

# The Walkable City

## Prologue

The construction of a colour space.

The first part is always the most difficult. I am from the future. Thank you so much for inviting me to this presentation. I thought before coming that I would probably speak at the city hall or at some university, so it comes as kind of a surprise that I am here in a Dance Theatre. I guess it says something important about your culture, your times. I am here today to tell you about the city I live in, the city you live in, the Stockholm of today and the Stockholm of the future. I am here to tell you about a document that has become very important for us in the future. The Walkable City – Stockholm City Plan. The Walkable City was adopted by the Stockholm City Council in March 2010. This vision for the city of Stockholm became the starting point for the future of Stockholm, the city I live in, and the city where your children and grandchildren will live.

## The Walkable City part I

This is some of the most important excerpts from your current City Plan. The Walkable City.

### *Marketing*

1.

Back in those days competition among cities and regions were increasing, which made marketing and profiling increasingly important. International recognition was at the time relatively low. Stockholm was sometimes linked with views and values that did not correspond with reality. It became important to consistently market Stockholm through symbols and conceptual projects.

2.

The vision of a world-class Stockholm was all about creating a vibrant and growing city that mixed different functions. The model often used for this was the intensive urban environment of the inner city, with its diverse range of housing, workplaces.

3.

The officials at the city planning office developed spectacular, momentous projects in conjunction with other players, such as building companies, real estate agencies and the tourist industry. These projects made the vision clear and worked like symbols for the Stockholm of the future, it also included other developments like matching job-seekers with the needs of companies, integration projects and the city's quality initiatives.

4.

Cultural life had developed into one of the cornerstones of the region's branding as 'Stockholm – The Capital of Scandinavia'. Stockholm's cultural life featured strong institutions, extensive local cultural activities, a dynamic cultural climate in all artistic areas and a growing number of festivals. The region was not only the centre of Sweden's cultural industry but also the home of publishers, music companies and designers.

5.

In an increasingly internationalised world, a people-friendly urban environment, a rich variety of housing and workplaces, well-developed services and a broad range of culture and entertainment had become ever more important in gaining a competitive advantage. The attractive metropolis of Stockholm had reconstructed itself to become a stronger brand.

### *Business*

1.

Back in those days the most important issue was to meet the need of the business world for skilled labour and improved communications. Another priority task was to promote and develop urban landscape into a good city with a high quality of life, so that workers would want to live and work here.

2.

The assets in these nodes, in the form of shops, housing, sporting facilities and proximity to nature, were improved, helping to create a greater well-being and a safer, more vibrant living environment across the city.

3.

In these times of globalisation, the economy had become increasingly dependent on trade with the rest of the world. The reasons for this were usually described as a combination of market forces, technical advances and political decisions on deregulation. This created an increased competition between different regions, particularly since large corporations were becoming less and less dependent on, and rooted in, what used to be their home region.

4.

The city needed to prepare itself for a major increase in the number of workplaces. From this perspective, a long-term focus on nodes was of strategic importance for Stockholm as a business city. The range of nodes with different profiles and varied architecture offered exciting new opportunities for the business community. More workplaces also created a positive knock-on effect towards an urban environment that was even more dynamic.

5.

Investments in education, from the first years of school to research at a high academic level, provided the region with a skilled labour force that few others could match. Careful monitoring and follow-up mean that no student left compulsory school without good basic knowledge. There was an extensive selection of schools with various focuses, and they met the needs of children with special talents. This was one of the reasons that so many businesses choose to establish operations here.

6.

This was in a time when the region had managed to successfully embrace globalisation. This can be seen in the comparative analysis presented by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development. The region's businesses were more knowledge intensive and the service sector larger than in other parts of the country and there were several well-established clusters. However, there were strong indications that competition was likely to become even tougher in core industries such as information and communications technology (ICT), biomedicine, finance and environmental technology. To meet this challenge the city played an important role in promoting a good

business climate, so that companies were able to compete under these tougher conditions, and so that the region remained an attractive place to relocate to.

7.

