



MP4 WP4.1

Retroactive evaluation of on-the-ground benefits

Evaluation report:
Pilot Eriksbo
in Gøteborg,
Sverige



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Introduction to the pilot project

City of Gothenburg has been involved in MP4 with two pilot projects allocated with MP4 investment money. The projects involved two almost similar city districts (the housing suburbs of Lövgärdet and Eriksbo, respectively) including under-used adjacent nature areas (such as a lake/river system and forest/wilderness areas). The two districts are located northeast of the Gothenburg centre and were constructed in the 1960s and 1970s as part of the so-called 'million program' based on principle of integrating work, living, and city function in smaller city districts. The program focused on creating new and modern housing options for an emerging middle-class in a phase of rapid urbanization in the Swedish society.

Although no formal definition exists in Sweden, both pilot areas are today described by staff in City of Gothenburg as 'deprived communities'. Both areas have physical environments that need to be renewed. The aims for both pilots as specified in initial MP4 project documents were to renew the areas in a sustainable manner, encouraging socio-economic growth and long-term improvements and to increase the attractiveness of open space.

Context and the aim of the project

Both pilot projects take place in what local staff describes as 'deprived' areas in Gothenburg. The areas have higher than average percentage of unemployment, receivers of social welfare, immigrants, and low income groups. The buildings and open spaces are similar in their structure. Apartment buildings are owned by a mix of public and private property owners, including both housing companies and private house-owners. Public green areas are located in the center of the areas and surrounded by dense multistory apartment buildings. The City of Gothenburg owns the green areas in the center of the areas whereas public and private housing companies own areas in between and in close vicinity to the building blocks.

The general objective of the MP4 pilot project in Eriksbo was to develop a master planning process that emphasizes the public value of open spaces, integrating long-term management concerns.

The specific objectives for the project included:

- Increase the use of local open spaces
- Engage local communities, businesses and associations in future maintenance of open spaces
- Engage all stakeholders in the process of decision-making and of finding alternative solutions (alternative funds, cost reduction, voluntary work, etc.) for the maintenance of open spaces
- To have open spaces which are enjoyable and well maintained as well as seen as positive assets by the local communities

At the outset of the MP4 project, the local community park in Eriksbo was still a popular place to meet and play in for the local community but also a very run down area with poor quality of inventory, green elements and the area itself. Improved access to the river banks of the stream Lärjeån located next to the Eriksbo Park was also perceived as a project that could

make the area even more exiting, although this would depend on additional finance and improvement works. Gender issues and safety aspects were also expected to be highlighted in the design process.

The specific place-keeping approach

The specific place-keeping approach in Gothenburg takes outset in the strategic park program of City of Gothenburg which is coherently managed and implemented throughout Gothenburg and in accordance with the needs of the inhabitants of the 10 city districts. The park program is labelled „Make room for the landscape“.

The strategic park program has five so-called ‘strategies’. These are:

- Character („Karakter“)
- Within reach („Inom räckhåll“)
- Taking care of (“Omhändertaget“)
- Make use of (“Ställa til förfogande“)
- Variety („Variation“)

The strategy unit within Park and Nature Administration has the main responsibility for carry out the strategic park program.

The overall aims and five strategies of the park program are implemented locally in each city district through the so-called „district park plans“. District park plans are elaborated within the overall framework of the park program and the work utilizes the knowledge and opinions of professionals, institutions and organizations (e.g. schools), experts, and the local community.

The content of a district park plan basically describe the current status of green spaces and highlight the development potentials within a district. Each park (or green-spaces) as well as the overall district and the green structure is described. The district park plan contains a range of photos and maps to make information easy accessible. The district park plan is intended for strategic decision-making supporting investment, development, and maintenance priorities. The district park plan does not contain information about how green spaces are managed and maintained or who is involved in these activities. It basically focuses on the physicality and social use and functions of parks within a city district. Although the strategic park program is on the potentials for place-making, the district park plans are a part of the framework for the long term management and maintenance of local parks and open space, i.e. place-keeping.

