same neighbourhood could together propose improvements.

#### 3.4.2 Planning and developing representative democracy

Future urban development planning needs to take new forms in order to create a sustainable society. Planning systems should be horizontal – neither top-down nor bottom-up. Creating dialog, close co-operation, and consensus between partners are main tools for achieving a transparent planning process, and for supporting sustainable use of resources and economically and socially sound co-operation. One key point in the review of planning methods is to determine the way in which private intervention influences the planning process, and to what extent citizens want to participate in planning.

Trust and representativeness are two key words in a democracy. People need to feel trust for the politics and the public administration. Power primarily lies with the elected politicians, but democracy can be exercised in other variants as well, via interest groups, media, lobby groups, etc. Citizens should be treated equally and have equal rights and opportunities to express their opinions and influence political life. Some even contend that the survival of a democracy sometimes depends on the existence of popular movements. Where NGOs, lobby groups, popular movements, and networks/groups of people are a vital part of society, politics and its institutions are legitimate, responsive and functional.

The institutions need to send positive signals to people,



**Figure 3.6 The neighbourhoods of Uppsala.** The map illustrates how the city has developed during the 20<sup>th</sup> century, and also how the character of the city varies from the city centre to the outskirts.

welcoming a dialogue between citizens and politicians. Public participation needs to be encouraged. Citizens need to know their rights and opportunities for participation in politics. It is essential that all kinds of groups have the same conditions for practising democracy, and are heard and treated in the same way. A democratic society requires involved citizens, who use democratic tools actively, in order to put pressure on decision makers. Citizens' rights are most often central when discussing democracy in welfare states, but the opposite, which concerns citizens' obligations, are not. In a democracy, the role of the citizen has to be more than to be a user and consumer of public governmental services. The focus is too often on what society can do for citizens, instead of what citizens can do for society.

A transition to a sustainable society demands a new way of co-operation. The politicians need to come closer to the people, and the people need to be more active and engaged in the debate, and in the practical implementation process. This requires a more open planning process, delegating work to non-governmental organisations, providing citizens with information, and planning and organising education, e.g., in co-operation with NGOs, universities and schools. New ways may be found in developing already existing tools for democracy. It is important to understand the different situations and conditions that exist in other countries in order to create a sustainable society.

#### 3.4.3 Restructuring the million homes program neighbourhoods

A special project within the vision and strategy for Uppsala is the work with the million homes program neighbourhoods. These are areas characterised by monotonous high rise buildings, erected mostly during the 1960s in order to create new apartments in places where many had very bad living conditions. The apartments themselves were mostly of good quality and very affordable (typically rental apartments), but the neighbourhoods and the external environments were uniform and did not support a good community spirit. The result was that often unemployed and less well-off people gathered there, including immigrants, and social unrest and sometimes criminality followed. The re-development work in these neighbourhoods (see box: Gröna Gottsunda) focuses on creating multi-functionality, especially workplaces, a better social and community spirit, security, a more pleasant environment and more social contacts.

#### 3.4.4 The next phase

The proposal for *Vision and strategy for Uppsala City* was under consultation for four months. As for Three perspectives of Uppsala 2012, *Vision and strategy for Uppsala City* has a broad consultation base and the municipality of Uppsala tried to reach out to as many citizens as possible. As well, citizen panels and consultation meetings were arranged during this consultation period.

When viewpoints from the public consultations have been received and analysed, the proposal for the document *Vision and strategy for Uppsala City* will be revised. Thereafter it will be presented to the City council for a decision.

### 3. URBAN GROWTH AND LONG TERM PLANNING

It will take considerable time and effort to implement the vision. It will act as a guide for other plans, programs and policies that will be developed by the municipality. In

the near future, the *Vision and strategy for Uppsala City* will act as a program for work concerning the comprehensive plan for Uppsala which has already begun.

#### The Green Gottsunda project in the million homes program area

##### Gottsunda - a suburb of Uppsala

A project where the aspects of partnership and civic society have played an important role is the work with Gottsunda - a living area in the western part of Uppsala.

Gottsunda is situated in the west part of the city of Uppsala. Through the project, Green Gottsunda, the municipality of Uppsala wants to change negative trends in Gottsunda. The vision is to create a more sustainable atmosphere and way of living, with good social, cultural, economic and ecological structures.

##### The million homes program areas

In the late 1960s, building the living area began, and the main part of the area was finished in the beginning of the 1980s. Gottsunda is a typical so-called million homes program neighbourhood. A program that dates back to 1965 when there was an increasingly severe lack of housing in Sweden. The Swedish Parliament decided that one million new apartments were to be built within ten years. The goals were politically controversial, but never before had so many buildings been constructed in such a short time.

After only a few years, a public, critical debate began. People were not satisfied with the physical design of the buildings, and a negative attitude towards people living in million homes program areas arose. Characteristic of this type of living area is large-scale housing, residential buildings up to 16 stories high, often of poor architectural quality, and often located far from services and workplaces. The municipality of Uppsala decided that the Local Investment Program for the year 1999 would be concentrated on a million homes program area, which ended up being Gottsunda.

More than 60% of the apartments in Gottsunda are rental units. In Gottsunda centre there are a diversity of commercial and public services. A sport hall, a public swimming facility, a library, a theatre for children and youth and a youth recreation centre exist. Many green areas for recreation are to be found in the immediate surroundings. Gottsunda is a multi-cultural neighbourhood. There is a total of 13,000 people living there, 35% of them born abroad.

Today, the million homes program's large-scale suburban neighbourhoods are once again a focus for community planning, primarily because of the rapid increases in the housing segregation of various ethnic minorities and the problems these people face in gaining a foothold in Swedish society. Parts of Gottsunda are known as problem areas with a high degree of mobility. Selective measures have been taken earlier to improve the worst conditions.

##### Focus on the sustainable living area

Through the project Green Gottsunda, negative trends will be changed. The vision is to create a more sustainable atmosphere and way of living, with good social, cultural, economic and ecological structures. The identity of Gottsunda will be strengthened through its



Figure 3.7 Apartment houses from the 1960's in Gottsunda. (photo: Lars Rydén.)

development potential. Building entrances, footpaths and bicycle roads will prevent insecurity. The process of change will be open for inhabitants to participate in the planning and implementation process. An important part of the project is to give citizens information and knowledge concerning the topics that the project involves. Knowledge is needed for generating an interest, which may result in changing behaviour - which is needed in the transition to a sustainable society.

The project Green Gottsunda embraces many different types of measures with a primary focus on environmental improvements. Water and energy conservation is a main goal. Other measures concern waste handling, information, adult education and follow-up and evaluation of the project. The total investment costs are estimated at SEK 26,3 millions. The project is divided into 18 measures, including creation of an energy and environmental centre, waste handling stations and a second biogas plant, reconstruction of heat and ventilation systems, installation of low energy lamps and automatic control engineering, change of refrigerators and washing machines; and removal of PCBs from buildings, land, and infiltration of the surface water, etc.

The measures have been ranked according to a system where the highest ranking goes to measures that reduce energy use most, and efforts that increase the use of renewable energy resources. Long term effects in reaching a sustainable society have been given a high value. Ideas with a more social and economic focus like creation of work places and services are also a part of the project goal. The time line for the implementation of the measures is two years, with a start in the year 2000.