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New Town in the Øresund Region - housing potential in the new town next to Frederikssund

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New Town in the Øresund Region

- housing potential in the new town next to Frederikssund

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Abstract

This paper gives a short introduction to the current housing market situation which is relevant for the presentation and discussion of the housing potential of a new town in the Copenhagen Metropolitan area, a main part of the cross border Øresund Region between Denmark and Sweden. Presently there is a huge demand for housing in this area and a lack of supply. The result is a dramatic housing price increase as well as rising commuting time in general. In the Greater Copenhagen region alone there is a call for another 90.000 dwellings in the next 12 years. The new town in the middle finger of the Fingerplan is one of the answers to this. The new town will be located at Store Rørbæk next to Frederikssund and the intention is to start construction work in 2010. The aim is to realise a new town with 14.000 people, 6.000 dwellings and 3-6.000 jobs. This paper presents possible future resident groups and their preferences as well as scenarios of the housing potential. The analysis of the preferences of future resident groups is based on information and data from four focus group interviews conducted in November 2005.

Introduction

The aim of this paper is to discuss some of the issues surrounding housing in a new town in the Copenhagen Metropolitan area in The Øresund Region. In order to provide an understanding of the wider context, the first sections of the paper gives a short introduction to The Øresund Region and the housing market situation in Denmark. It sets out the background for planning in the Copenhagen metropolitan area, and the possible role of the new town in the middle finger. Also the initial vision and programme for the new town is presented. The next section of the paper looks at the target groups of future residents for the town and results from a specific, new study of their housing preferences. This particularly emphasises the housing preferences of expected resident groups as well as desired qualities in the town. In the following section, the focus turns to scenarios for the development of the town and thus the type of residents that can be expected to be attracted to the town under different conditions. A final section discusses factors decisive for shaping the future town and what can be learned about searching for future housing preferences.

The Øresund Region

The Øresund Region generates a quarter of the combined GDP of Sweden and Denmark. The two sides of the region are connected by the Øresund Bridge – the link between Copenhagen and Malmö since 2000 – and by ferries sailing the route between Helsingborg and Helsingør. The region contains the fastest growing areas in both Denmark and Sweden and is aiming to become one of the most integrated cross border regions in Europe. The Øresund Region is the biggest and most densely populated metropolitan area in Scandinavia with approximately 3,6 million inhabitants, 2/3 living on the Danish side and 1/3 living on the Swedish side of the Sound. The region has 15 universities and colleges, 120 000 students and 10 000 researchers and seven science parks. The workforce is about 1,8 million. Work commuting is an increasing trend and a closer integration of labour markets and housing markets are expected (<http://www.oresundsregionen.org>). A partnership between municipalities and counties across the region is working to realise this aim through common planning initiatives (<http://www.oresundskomiteen.dk/>, Øresundsbro konsortiet og Öresundskomiteen, 2006).

Currently there is a high demand pressure on the housing market in Copenhagen at the Danish side which also spills over on the housing market in the Malmö area on the Swedish side. New demands are being put on both infrastructure and the housing market in the region as well as on the institutional framework. There is especially a need to promote partnerships in relation to planning, infrastructure and housing to further the quality of life of the increasing number of citizens residing and working in the region. Important stakeholders are Region Skåne at the Swedish side and The Metropolitan Region and Region Sjælland as well as the Ministry of the Environment at the Danish side.

Danish housing market development

The Danish housing market is characterized by subsidies of all types of housing and a highly regulated rental housing market.

This is probably resulting in a mismatch between housing needs and use and giving scope for informal arrangements and illegal side payments as flats are likely to be allocated on the basis of personal connections, queuing and acquisition of seniority rights. Denmark could, according to independent economic commentators benefit from a fundamental re-shaping of its housing policies. Measures to abolish the regulations and to go in the direction of a free housing market are advocated, but there is no support for such a policy shift, and there are no current plans to free resources on public budgets for other purposes than housing. Housing remains a significant spending item for general government budget, as well as an indirect cost in the form of tax revenues foregone via preferential tax treatment. In 2005 as in 1999, housing support from public budgets totalled about 3 per cent of GDP (OECD, 2006 and 1999).

