

URBAN DEVELOPMENT, CLIMATE AND ENVIRONMENT AS COMPETITIVE ADVANTAGES

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With a population of 250.000, Bergen is Norway's second largest city and the capital of Western Norway, which is the leading region for all significant Norwegian export industries. Bergen is also a vital centre for art and culture.

Bergen has a rich cultural life, including higher education and established cultural institutions that contribute to the development of the city. In the process leading to the Strategic Economic Development Plan for Bergen 2006-2009 it was emphasized that this cultural life makes the region attractive for inhabitants and companies. Other strategic documents developed are: "New Cultural Strategy 2003–2013", "Bergen City of the Arts 2008–2017"⁷, "Plan of action for Rhythmical Music 2004–2007", "Arts Plan for 2006–2016" and "Plan for the international artistic and cultural policy of the city of Bergen 2006–2009".

We find it important that Bergen city has an arts policy for the period 2008-2017. An important aspect is that culture industries development is also emphasized within the framework of the strategic planning document for economic development. Some of the important directions stated in the policy documents of the city are:

- Ensuring artistic freedom-allocating more budget for innovative projects.
- Improving conditions for art and artists.
- Emphasizing the role of art in creating a sense of identity in a diverse and multifaceted city.
- Developing further Bergen's artistic identity.

The new action plan of the city of Bergen will support three new institutions: Incubator for creative industries; Network organisation for design and Audience Development Company.

We also find it important to discuss the role of local governments in developing a cultural policy and creative economy which mobilises diversity, job creation, economic development, urban regeneration and investing in the creative infrastructure and design. In this way the city of Bergen aims to connect its cultural history with the development into a modern city.

The City centre

The urban spaces and city squares (called "almenninger") are a product of a mediaeval town plan, of European urban traditions, sea transport, the West-Norwegian landscape, shortage of ground space, density of population and the Bergen urban culture. The "almenninger" are physical expressions of a public right of access, and the physical space can be perceived as an example of the right of every individual to participate in processes relating to the development of the city.

Imagine a plaza or town square bustling with people who are greeting each other, buying, selling, and exchanging ideas! Parks, plazas and squares succeed when people come first, not design.

The historical qualities of the urban spaces are the city's greatest asset and form the basis for city life, experiences and identity. The blend of residential houses, shops, offices and businesses makes the urban spaces busy thoroughfares, places to linger

and venues for numerous activities all day long. The locations and qualities of the urban spaces are the backbone of the city's movement pattern. These qualities should serve as a model for urban structure in the densification areas.

The centre of Bergen, with its concentration of economic, social and cultural activity, is a dominant pivot in the urban structure.

Good accessibility, pedestrian friendly zones and the prioritisation of public transport are essential if the centre is to serve its function and maintain its attraction. All handling of heavy goods should be removed from the centre, which must also be protected against unnecessary road traffic. Environmental qualities will be emphasised. The improvement of streets and urban spaces has

high priority in the Bergen Programme (2010-2015). The City has also contributed substantially to this development over its own budgets.

Industrial and commercial areas

Bergen wants to strengthen its position as an attractive city for expertise-intensive businesses and commercial service providers. These businesses are very interested in locations near the city centre. There are substantial transformation areas in central parts of the city that will generate continued growth in new housing developments and new jobs.

All the central areas defined in the municipal master plan also represent great potential for offices and service industries. Regulations and guidelines have been drawn up for the establishment of retail businesses in Bergen. It is recommended to locate large retail businesses in the centres of the city districts or the city centre. Stores for space-intensive goods can be located in some of the industrial areas provided there is good access to the transport system.

The strategic business plan is rooted in Bergen Scenarios 2020, which is a unique collaborative project involving private and public sector players. The object of Bergen Scenarios 2020 is to promote value creation in the City of Bergen and County of Hordaland.¹

Travel and tourism

Bergen faces a number of challenges in terms of its tourism development. Specifically, it is often

perceived by international tourists to be an 'exclusive' destination. Equally, many of its tourism attractions (such as the nearby ski resorts) have insufficient market penetration in markets outside of Norway. Geographically rather remote in terms of its ground transport, Bergen depends primarily on air travel as the main means of transport access for tourism visitors.

Bergen is also known as "the Fjord Capital" and "the Gateway to the Fjords of Norway" as well as being a well-established cruise port. Bergen has in addition regular calls by cruise ferries from Denmark. And every day, throughout the year, the

¹ To read more about Bergen of the future:

https://www.bergen.kommune.no/bk/multimedia/archive/00051/KLIMABYEN_ENG_23_03_51983a.pdf

famous Coastal Steamer "Hurtigruten" starts and ends its popular round trips to the North Cape (Kirkenes and the Russian border) in the port of Bergen.