The market for business-related services also expanded significantly. Demand was high for lawyers, accountants, economists, hotels and shops. Overall, the region offered favourable conditions for the development and commercialisation of innovations. It featured high-quality education and research systems, a dynamic business community and venture capital. Ideas evolved into new products and services. New companies sprang up from this highly innovative environment, and existing ones strengthened their competitiveness.

8.

To make the vision a reality, it was essential to have shared goals and partnerships between the city, public-sector players and the business community. The new state sector governance became more flexible and harmonised, particularly for the application of planning and construction legislation.

### *Infrastructure*

1.

The city's conclusion was that there was a need for long-term and collective development work, with the focus not only on the individual districts, but also on how the different parts of the city relate to one another and above all how the labour market could become more integrated. With these issues as a starting point, alongside a joint development work for the southern outer city, work on the vision had finally begun.

2.

The people of Stockholm moved over ever greater geographic areas to shop, work, go to school, meet friends and so on. As well as journeys into the inner city, an increasing number of people needed to move between different destinations in the outer city and beyond the city boundaries. Poor cross-city public transport links and physical barriers in the form of roads and unsafe areas made this type of journeys difficult. To make daily life work, the car had become a necessity for many households. Those who did not have

a car, particularly young people and women, were therefore affected harder by the poor links across the outer city.

3.

Much of the fear of crime could usually be put down to a fear of unknown people and places. Research indicated that residents of the inner city often believed the suburbs to be dangerous, while people living in the suburbs felt that the inner city was dangerous. Greater integration between the various parts of the city thus promoted a greater feeling of safety and social cohesion.

4.

A safe urban environment was highly valued and the goal for this underpinned all urban planning. Many, particularly women and older people, used to worry about being victims of crime and felt unsafe in their neighbourhood after dark. This anxiety had consequences for daily life. It could, for example, mean taking long detours, not going to the cinema or choose to take a taxi late at night.

5.

Tackling the issue of safety was, in many ways, a matter of creating a sense of security in the local community as well as in populated public spaces and environments. More vibrant street-level retail spaces had a positive effect on the feeling of safety. Physical measures and upgrades to increase the sense of security were implemented in many parts of the city, including within the framework of specific integration projects in the outer city.

6.

Another key factor was the development of parks and green spaces, especially since less valuable green areas had been sacrificed to urban renewal. Starting points for planning included incorporating parks and green spaces as elements in the urban environment and took into account the fact that the attractiveness of green spaces depended more on the functions they provided, their design and their accessibility, rather than on their size.

## *Social Construction*

1.

People with similar backgrounds and interests tended to live close to one another, and many inhabitants lived separate lives from those different from themselves. In order to increase social integration, it became important to develop more shared meeting places, where people with different backgrounds could see and meet one another in the natural course of their day.

2.

The social perspective of planning was strengthened on a neighbourhood level. Proposed changes was analysed from a social perspective.

3.

A focus on new, high-class residential environments, together with high quality neighbourhood schools, had a bearing on the reputation of these neighbourhoods and promoted a positive development in a wider sense. Several of the nodes used to have a relatively homogenous range of housing. More varied housing attracted more consumers and provided increased opportunities for an upward housing mobility within a single district.

4.

Stockholm was quite sparsely populated in comparison with other major cities. The plot ratio was highest in the dense built environment of the inner city. There were, of course, dense centres of population in other parts of the region, but these were only limited areas of the suburbs. The conclusion was that there was considerable potential for increasing density in large parts of Stockholm and that greater density could help to create a more vibrant environment in line with the city's vision.

5.

As in other major cities, there were significant social and economic differences across the region. Prosperity had increased over many years, but so had the disparities between different groups in society. One of the region's greatest challenges was to provide all people with equal life chances, not least in the labour market, where Stockholm had been

less successful than many other places. It became imperative to make better use of this reserve of labour in order to secure long-term growth. There used to be huge differences between districts and between the inner and outer city. Factors such as education, income level and ethnic background were clearly reflected in the pattern of housing. Certain areas with mainly detached housing and some districts in the outer city had a population that was socially far from diverse.

6.