Since 1993 the Copenhagen metropolitan area and Århus in the East of Jutland have experienced population growth and the West of Denmark has lost population (Indenrigsministeriet, 1998 and Nordstrand, 2001). Simultaneously economic activity and new business started to improve especially in the eastern parts of Denmark. This growth has caused pressure on local housing markets. Copenhagen, having relatively less single family housing and owner occupied housing than the rest of the country, was slow to take action on this situation. By 2000, when the development of new housing in Copenhagen was practically immobilised, a very pressed housing market situation started to build up with following price increases. Rent regulation meant a lack of open supply of (under priced) *private rented* dwellings built before 1991 and older properties were

gradually sold off to sitting tenants forming tenants *co-operatives*. Simultaneously new units at market rents became hard to let even in Copenhagen, as they lose out to owner occupied dwellings in the wider region and to new residential developments at harbour fronts. Segregated and deprived *social housing* estates with a concentration of marginalized and excluded residents and residents with low incomes or living from social transfers became generally an increasing problem. At the same time dwellings on social housing estates outside the urban pressure areas with high cost rents became harder to let.

Consequently the concentration of higher income groups in *owner occupied housing* especially in pressure areas like Copenhagen and Århus has become more pronounced. Here the demand driven price increase has also taken place due to a lack of available building lots. Relatively limited new building but extensive reinvestment activity in owner-occupied housing took place in the 1990's (Statens Byggeforskningsinstitut & Amternes og Kommunernes Forskningsinstitut, 2001). In the pressure areas especially established homeowners have enjoyed an equity increase and first time buyers of single family housing have become older (Lunde, 2005). Spokespersons from larger real-estate lenders have characterised the situation as a closed party. The "entrance fee" has become so high that it is difficult for the newcomers to join the market. The relative price increase of smaller owner occupied flats has been even higher. First time buyers have been squeezed out of most of the Greater Copenhagen region and a continuing metropolisation of Zealand and part of Scania – the core area of the Øresund Region - is foreseen. The issue of affordable housing for key workers has reached the political agenda and was important in the local election campaigns in the fall of 2005. Prices have also been driven up by factors such as the low interest rate environment, the introduction of interest only mortgage loans and a tax freeze introduced in 2001. The tax freeze has reduced real taxation of housing in Denmark as the nominal amount paid in property value tax is frozen while house prices have grown rapidly, especially in Copenhagen Metropolitan area.

Greenfield/ nature protection in addition to zoning regulations and administrative procedures for allowing building permits are criticized. Municipalities in the pressure areas also have weak incentives to develop new areas for residential building as this requires financing of new infrastructure like child institutions and schools and thus local tax increases. This has contributed to the rise in house prices in recent years.

Housing and planning in the Copenhagen metropolitan area

Copenhagen and its urban region have changed substantially during the last 20 years. Until 1993 Copenhagen were loosing population and jobs. Since then the new economy have expanded in the area. Knowledge intensive or knowledge based enterprises have become more important. Desurbanization have turned into urbanization. The region including the whole of Zealand is being transformed into an integrated job market with people commuting longer and longer distances. Former days more self-contained provincial cities like e.g. Helsingør and Holbæk are suburbanised; labour intensive industrial productions have been leaving the country, and knowledge intensive activities are taking over. As Copenhagen is located right in the centre of the Øresund Region this also has to be seen in relation to the development in the Malmö area. Malmö has become one of the most important growth areas in Sweden. Also a new urban quarter with 15.000 residents and 60.000 work places – Ørestad – is being built between the centre of Copenhagen and the Copenhagen Airport next to the new bridge to Malmö.

The realised and the expected macro-developments, such as economic growth and immigration will influence the functioning of the local housing markets as well as the housing in the wider region. The recent Regional plan for the Copenhagen metropolitan area (Hovedstadens Udviklingsråd, 2005) stresses the economic growth as being behind a pressed market with increasing house prices. In order to be able to continue to attract economic activity and new jobs the Regional plan offers new possibilities for house building, so employees can be housed at reasonable costs in the future.

The plan creates space for more than 80.000 dwellings until 2017. This space will be found in the "fingers" of Copenhagen's Fingerplan, which originally were elaborated by a group of town planners associated with the Danish Town Planning Institute and published in 1947 (Fig. 1). New urban areas will have space along an already existing third transport ring to be supplemented with light rail. Brownfield and harbour sites will be redeveloped into residential areas. And finally the plan opens up for new residential areas in connection with a planned new train station at Store Rørbæk (on the middle finger) south of Frederikssund. This new town to be build from 2010 is planned for 14.000 residents and 3-6.000 new jobs. It is seen as an exceptional opportunity to build for the future and it is the only new town to be built according to Regional plan for the Copenhagen metropolitan area.