A special planning method has been developed in Sweden that focuses on the social use value of urban green spaces. The method, as an applied planning tool, has become known as „sociotope mapping“. The method was originally developed in the City of Stockholm, but is now used in other major cities as well. Gothenburg has been using sociotope mapping since 2005. Identification of „sociotopes“ and the graphical presentation of these in „sociotope maps“ and „sociotope spinning tops“ are vital elements supporting the overall park program and the elaboration of district park plans. These tools provide information about use of and transport distance to different important recreational and outdoor activities locally and across the city. The „spinning tops“ defines the maximum transport distance that people ought to

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have to reach different sociotopes. Within reach of 15 minutes we find the sociotopes: play, meeting place, rest, promenade, picnic, green oasis, social interaction. Within reach of 30 minutes we find: water experience, events, ball games, motion, elderly area, vista, bath, boating, street sports, nature experience. At transport distances more than 30 minutes we find: cultural-history, fishing, and flowers. The district park plan should ensure that people in a district by and large have access to these sociotopes within given transport distances measured in travel time. Developments and investments are targeted projects that improve deficits in, for example, accessibility or provision of these green spaces services (i.e. sociotopes).

The engagement of local people and local actors in the elaboration of the district park plans is based on meetings where people with varied areas of expertise talk engage in dialogue about the city district and their park structure. With outset in the strategic park program, facts and impression are collected and assets and inadequacies are analysed. The results are discussed with the public and the agreed view that is reached is used to make a development plan. The final development plan takes form of a report, including a series of maps and graphical illustrations.

There is no fixed procedure for setting up a park district plan, but the five strategies are utilized in a process adapted for needs in each city district. The requirements for planning in an inner city district differs highly compared to the needs in a more remotely located social housing area. The strategy „character“ puts focus on both the overall role the individual district has in the green structure in Gothenburg („zoom out“) and what is typical in the district („zoom in“). The strategy „within reach“ identifies how accessible people in the district consider their parks and open spaces and which sociotopes are present and valued in the local district. The strategy „Taking care of“ takes on a holistic view of management and maintenance and asks which priorities that should be set to fit the character and preferences in the city district and who can be responsible. In the process of setting up the park district plan it is asked what is wanted by the people locally on order to ensure that parks and open spaces caters for different people“s needs and wishes, choices are made among ideas and suggestions, the voice of the public is integrated through open meetings in the planning process, and finally changes are made to provisional draft plans made by the City’s authorities. The final stage of the strategic park program is the implementation of district park plans, where investments, projects, and changes in maintenance levels are carried out.

The involved group of actors differs for each planning effort, but includes the City’s park administration, unorganized and organized local user groups, housing companies, and consultants.

Status of place-making by March 2012

The construction works started in September 2011 and has been going on until early spring 2012. Evaluation of the investments is expected to take place during the next MP4 project period between March 2012 and September 2012. City of Gothenburg plans to set up an evaluation meeting with stakeholders in Eriksbo.

As part of the construction works a playground has been improved with a new sandbox with new equipment, a new ‘challenge swinging thing’, three swinging cup and a slide has been

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placed in the nearby slope. An outdoor fitness area and a barbecue area have been constructed as well in order to facilitate the area for new user groups.

Public lighting in the area was sparse but it has been improved as part of the investments so it now feels safer to stay at the playground in the dark time of the year. This is important as Gothenburg is located at relatively high latitude. The animal farm in the area has got new fences and accessibility has been improved by replacement of stairs. The basketball area has also got a new fence and a new coating of the asphalt surface. Maybe the locally most wanted improvement was to cover a gravel pitch with artificial grass. That has now been done. This will prolong the football season for the local youth.

City of Gothenburg planned to re-use the old steps in the stairways, but these were too full of concrete so new ones have to be ordered. There was some delivery time for this which prolonged the construction time.

Another construction work that has changed the area is a new and long fence around the artificial grass field. City of Gothenburg thought that the slope adjacent to the football field was used for sliding in the winter time. The fence had to be constructed so as it also enabled sliding. With the new investment it is now possible to both play football and slide in the winter time.

In sum, the place-making has improved the functionality and perceived safety in the local park in Eriksbo.

Place-keeping: looked at from five dimensions – findings?**1. Partnerships**

Until March 2011 no agreements with local stakeholders had been reached, but efforts for gathering stakeholders and associations were planned to take place later in 2011. The agenda for meetings were focused on discussion on design and maintenance.

By September 2011, an artificial football lawn was requested in the area and an agreement was reached between the sport administration in the municipality and a local football club in Eriksbo. The agreement specifies that the local football club will make an application to the central football administration to get appropriation for this.

There is one big property owner, a public housing company, in Eriksbo. City of Gothenburg had hoped for that the public housing company would be a partner in the MP4 project. Unfortunately new and unexpected legislation made it difficult for public housing companies to invest on public ground which is not their own. However, they may still take on some responsibility for maintenance in the areas owned and managed by City of Gothenburg.

By March 12 City of Gothenburg has tried to involve new stakeholders, especially the public housing company, however, not with any success. City of Gothenburg is still hoping that this will be possible. City of Gothenburg also sees this as an important step in creating awareness in the local community and gives stakeholders a feeling of ownership to the refurbished area.

