



Description of Green Corridors in the Gothenburg Region

A way to utilise natural features in community land use planning

Sector for administrative support

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Programme



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1. Summary:

Land use planning in the Municipality of Härryda is a part of the border-crossing collaboration with the neighboring municipalities regarding housing, places of employment and infrastructure. Major emphasis in this collaboration is placed on preserving residents' closeness to nature areas. As green corridors between the housing areas, roads and so forth, large expanses of land are preserved. This PM presents this approach for the international partners that the Municipality of Härryda collaborates with within the framework of the accorded EU project within INTERREG - North Sea: SURF (www.sustainablefringes.eu).

2. Goal

Describe the green corridors' significance for land use planning around Sweden's second-largest city, Gothenburg, and local planning in one of its surrounding municipalities, the Municipality of Härryda.

3. Purpose

Contribute to the European collaboration within the project SURF, where the international partnership seeks increased knowledge of how green corridors can be used as an operative instrument in land use planning. Under the agreement between the SURF project's leading partner, the Municipality of Aberdeen in Scotland, the Municipality of Härryda in Sweden has been asked to give a general presentation of the significance of green corridors.

The presentation is conducted in two ways:

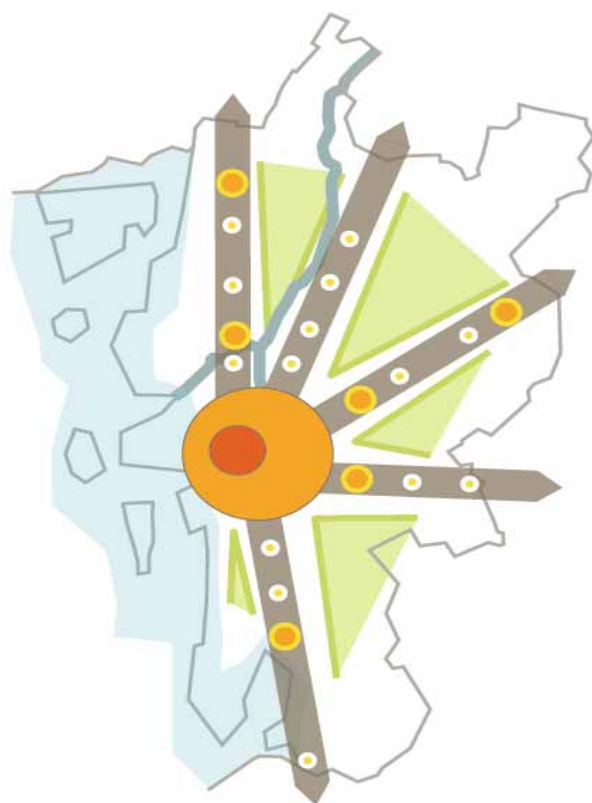
- As an oral presentation at the SURF work conference on 6/29/2011 in Bradford, UK by the Gothenburg region's coordinator for regional planning, Per Krister-son. The presentation will have as its point of departure, the planning for the entire Gothenburg region.
- As a written presentation based on the regional and local perspective in the Municipality of Härryda.

4. Demarcation

The description concerns the Gothenburg region, meaning the Municipality of Gothenburg and the surrounding municipalities. There is active collaboration in care services, education, culture, recreation and land use planning that is conducted in the Gothenburg Region Association of Local Authorities, whose member municipalities have 930,000 inhabitants. This is about ten percent of the population of Sweden. The largest municipality is the Municipality of Gothenburg, which has more than 500,000 inhabitants. The Municipality of Härryda has 34,000 inhabitants, i.e. 4 percent of the population of Greater Gothenburg. The description applies to conditions for physical demarcation, regardless of whether this was planned or has grown forth due to natural features such as hills and adjoining valleys.

5. Green corridors as a part of the structure profile in the Gothenburg region

The green corridors are a part of the structure profile in the Gothenburg region, with the City of Gothenburg at the center and surrounded by neighboring municipalities, including the Municipality of Härryda. The structure profile consists of the fundamental elements in an overall structure profile: coast and sea, forests and lakes, a strong and attractive regional core and distinct corridors with attractive regional centers. Through consultation, a dialog has been conducted between the region's member municipalities and the board of the Gothenburg Region Association of Local Authorities concerning development of the Gothenburg region. In May of 2008, the board of the Gothenburg Region Association of Local Authorities decided to take shared and long-term responsibility for the regional structure.



The infrastructure in the region shall be further developed by building a tunnel under central Gothenburg that will transform the present terminating rail commuter lines into through-lines and lead to construction of new stations in the city, consequently permitting expansion of the system in establishing attractive commuter and regional service. To achieve this, a united effort is required for an extended period. One of several elements is constituted by the green corridors.

The structure profile consists of six parts:

5.1. Core: The region's core is constituted by central Gothenburg, which serves as the hub and engine for the region with its full range of housing, places of employment, education, culture and entertainment, commercial services and more. Approximately 150,000 people live in the core.