Fig. 1 Copenhagen's Fingerplan and the location of the new town on the middle finger



The new town - vision and programme

In 2004 a vision for the new town and a programme for how to realise the town were launched and discussed (Frederikssund Kommune, 2004). The vision is to create a town placed in a mixed rural and natural landscape, serviced by a new motorway and a train station where businesses and high-density housing are mixed. The idea is to mix functions even in the same building if possible. It has to be a lively town that can transform to meet changing needs over time. The planning area is 350 ha. and the aim is 14000 residents in 6000 homes and 3-6000 local jobs.

The vision is to develop the town according to eight fundamental values: density, safety, flexibility, accessibility, eventfulness, quality, sustainability, light and stillness. These values will be used as yardsticks for measuring if the town keeps to the course laid out. And the concrete projects will have to support these values. In relation to housing the objective is to create a town with unique dwellings giving ideas on what the future flexible dwelling and the dwelling for the family is. The vision is:

- *'a town with a mix of type of tenures and building types being very flexible in relation to changing conditions*
- *a town that can attract residents from near and far*
- *a town with a new definition of the space between the buildings that can open up for different community forms*
- *a town with healthy and fine dwelling of a high quality that are affordable'*

(Frederikssund Kommune, 2004, p 14.)

The centre around the new train station could be rather dense. The idea is to build high-density housing and to limit traditional single family detached housing. The local jobs will make it a safe and lively town during the day and not a deserted place. Flexibility in space use and multi-functional buildings will make investments more responsive to changes in demand and viable also in the longer term. The town shall be accessible by all means of transport and respect and give space for pedestrians and bikers. All types of residents, a mix of age and ethnic groups, using the town and its services and an interesting architecture will support an eventful and living city. The aim is quality at all levels, care for details, unique architecture, landscaping, green spaces etc. Sustainability concerns the environment, social questions and economic circumstances. Light and stillness are qualities making the new town different from how other towns usually are experienced.

Target groups and their preferences

This section looks at the target groups for the new town and a study of their housing preferences. This particularly emphasises the housing preferences of expected resident groups as well as desired qualities in the town.

In principle the idea is to get a mix of residents of all ages and with different vocational and ethnic backgrounds. It is expected that the future town will attract especially younger families moving out of the city of Copenhagen and senior citizens looking for housing fit for the third age. Young people are the most mobile and there is no reason to assume that this pattern will change. In order to get to know the preferences of the future residents a research looked into what was behind the preferences of potential or 'identical' residents - realising that the young newcomers in 2017 will be around 8 years old today (Vestergaard, Ærø & Lyduch 2006). In the research the following four groups or types were used as stand-ins of potential residents:

1. Knowledge workers: Younger persons with a degree and a job in a science park outside the City of Copenhagen
2. City people: Younger persons living in the City of Copenhagen
3. Newcomers to Trekroner: Persons having moved to a new residential neighbourhood next to the University of Roskilde. This neighbourhood is located close by the site of new town and it is to some degree similar to the vision of the town concerning a common target group of people with preference for developing a new community
4. Newcomers to Frederikssund: Persons having moved to the Municipality of Frederikssund within the last two years with fresh experience from the local housing market.

Table 1 Target groups and potential newcomers to the new town at Store Rørbæk

	Target groups and potential newcomers			
	1. Knowledge workers	2. City people	3. Newcomers – Trekroner	4. Newcomers – Frederikssund
Life style	The creative	City lovers	Social	Provincials
Focus	Career	Events	Community	Family life
Residence	In the region	Flats	Co-housing	Detached housing
Preferences	Nature	Unplanned events	Ecology	Free scope
	Privacy	Privacy	Community	
	Quality			
Why choose Store Rørbæk?	Quality Good architecture	Nature Fascinating houses	Possibility to become pioneers	Do-it- yourself- construction
				Closeness to family
What could keep them from Store Rørbæk?	Unambitious project	Distance to Copenhagen	Too homogeneous composition of residents	Too inhomogeneous composition of residents
	Demand for participation	Demand for participation		Building style too modern

Focus group interviews gave information on present and past housing experiences and motives for housing choice. Experience from living in different kinds of neighbourhoods and urban settings and from participating in local governance and network activities were selected interview themes. When having explored their past and present housing situation the groups were guided to talk about and discuss how they would like to live in the future. What kind of norms and ideals are influencing their housing dreams? What would they consider to be a good dwelling? What kind of town and neighbourhood would they like to live in? Could they envisage themselves as a resident and pioneer taking an active part in building up the new town? Would it be attractive for them to be pioneers? What could hypothetically make them move to the new town? What kind of advice do they have to the people planning the new town?