The revised Bergen Tourist Board marketing strategy scheme will be used to provide essential

infrastructure support across a number of key areas, including training, communications and marketing. All the major stakeholders have established the scheme, including the 400 members of the Bergen Tourist Board.

The broad objectives of the scheme are to:

- support the growth of the economies of Hordaland and Sogn & Fjordane counties, in particular in the more remote rural areas;
- stimulate sustainable tourism and the development of destinations and attractions;
- reduce the need for long-distance travel via connecting 'hub' airports and therefore cut down on emissions volumes per passenger.

EcoCity

Urban gentrification is the socio-economic and demographic change in an urban area that results from significant numbers of better-off people buying housing property in a low-income community. As a result of gentrification the average income increases and family size decreases. It often has the effect of what critics charge is an informal economic eviction of the lower-income people due to rising rents, house prices, and property taxes.

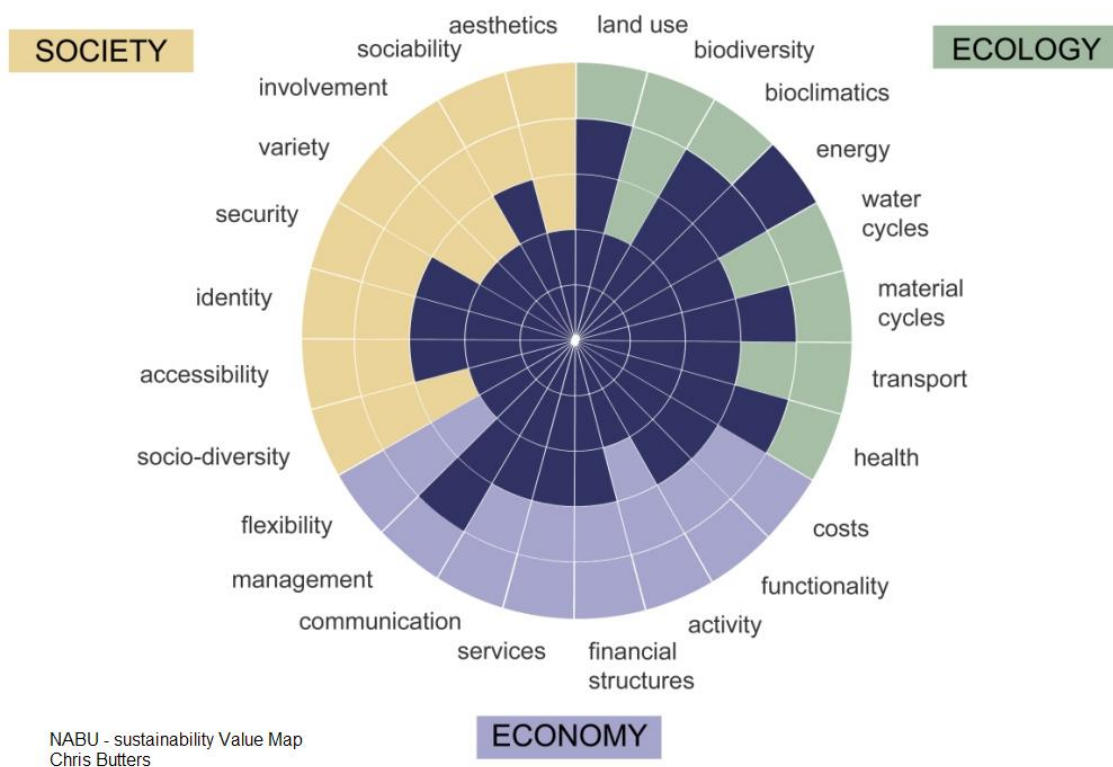
The City of Bergen aims to be a good city to live in for all kind of people, students, children, retired people, immigrants etc.

An example: in connection with the action plan for the urban development areas around Damsgårdssundet, a work process has been carried out with the aim of incorporating good universal access qualities when establishing new pedestrian routes from the existing residential areas through the transformation areas towards the city centre, and in the new waterfront promenade. Conclusions and concrete solutions from this work will form a basis for negotiations with developers in the development areas and form a basis for the upgrading of public streets, urban spaces and pedestrian routes in the area. The work will be used to make a local accessibility map, which will also show the gradients in the hilly landscape.

The project will be implemented using a work process in which the following will be involved:

- State Housing Bank
- The Norwegian State Council on Disability
- Miscellaneous elite users and experts
- Section for property development and development contracts
- Public Roads Administration

Our vision for future qualities is that they shall give dignity and attractions to the area, based on the principles in this value map.



The map visualises the goal that *all* architecture and city planning should fulfil the three conditions of sustainability.