A number of municipal and national integration projects targeted many of the areas that were expanded during the Million Programme. The enormous home-building drive in the 1960s and 1970s. These integration projects led to positive changes, for example in an upgrading of the urban environment, but evaluations of the projects found it difficult to identify any lasting improvements.

7.

The urban fabric was developed into a city with many centres. The historical division between city centre and suburbs, neighbourhoods made up of houses and of multi-family dwellings, bedroom communities and workplace areas were dismantled. Different forms of tenure became more mixed. Various projects that improved the reputations of previously segregated areas were implemented, turning them into some of the city's most attractive areas. All construction focused on integration. The city of Stockholm also cooperated with associations and the business community so that people could learn the new language, find a job and feel at home in their new culture. Stockholm's natural pre-conditions were taken care of in a groundbreaking way. Active cooperation between the city, property owners, businesses, citizens and the police made Stockholm the cleanest and safest capital city in the world.

8.

The central parts of the region also stood apart in terms of the mix of housing and workplaces. In other urban districts housing dominated, which related to the focus of earlier urban planning to separate functions from one another. Although there were significant business areas in most parts of Stockholm, the situation was a long way off the goal of a mixed city.

9.

Specific investments were made to build housing with simpler standards and lower housing costs, to ensure that people gained access to the housing market. The broad variety of housing made it possible to choose between different forms of housing throughout the city. The city became a place without physical or social barriers. There used to be a lot of discussions on how to make careers, careers in living conditions, moving up an imaginary property ladder. It became essential to keep moving, not to get too rooted. Not the flatline on the path to progress. Not to produce history together with locality, too resist localism. Through a series of projects and cross-sector routes, the city's districts became linked with each other. Where major traffic routes before prevented people from moving between different areas, tunnels were built and over-decking projects were constructed. All of the city's districts featured a mix of housing, companies, culture and services. This applied particularly to the downtown area, where additional housing was added, and in the West and South districts, which was enriched with exciting workplaces, new row houses, single-family dwellings and tenant-owned apartments. The investments were possible thanks to a broad regional consensus and new financing solutions in cooperation with the state and the private sector. Infrastructure projects could from now on be implemented much more quickly.

## **The Walkable City part II**

These were some excerpts from the Walkable City, the City Plan that in March 2010 became the official guiding document for the planning of Stockholm. From here on I will go through some examples, trying to give you a better understanding of what kind of environment the future has become. What world your visions for the future ended up creating. The first examples are about you, about your generation, about your times.

1.

You still believe that you live in the era of information. That your technologies are about producing, organizing and distributing information. You are wrong. You live in the era of attention; it is not you who consume information. It is information that consumes you.

2.

You are still obsessed with objects; your whole culture has been founded on the economy of stuff. This is no longer true; just look at yourself. All that cheap cotton you are dragging around. It is so primitive. Disgusting. You live in an age of phantom pains; the object-based economy is running on fumes. You are already in the future, you all feel it, but you can't see it yet.

3.

Pleased to meet you, pleased to have you on my plate

your meat is sweet to me

your destiny

your fate

you're my life support,

your life is my sport

I'm a man-eating machine,

employer of the year,

grandmaster of fear

corporate cannibal,

financial criminal,

eat you like an animal.

4.

The only resource that is rare is attention. In a world where things and information comes in endless supplies, the only thing there is never enough of is the attention of human minds. What is the point using energy to produce what is never used, never looked at, never consumed. So how do you survive in an economy of attention? Get as many as possible to spend time on something you have produced. Become rich by being really

good at spending time. Learn to focus and direct your attention, and you can become a professional consumer. Attention is the currency of the future.

5.

In these times all transactions are managed through a very efficient, fluid and pure system of consumption. There are of course still things. The physical layer of reality still exists. It's just that it doesn't really matter. It is, I would imagine, a bit like your relationship to dirt? Yes of course you can use it to make a cup, or a vase. Or even cultivate it and plant something in it. But why should you?

6.

You have to live the paradox of stuff. The stuff you dig out of the earth's crust becomes, in an information economy, less important than the information that informs it, what you think about the stuff. The more you think about that information, the more you understand about stuff, the more real the stuff becomes. So from this perspective, the more you see that style matters more than substance, the more you see the vital role, the vitality, of substance. It is like a double hunger, by being obsessed, staring at the surface; we become more and more overcome by a desire for the real to exist. Each needs the other. The Real thing is the real thing.