When preparing the focus group interviews the hypothesis was that people predominantly preferred single-family detached housing. A survey on housing preferences in 2001 showed that more than 70 % of the Danes wanted to be or to become owner-occupiers within five years if they had a free choice (Vestergaard, 2001b). Those with preferences for owner occupation further wanted a detached house, were predominantly below 50 years of age, were living with a partner and were planning to move house. But the results turned out very differently as indicated in the analysis of the results of the interviews summarised in table 1.

The 'knowledge workers' with a creative lifestyle have focus on their professional careers. Their residence is in the wider region. After some years in the City of Copenhagen many move to larger dwellings in the same type of neighbourhoods they grew up in, often in the areas north of Copenhagen. They especially express preferences for access to open green areas, having privacy in

their own dwelling and for housing of a very high technical and esthetical standard. They would consider going to live in the new town if they here could have good architecture as well as buildings of a high technical standard without defects.

'City people' are mostly younger persons enjoying the free and often anonymous life in the big city. They focus on instant events and like to be able to step out from their small apartments into lively streets in the city. To be able to have fun and to meet friends without having to plan in advance is important. Transport is preferable 15 minutes on a bike and commuting time to Copenhagen and friends in the city could turn them off from moving to the new town. Access to nature and fascinating houses could attract them. At the moment they do not have time to be involved in creating the new town.

'Newcomers to Trekroner' have a social life style and they prefer a town with a mix of all kinds of people. They like to spend time with family and neighbours and to be active in the neighbourhood. Many have lived in small communities set up in large flats or houses in the city before they embarked on a building a co-housing project with likeminded people. Ecology and community are important factors and they want them in their everyday life. The possibility to become pioneers in the new town and to be able to build and live in a co-housing community can attract this group of people to the new town.

'Newcomers to Frederikssund' are looking for a stable family life and to be able to send their children to a local school with kids from similar families. They want their own single-family detached house, where they can raise a family with children. Many look for the free scope of having your own garden, to be able to build or rebuild and having a private zone around your own house. They are not attracted to modern architecture and building styles with high-rise or densely build-up areas. They are interested in the new town as local residents in the same municipality.

Actually only one group, group 4 'Newcomers to Frederikssund: Persons having moved to the Municipality of Frederikssund within the last two years' confirm the assumption that most people tend to prefer single-family detached housing. The three other groups did not see densely built-up high-rise housing in the context of the new town as unfamiliar. These groups had very high demands on quality and emphasized architecture, commuting and transport possibilities, landscaping and access to nature as important factors. None of the participants in the first three focus groups - knowledge workers, city people and newcomers to Trekroner - discussed questions like layout or interior decoration. Their interest were more general about the kind of life one could have, the neighbourhood, type of contact with others, what to look at, green spaces, access to nature and the outdoors, possibility to jog or go for a ride on a bicycle, to see your children in a safe and attractive setting, to be able to have privacy etc.

The ideal start of the new town when taking the focus groups into account would be to get persons from group 3 'Newcomers to Trekroner: Persons having moved to a new residential neighbourhood next to the University of Roskilde' organised as pioneering groups and then letting developers construct housing that could be offered to attract the first two groups. The knowledge workers focusing on individual careers do not have time to commit themselves to be pioneers. The city people are too young and occupied with short term events in the fascinating city to put attention to the future. Group 4 'Newcomers to Frederikssund' are interested in the new town as citizens in the municipality. They have already got the housing qualities they have been looking for and they represent the electorate in the municipality that is the main partner in planning the new town. They

might want to influence the new town if they find the plans conflicting with their values and ideas of a good town and neighbourhood.

Housing potential – four scenarios

In the following section, focus turns to scenarios for the development of the town and thus the type of residents expected to be attracted to the town under different conditions.

The aim of the scenarios is to identify different typologies of potential residents and thus target groups as a basis for further development of the town. This should clarify how the town can be planned in order to attract the different target groups and thereby implement the visions for the town. This knowledge is being used as part of the background information for developing the master plan for the new town.

In developing the scenarios there are local and specific *strengths* and *weaknesses* that will support or impede residence in the town; and there are some important *external factors* that will be decisive for the general framework for the development of the town.