To sum up how the City of Bergen is working with the challenge of gentrification we can give these key words:

- Democracy, participation and responsibility.
- Infrastructure. Sustainable qualities and accessibility for all groups.
- Housing, planning and administration.
- A combined school and local cultural centre as the heart of the area.
- Health and social care handling the tasks within the area.
- Competence development.

In Bergen, we have experienced what it is like to be struck by extreme weather conditions; we have had floods and people have died in their home as a result of rock slides.

Adapting to climate change is an enormous challenge. But if we meet and adapt to the challenges posed by extreme weather conditions, and use crises constructively, I believe that climate and environment can become competitive advantages.

Some examples:

Cities must prepare for modern, attractive and environmentally friendly transport and make it beneficial to use environmentally friendly transport. The long-term planning includes climate, energy and the environment as well as transport, which have been incorporated into the land-use part of the municipal master plan in Bergen.

Because: it is necessary to see the different plans coordinated. Environmentally friendly transport makes businesses more attractive. Good public transport and a well developed network of cycle paths that bring people to and from work effectively and comfortably make it more attractive to work in Bergen.

Region: we need to look beyond our city boundaries, and collaborate with our neighbours.

BERGEN LIGHT RAIL: A gigantic environmental project, primarily because an urban light railway is a very environmentally friendly means of transport. In addition, Bergen Light Rail entails extensive concentration of building developments along its route, so that an increasing number of people can benefit from the existing infrastructure. The overall result, therefore, is lower energy consumption and greater environmental gains for Bergen.

WELL ADAPTED GREEN AREAS: The City of Bergen is the first municipality in Norway with a comprehensive watercourse plan. We are working to reduce pollution and prevent destructive encroachments in watercourses in order to ensure universal right of use to them as recreational areas. We are also making efforts to make the city's mountains and coastal areas more accessible for everyone.

FOCUS ON DRINKING WATER: People know that Bergen is famous for its rain, but the city is also at the forefront when it comes to treating water. All drinking water in Bergen has to pass two independent hygiene barriers. The water is first subjected to wastewater treatment and then to UV radiation, thus ensuring that any parasites are killed.

THE CITY IS CUTTING ITS OIL CONSUMPTION: The emissions from an oil-fuelled heater are the equivalent to the greenhouse gas emissions from one year's car use. Becoming oil-free reduces the emission of greenhouse gases, energy consumption and energy costs. This is an environmental measure that really works!

ENVIRONMENTAL CERTIFICATION: The council has established a special environment fund and all municipal entities will be environmentally certified. The goals include Green Flag certification of schools and kindergartens

CITIES OF THE FUTURE²: A local, regional and national 6-year project. The City of Bergen is taking part in a national program named Cities of the Future. In this program we are particularly working with land use and transport, Heating, Consumption patterns and waste and Adaptation to climate change.

BERGEN COLLABORATES ON THE ENVIRONMENTAL CHALLENGES: The Norwegian cities Bergen, Stavanger and Kristiansand (including business corporations) are collaborating on energy solutions of the future. The aim is to strengthen cooperation between energy players in the regions. In addition, these cities wish to take the lead in developing sustainable and environmentally efficient transport solutions and forward-looking use of energy.

² https://www.bergen.kommune.no/bk/multimedia/archive/00037/Cities_of_the_future_37902a.pdf

CITIES MUST COLLABORATE WITH INDUSTRIAL CORPORATIONS: We need trade and industry that seize opportunities.

Today, Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) is a competitive necessity for industries in order to attract business. Private sector has an important role, alongside other actors, in the economic and social development of its communities. It is an integrated part of any society and is committed to operating in a responsible and sustainable manner.

The reasons for a business to move beyond compliance and undertake a CSR initiative are many and varied but, where businesses do, they do so because it makes economic sense. Given the dynamics of business today, CSR cannot be seen as a rigid engagement and therefore needs to be seen in a different context than the engagement in environmental, social or economic issues by governments.

While the line between government and business activity is not always a definitive one, it is important to realize that governments have a clear role in society through the provision of certain services – such as health and education, wealth redistribution, and as a guarantor of security, amongst others. Governments should look to promote and support the adoption of responsible attitudes and good practice by companies.

CLIMATE CHANGE AND HUMAN RIGHTS: The City of Bergen would like to see a broad initiative to start work on a new human rights convention which will secure the right to a sustainable future and sustainable decisions within the framework of the climate goals recommended by the United Nations.

The convention can be designed as an additional chapter to the European Convention on Human Rights with the Court of Human Rights in Strasbourg as its highest body or, possibly, as a separate convention with its own court. The convention must build on the individual's right to a sustainable future. It should be supplemented by the reports written by the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe concerning the need for internationally binding conventions on climate and environmental issues, with corresponding opportunities to impose penalties or sanctions in the event of non-compliance or of decision-making that flouts the convention and international agreements. So-called soft laws fail to commit nations and do not secure the future of individuals.