Lessons learnt / implemented

It has been hard to involve stakeholders more formally in partnerships. City of Gothenburg has still succeeded in facilitating a new agreement between the local football club and the colleagues in the Sports department in City of Gothenburg. Plans for setting up a more comprehensive cross-cutting partnership with the public housing company have been halted by new and unexpected legislation. Still City of Gothenburg has explored the possibilities to reach agreements and partnerships with the local communities.

2. Governance and Engagement

By March 2011, reorganization in the City districts of Gothenburg and at the Parks and Landscape Administration prolonged the plan-making processes in Eriksbo.

In 2010 the Swedish National Board of Housing, Building and Planning (NBHP), granted the Park and Landscape Administration money to put extra focus on gender and safety aspects in the design process of the Eriksbo Park. An intersectional group and different trade-unions have meet five times and to discuss different kinds of experience of safety, gender and equality connected to town development. The meetings only made slow progress at the beginning. To aid the process a new tool has tried out. A set of reference pictures was related to a set of descriptive words concerning use of parks and open spaces. The process resulted in a pack of cards, a 'party game', that could be used it as a tool for engagement in design and planning discussions focused on safety and equality. The cards are called "the gender cards".

There was also dialogue with pupils at the school in Eriksbo about the park and open spaces outside the school yard. City of Gothenburg used the information from this dialogue to set priorities and decide upon investments. The dialogue with the nearby school made it possible to match local preferences and wishes with the investments in the area.

A working group including the public housing company in the areas, a community group and a representative from the City District Administration was setup and planned to participate in the planning of the design of the area.

In the period between March 2011 and September 2011, City of Gothenburg prioritized their efforts on the construction work and not so much on further engaging of local stakeholders. In the period, City of Gothenburg prepared documents for and carried out a public tender. An entrepreneur was also selected to carry out the construction works.

By March 2012, the construction works is almost finalized and stakeholders for further engagement have been identified. The group includes people that work at the animal farm and at the "after school" activity. Others groups are the property owners and the park association.

Lessons learnt / implemented

It is the impression that engagement of external stakeholders needs time and sometimes new partners have to see some changes before they take any responsibilities.

3. Finance

The initial plan set out by City of Gothenburg included funds from the City of Gothenburg together with co-finance from the NSR Interreg IVb program. These funds were expected to be matched by co-finance from the housing company in Eriksbo. Although an agreement with the sports administration was successfully setup for payment of the artificial grass lawn an attempt to create a partnership with the public housing company was less successful because they were not allowed to invest on public ground which is not their own. As the expected finance levels were not reached it was not possible to prioritize improved access to nature areas in Eriksbo.

The construction works has improved the functions and facilities in the open spaces in Eriksbo. However, these improvements will also increase the needed level of maintenance in the area as more facilities need to be maintained and increased use often results in more litter and garbage. City of Gothenburg will attempt to keep up the standard of the open space and minimize needed maintenance operations by making stakeholders feel more responsible for the area i.e. by looking after the area a little bit more and for example do some cleaning and report if anything happens, breaks down, vandalism, etc.

The new Eriksbo Park will require more from maintenance now when there are more to look after, more commitment from our staff to follow up the area and hopefully more commitment from stakeholders if the new level of the area should be retained.

Through MP4-project: lessons learnt / implemented

Whether it is possible to find co-finance is hard to predict. Unexpected events turn up like this with the public housing company not able to invest in our public ground. On the other hand we didn't believe at first that there was any possibilities to get finance for the artificial grass lawn but after talking to the sport administration once again an opportunity appeared. Maybe the right questions weren't asked before, maybe some other projects wasn't carried out, or maybe additional funding was becoming available in the sports administration.

Based on the experiences from the pilot in Erikbo it is the impression that place-making seems to be much easier than place-keeping. Municipality funds in Gothenburg are generally reduced and it is difficult to design places with low or lower costs than before restoration. This situation demand new ways of thinking and new ways of organizing finance for place-making. A big challenge in the pilots and in Gothenburg in general is to convey costs or share these across stakeholders and people living in the area. In Erikbo it is hoped for that a sense of ownership and co-management (users reporting on vandalism etc.) of the new facilities will enable an improved economic use of maintenance resources.