The new town at Store Rørbæk has a number of *strong points* that potentially can attract target groups and make it a sought after place to reside:

- the location at the housing market in a growth region
- sites that can be offered to co-housing groups and to other interest groups
- access to a growing and attractive job market
- access to local nature/green areas and an inlet

But there are also from the start a number of *weak points* that can become barriers for attracting residents and the wanted target groups:

- a bare field, lack of spirit
- shortage of local private services
- less availability of public services like childcare institutions and schools
- transport time and transport costs

The general framework for the development of the town will be influenced by *external factors* and some of the most important are:

- the future economic development
- the future housing policy
- new infrastructure like train station and motorway

Future *economic development* in Denmark and in the region will influence the demand for housing. The idea of making a new town at Store Rørbæk is not recent. But the economic growth and population increase in the Copenhagen Metropolitan area since 1993 have actualised this plan. The Frederikssund area, including the new town, is expected to contain the major part of the future housing and population growth in the region. If the economic growth is halted and the Copenhagen Metropolitan area start to loose population the basis for realising the new town can quickly erode.

More over, as already mentioned there are no current plans to change *housing policy* or free resources on public budgets for other purposes than housing. In Denmark housing is difficult to handle politically without risking political mandate at Election Day. This has maintained a relatively high level of direct and indirect subsidizing of housing. If this picture changes the conditions on the regional housing market can become less favourable for housing investments. Policy changes could for instance be an increase of property taxes and a phasing out of the rent regulations of the private as well as social rented housing. Such changes would tend to curb housing demand and turn demand to the existing housing stock. The market for housing in the new town at Store Rørbæk and for new housing investments will decrease. – The effects of hypothetical housing policy changes are not considered in the scenarios. The assumption is that future housing policy changes will be phased in gradually and thus not damage the functioning of market on the short term.

New infrastructure like a local train station and a new motorway are crucial preconditions for the new town at Store Rørbæk as laid out in the vision and programme from 2004. The final decisions on these investments will be taken on a national level. And these decisions will influence the scope for shaping the town.

Four scenarios for the new town have been developed in order to show how housing is influenced under different likely conditions or likely mix of conditions (see table 2).

The heading of the four scenarios are:

- Scenario 1: Economic growth and new infrastructure with train and motorway
- Scenario 2: Economic growth and new infrastructure only with train
- Scenario 3: Economic growth and no new infrastructure
- Scenario 4: Recession and no new infrastructure

The assumptions on the economic development and decisions on infrastructure influence to which degree the vision on a town with both business and housing can be realised. In a separate analysis of the business potential of the new town it was assessed that it would be almost impossible to attract businesses to the town until a major part of the housing were realised (Rambøll Management, 2005).

In both of the two scenarios with economic growth it is realistic to develop the housing part of the town. In Scenario 1 with economic growth and motorway as well as a new train station both the business part as well as the housing part is realistic. In Scenario 2 the housing part is realistic while it will be difficult to attract business without a new motorway (Rambøll Management, 2005). But in this scenario the concentration on train commuters will advance the vision on high and densely build-up housing and a lively town centre. The opposite will be the case in Scenario 1. Here there will probably be difficulties in relation to restraining the demand for building sites for single family detached housing. If the planning authorities give in to the pressure to allow a change of plans this housing type wanted by car-commuters can result in urban sprawl. Here the potential influence of the local electorate can become crucial in influencing the local council.

In scenario 3 with economic growth and no new infrastructure there might be basis for a new residential neighbourhood, but no real town. Car-commuters willing to spend time in traffic queues might be attracted by relatively lower house prices than elsewhere in the region. In scenario 4 with recession and no new infrastructure there will hardly be any new development. Store Rørbæk will remain a village.

Table 2. Four scenarios for the housing potential in the new town at Store Rørbæk