7.

I feel very fine, I feel very buoyant and light and resilient. I have a feeling that my hands are not resting against this chair. I see flashes of colour, quit a bit; it seems to have an awful amount of complements of violet and yellow. I assume it is grey. I have a wavering tendency. A very pleasant feeling of nausea. The pulsation becomes more intelligent, the floor feels like I am watching it. Somehow, I try to rescue myself from the idea that there are so many realities here. I feel like an observer. This is purple isn't it? It seems to me that I can't seem to say what I want to say. I like to find out which reality I am in. This feeling comes over me of the singing, of angels. I want to feed this feeling of joy. I feel like I am not myself, I am like a lot of other people. They are all better than me.

8.

These are the rules of survival in the Attention-Economy:

- Build attention traps. Create value by manipulating the ruling attention structures. Judo, not brute force, gets the best results. Conceptual artists did this as a joke. Do it for business.

- Understand the logic of the centripetal gaze and how to profit from it.

- Draw your inspiration from your audience not your muse. Keep in touch with that audience. The customer is always right. No Olympian artistic ego need apply.

- Turn the “masterpiece psychology” of conventional art upside down:

1. Massproduction not skilled handwork

2. Massaudience not connoisseurship

3. Trendiness not timelessness

4. Repetition not rarity

- Objects don't matter. Conceptual art gets you nowhere. Create stuff you can sell.

- Live in the present. That's where value is added. Don't build your house in eternity.

“My work has no future at all. I know that. A few years from now, my work will mean nothing.”

9.

This is why the Walkable City was so important. Before The Walkable City cities were based on the needs of its citizens, this was in a time when politicians still talked about housing as a fundamental right. Public space was created as a pre-emptive strike against fascism; through planning and design a formula for a truly democratic city was being developed. Public buildings were erected to facilitate a sense of collective belonging. Whole systems planned to accumulate knowledge as well financial wealth, and dispersed for the common good. The city was re-organized in order to minimize the negative impact of the market economy. The city was actively trying to counter economic segregation through rent control and large investments in housing and infrastructure. City-planning was based on the dream of a better society, on the possibilities that we could become better as humans, more decent in relation to each other. This was wrong.

It was a fundamental misunderstanding of how capital works. It had no future. It could not be allowed to have a future.

10.

So we had to get rid of architecture, or at least in the way you understand it. Architecture kept people apart, but this was not really a problem. The important thing was that Architecture brought people together. Being such a slow medium it had the capacity to carry hope through time. Architecture resisted change, often by just being really difficult to get rid of, but also because it could make people get attached to a place without it having any economical value. Sometimes the built environment even resisted attempts to be commercialised. It embodied struggle. It was not trustworthy. Even if you built it entirely as something else, it could suddenly transform into a symbol for something completely different. Architecture was too predictable in one situation, just to turn around and become totally unpredictable in the next. Architecture was too much of a risk. So we started to construct the Walkable City, a homogenous environment that can transform itself in an instant. The Walkable City was developed in order to perfectly align with any possible economical reality. A hyperflexible structure that flickers, extends, subtracts, offsets, trims, splines and mirror copies itself into anything it needs to be.

11.

In these days we live in a classless society. This does not mean that social oppression does not exist. On the contrary, social competition, what you call class struggle, is the essence of our economic existence, our reality. It is just that identity has been broken down into such small particles, almost to an atomic level. Identity has become so differentiated, that it has become difficult to talk about group formations in a way you could understand. This means that it has become impossible for any kind of solidarity to exist. The foundation for solidarity is that we recognize something of ourselves in the encounter with others. In these times we are so far apart, that we are all exactly the same. Systematic freedom.

12.

I am one with everything. I am...I can see everything in colour. You have to see the air, you can't believe it, and the dimensions and the rays and it is all coming down to you and moving. What is pleasant and unpleasant? It is all present. It is too beautiful. Can't you

feel it? It is so beautiful and lovely and alive. You shouldn't say anything about anything, this, this is reality. If you look right over there. Are you looking, can you see? I wish I could talk in Technicolor or let you see, did you say you could see it? Its. I can't tell you about it. If you can't see it you will just never know. I feel sorry for you.