4. Policy

The policy for place-keeping in Gothenburg is set out in the strategic park program for Gothenburg (see also model agreement and introduction to this report). The park district plan for Lärjedalen, where Eriksbo is located, was finalised in March 2011. The park district plan also includes a sociotope map for Lärjedalen. The process in Eriksbo has followed the outlines in the strategic park program and recommendations from the workgroup that was set up for Eriksbo has been implemented in the constructions works

Lessons learnt / implemented

The strategic park program has secured a good place-making process despite the intended process in Eriksbo has been delayed and halted by various events. One very important lesson learnt is the critical importance obligatory policies and guidelines have for achieving results.

5. Evaluation

No evaluation of the investments in Eriksbo has taken place by April 2012 as these has only been finalised at this time. City of Gothenburg has planned to evaluate the investments before September 2012 and is awaiting the results of a user evaluation among the residents carried out by the housing company.

The sociotope map contained in the park district plan and a mapping of recreational experiences as part of MP4 innovations has been carried out and can be used to assessment of the social and recreational qualities in Eriksbo.

Lessons learnt / implemented

The park administration is waiting for the result of the user evaluation among the residents by the housing company. City of Gothenburg does normally not undertake systematic evaluations, but as part of the lessons learnt in the MP4 project an understanding of the importance of proper evaluation has emerged.

Critical appraisal of the pilot project

Table 1. Meeting MP4 pilot objectives in Eriksbo – Status, autumn 2012

Objective	Status
1. Increase the use of local open spaces	Yes, expected, by the new design and open space functionality provided by renewal works. Safety issues are also addressed by improved lighting.
2. Engage local communities, businesses and associations in future maintenance of open spaces	Yes, by engaging the local football club and the sports administration.
3. Engage all stakeholders in the process of decision-making and of finding alternative solutions (alternative funds, cost reduction, voluntary work, etc.) for the maintenance of open spaces	Limited, unexpected external events and circumstances (for example new law on investments) made it impossible to establish a cross-cutting collaboration and secure co-finance for investments with the public housing company in Eriksbo.
4. Have open spaces which are enjoyable and well maintained as well as seen as positive assets by the local communities.	Yes, by delivering new open space design, facilities and functions.

Recommendations and Outlook

When you are working with an old area that has been run down you may have to put rather much money in repairing the old constructions. This work is important to get the feeling of that the area is well looked after but it's not certain this work will be noticed by people. Even if you have talked a lot to people in the area there often turn something up when you arrive to the place and turn up the sign with information of the work. Here for instance we had to make a longer fence for the artificial grass field.

Circumstances from the outside can infer/disrupt plans. In this case a corruption scandal in City Gothenburg and new legislation created a risk adverse attitude among public servants and private (or public) companies. This has in some degree hindered cross-cutting collaboration to take place, not only as envisioned in the MP4 pilots, but across all public-private relations involving City of Gothenburg.

Investments has been delayed in the process and in the district of Eriksbo there has only been limited success with engagement and setting up partnerships with both local

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community groups and the housing companies. However, the strong policy framework that is setup in the strategic park programme support local planning processes. The strategic park program and local park district plans has ensured that the design and investments are based on a sound analysis of important open space functions and local needs in the various city districts in Gothenburg. The back up in the strategic park program has guarded the process in unfortunate circumstances and still delivered a framework for sound long-term management in Eriksbo.

Glossary

'Place-making': creating high quality places that people want to visit, experience and enjoy. It implies a people-centred approach which emphasises designing spaces that promote health, wellbeing and happiness. Such spaces engender a sense of belonging and connection for those who use them.

'Place-keeping': relates to maintaining the qualities and benefits – social, environmental and economic – of places through long-term management. The management required to maintain these qualities and benefits, the approach adopted and the timescale will depend on the 'place-making' aims, the available resources and the life span of the 'place'.

Partnership: is defined as agreed shared responsibility between public, private and community sectors. It is a relationship which, in this context, is normally formed between governmental and non-governmental sectors – i.e. it is a manifestation of governance relationships.

Engagement: is a cross-cutting issue which describes successful models of working with communities and encouraging appropriate use. Engagement is an aspect of governance particularly relevant in forms of participatory governance and is intrinsic to the concept of 'governance' as defined below.

Governance: relates to the relationship between and within government and non-governmental forces. The term implies wider participation in decision-making than representative democracy or other forms of government, recognising a wider range of actors other than the state, and allowing for varying governance contexts and processes.

Finance: describes financial models for efficient long-term management.

Policy: is discussed within the context of embedding best practice into spatial planning and other policy.

Valuation: describes the economic impacts of improvements to open spaces, but also relates to wider socio-economic and environmental benefits.

Notes on this report

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This report is based on methods, interviews, evaluation visit, critical reports, model agreement assessment, etc.

Websites of the Eriksbo project in Gothenburg

City of Gothenburg: www.goteborg.se