5.2. Interconnected urban area: The densely populated parts of mainly the Mölndal and Partille municipalities, but also other municipalities in Greater Gothenburg that are situated beyond Gothenburg's actual center. The opportunities for increasing the amount of housing and places of employment are good with the existing infrastructure. About 200,000 people live in this part of the Gothenburg region.



5.3. Main corridors: These constitute a fundamental element for strengthening the region. The corridors are set by five different rail lines to the north, east and south. The corridors encompass the communities adjoining these lines, with traveling times of between 30 minutes and two hours to central Gothenburg. Taken on the whole, these communities have a large population with places of employment, education, commerce and services. A total of 200,000 people live along the main corridors.



5.4. Coastal zone: This zone is highly attractive and establishes the identity for the entire Gothenburg region. A significant portion of the region's housing is in the coastal zone. In its function, the coastal zone resembles the green corridors due to the opportunities for combining recreation, attractive housing, etc.



5.5. *Göta River*: The river is the reason behind the City of Gothenburg's location on the Kattegat coast, with watercourses as transport routes to the interior of the country. The river presently has many functions, including as a source of water for 700,000 persons.



5.6. *Green corridors*: These are interconnected green areas and contribute to the region's attractiveness.



The regional green corridors are made up of the larger interconnected forested and agricultural lands that extend deep into the interconnected urban area. The Municipality of Härryda has partial responsibility for two of the green corridors. One of these runs to the east from the Gothenburg municipal boundary to the Härskogen open-air recreation area. The other runs from the Rådasjön nature reserve to the south-east.

The larger interconnected green areas – green corridors of sorts – contribute to the attractiveness of the entire Gothenburg region. In the green corridors, there is even a certain amount of agriculture, but primarily forestry, in many cases with cultural history values.

The undeveloped countryside is an indispensable asset for abundant outdoor activities and it gives the inhabitants opportunities for relaxation through recreation, play, nature experiences, nature education and cultivation. The green corridors create the conditions for preservation of biological diversity as well as local climate and environmental-improving measures.

The green corridors' value is often dependent upon the green areas being so large and interconnected, and that there are opportunities for accessing the areas. Some people prefer living in the open countryside or in forested areas outside of the urban areas. Many small encroachments can on the long term produce significant effects on the agricultural landscape and green areas, where values of significance for the region's development can be jeopardized.

Interaction between various entities and authorities must function so that an appropriate balance can be achieved between the interests for preservation and/or recreation.

6. Special points of departure for the Municipality of Härryda's planning based on the green corridors

Because the green corridors form a natural boundary between for example, clusters with housing and places of employment, and infrastructure while also influencing municipal boundaries, it is important that we have open dialog between neighboring municipalities.

6.1. Some recurring questions at issue that our municipality is working with are:

- An important goal in the municipality's general planning is to more densely develop our existing communities and in this way, protect the green corridors.
- Planning responsibility for the area is locally distributed among the different municipalities, but cross-border collaboration must be conducted between the municipalities. Our neighboring municipality is presently expanding into an adjoining area and this will consequently cause problems for our own municipality in all our land use planning.
- We want to analyze and promote the value of the green corridors based on outdoor activities and recreation, as well as the residents' physical and mental well-being, in overall land use planning. It is often said that the soul of the Swedish people includes a large measure of nature romanticism.

6.2. Development of hiking and bicycle trails

The goal of the Municipality of Härryda is to develop the concept with hiking and bicycle trails at several different locations. Our participation in the SURF project entails that in the area with the green corridors, we intend to restore an overgrown hiking trail that runs from the City of Gothenburg in the west to the small railway station community of Hindås in the east. The trail runs primarily through the Municipality of Härryda but also through other municipalities. The trail is 35–40 kilometers long. We have iden-

tified over 100 landowners and within the framework of the project, we have initiated negotiations with them to use their properties.

The experiences from these ongoing negotiations are as follows:

There are more than 60 forest properties distributed among 100 landowners. Most have small properties. Most conduct small-scale forestry, likely alongside ordinary employment. The landowners appear to have inherited their forest holdings from earlier generations.

Most were positive when contacted by telephone to signing agreements with the municipality for utilization, viewing this as a joint responsibility. But it seems to be more difficult to get the agreements signed once they are in the form of concrete proposals.

If a forest owner does not want to sign, there are two alternatives:

- We investigate as to whether we can route the hiking trail around the area.
- We do not sign an agreement with the landowner and instead let the visitors exercise their right to access the area via the Swedish right of public access, i.e. the right that permits visitors to access undeveloped land within reasonable limits.

Sources:

- Gothenburg Region Association of Local Authorities, 2008: Structure profile for the Gothenburg region – an agreement under which we have joint responsibility for the regional structure being sustainable on the long-term
- Gothenburg Region Association of Local Authorities, 2008: Presentation: Per Kristerson reporting
- Municipality of Härryda: Consultation documentation with residents: Nature preservation plan, 2010