Powers behind housing in the town: Strengths and weaknesses	Scenario 1: Economic growth and new infrastructure with train station and motorway	Scenario 2: Economic growth and new infrastructure only with train station	Scenario 3: Economic growth and no new infrastructure	Scenario 4: Recession and no new infrastructure
Strengths				
The housing market in the metropolitan area of Copenhagen and Zealand	A pressed housing market attracts mobile and working persons to look for housing in the town	A pressed housing market attracts train-commuters to look for housing in the town	The town will attract a relatively limited share of an increased housing demand in the region	The town will attract very few
Sites available for prospective residents with special interests like groups interested in co-housing	A wide range of groups, also those looking for co-housing, will look for housing in the town	A limited range of groups, mainly train commuters, will look for housing in the town	A limited range of groups, mainly elderly and non commuters, will look for housing in the town	Only groups looking for rural surroundings will be attracted
Access to attractive local place of work	Housing demand does not depend on access to attractive local places of work	Housing demand does not depend on access to attractive local places of work.	Attractive local places of work are important	Attractive local place of work are of vital importance
Access to nature, the inlet and the open air	Access to nature is important for attracting new residents in competition with other attractive residential areas in the region	Access to nature is important for attracting new commuting residents working one hour away when using public transport	Access to nature is important for attracting new residents that are willing to commute more than one hour in order to have this access	Access to nature can be important for keeping and attracting residents in competition with other attractive residential areas in the region
Weaknesses				
Bare field and no spirit	The vision of the town is challenged by a pressure to build detached houses, unless growth and demand pressure are managed	The vision is strengthened. The spirit moves in with the new residents	There will be more and more detached houses on the bare field. The place will be suburban with no local places of work	The bare field will continue and the village will keep it's present rural spirit
Shortage of local private services	Basis for shops, cafés and local services at the centre of the town and by the train station. Car - commuters will tend to shop elsewhere	Basis for shops, cafés and local services at the centre of the town and by the train station	No basis for local services. Residents will shop elsewhere	No basis for local services. Residents will shop elsewhere
Childcare institution and schools	Basis for childcare institutions and schools from start	Basis for childcare institutions and schools from start	Basis for childcare institutions and schools develops quickly	Basis for childcare institutions and schools develops very slowly
Transport – time and costs	Only a barrier for city people (max 15 min on a bike for going anywhere)	Only a barrier for city people (max 15 min on a bike for going anywhere) and for car drivers	A barrier for everyone except for those working in the local neighbourhood	A status quo situation or gradually worse
Effect on the housing potential in the new town at Store Rørbæk	A mixed residential and commercial town. Willingness to accept relatively high housing costs.	Residential town with high – density housing. Co-housing and a mix of smaller and larger houses	Dormitory town or suburb for those ready to accept long journeys in order to live in detached housing	More village than town – detached housing for families and co-housing

All planning can be considered as an attempt to restrict possible futures. This is also the case here. Of the four scenarios listed above scenario 2 'Economic growth and establishment of new infrastructure only with a train station' comes close to the vision of a densely build-up town that can attract residents from the wider region. In this scenario it will be difficult to attract business right from the start. But businesses will be very hard to attract anyway and without a motorway a town with both business and housing are probably not realistic on a shorter term.

But it is questionable if a strategy of putting business before housing is an informed choice if the new town is seen in the perspective of the Øresund Region. If the town shall attract residents from this large region in the future it ought to go for especially the long distance commuters using the public transport system.

Conclusions

This section discusses factors decisive for shaping the future town and what can be learned on housing preferences.

An important objective of the new town is to meet the need for more housing in a region with a pressed housing market. At the same time there is an objective to make the town lively and avoid that the place becomes suburban sprawl or a place with troubled housing estates. The emphasis on mixing housing and business should ensure at least some of the wanted qualities in the town. – Housing before business is a trend that challenges the vision and programme for the town. It can be questioned if there are any negative consequences associated with the new trend of housing before business in a metropolitan area? In the region there is already a trend in the direction of knowledge businesses wanting to locate where people with the needed qualifications already live.

Infrastructure can make or break the new town. There is a reason to reconsider if an option for a new town serviced by rail transport has to be ruled out. If the housing part of the town comes before the business part it might be a sensible choice, as it supports a densely build-up town centre from the beginning. If the motorway is established before a new train station pressure for single-family housing on individual plots can reduce the focus on densely build-up housing.

A final issue is the basis for our knowledge on housing preferences. We assumed that the target groups prefer single-family detached housing. This assumption turned out not to be confirmed. Actually, the interviewees want the qualities you can have in a detached house like privacy and access to nature. At the same time especially the younger interviewees liked the anonymity of living in the city and being exposed to events and not having to plan too much to be able to have fun and excitement in the city. Transport time is seen as an important barrier for having this lifestyle when not living in the heart of the city. The connection to an effective public transport system can diminish this barrier.

Further research

Housing preferences in the Øresund Region needs to be considered in an economic, geographical, and regional context. There is a need to know more about what are behind the housing preferences current and future residents express. There is a need to frame a theory on factors influencing housing preferences that goes beneath the surface.

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