13.

Hundreds of years ago the architect Le Corbusier said –A City That Has Speed Has Success. He was wrong. Well, he was right of course, but he thought it was about cars. The fast pace of the car, of transportation, was just impossible to attach real commercial value to. It was too private, too shielded, too much speed through space. Instead we had to get space to move through us. All these streets full of - strolling, browsing, drifting – people.

14.

We are on the very outskirts now. Wow! It looks absolutely stunning, at night, from the sky...

“Looks good, doesn't it?”

It looks otherworldly – unreal – I feel like I'm on a giant film set.

“We'll be there in a few minutes,”

My blood is pounding in my ears as my heartbeat accelerates and adrenaline spikes through my system. Oh my... I think I'm going to faint.

My fate is in your hands.

We are now amongst the buildings, and up ahead I can see a tall skyscraper with a helipad on top. A word is painted in white on top of the building. It's getting nearer and nearer, bigger and bigger... like my anxiety.

15.

A cityscape full of human resources; so many encounters that can be commercialised in an indefinite numbers of ways. Every moment has a potential financial value. The city is organized in such a way to always optimize this value. Historic orders of work, division of labour and leisure time, family structures, ethnic backgrounds, cultural preferences.

They kept us apart. It meant that the optimal possible productivity could never be realized. Spatial segregation, history of place and geo-political difference was a financial disaster. Instead of spatial segregation, we needed to invest in economic segregation. The rich, the not so very rich and the poor need to live together. Everyone constantly on the move, engaged in a floating state of productivity. New workforce constellations always ready to put into operation. To fuel this continuum of progress; history had to be destroyed. Political diversity is expanding endlessly. Cultural differences are sub-divided into more and more possible identities. The environment has been constructed in such a way that as many encounters as possible happen at any given moment.

16.

The elevator arrives on the first floor, and I scramble out as soon as the doors slide open, stumbling once, but fortunately not sprawling on to the immaculate sandstone floor. I race for the wide glass doors, and I'm free in the bracing, cleansing, damp air. Raising my face, I welcome the cool refreshing rain. I close my eyes and take a deep, purifying breath, trying to recover. I shake my head. Holy crap – what was that? My heart steadies to its regular rhythm, and I can breathe normally again. I head for the car.

17.

The city was a rope hung between who we were and who we would become. By building, we moved as fast as we could away from what we were, towards what we would become.

18. (stop white noise)

In these days, The Walkable City is in full effect. Progress is everywhere. Anything that holds it back is immediately removed. In order to succeed all obstacles for the smooth transition into the unknown have been dismantled. Only by doing this it is possible to create the exponential development that have become necessary for our survival.

Instrumental is that we all agree on shared goals, integration, partnerships, cooperation and collaboration. What before could take decades through political disagreements and struggle, can now easily be implemented and realized in weeks. Since we are all involved these procedures develop in real-time. Everything is diverse everywhere. Everyone and everything is integrated. It is a deeply democratic society. Not out of choice, but out of necessity. The three dimensions of space are incorporated with the dimension of time.

Time and space can be freely exchanged. Everything can happen simultaneously in different spaces and different times. We are all integrated and segregated at the same time. Everything is constantly in motion. A flow of continuous calibration searching for optimum conditions. The Future has arrived, and it is here forever.

19.

I feel that everyone here is conscious of this meeting. We will never be the same. An ethereal negative, a nimbus around it with a lot of purple hues, a lot of yellows, greens. The background is moving into your face. I feel as though I have an entrance into an emotional life, and yet I can't feel. I am anxious about the reality of it. This one seems much heavier, more positive. I feel these lovely colours vibrating all over me. It is shimmering, like water. It is just giving and, you don't know. You want to give yourself. I feel as though I have no enemies in the world and this is very lovely, it is so fragile, delicate and lovely. It goes and comes you know. It is marvellous. I feel so happy.