

## Cooperation as an Approach to City Centre Development

Transnational Transfer of  
"MittendrIn Berlin! The Centres Initiative"







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### Transnational Transfer of “MittendrIn Berlin! The Centres Initiative”

Report  
Dr. Petra Potz,  
location<sup>3</sup>

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Since re-unification, Berlin's urban development has been experiencing a boom that has left no part of the city untouched. The most spectacular examples of this can be found in such visible changes as the building of the new government quarters in the Spreebogen district, the completion of the Pariser Platz ensemble at the Brandenburg Gate or the new service district at Potsdamer Platz.

A few facts illustrate this structural change:

- Between 1991 and 2005, the number of people between the ages of 18 and 35 who moved to Berlin (1.005 million) exceeded the entire population of Cologne (2005: 983,000). In total, Berlin gained 246,000 new inhabitants from this age group. This is evidence of the extraordinary appeal that Berlin has on young people.
- Compared to 1991, there are now 260,000 fewer jobs in the manufacturing sector. Berlin has an unemployment rate of 16% (4/2007). At the same time, 170,000 new jobs were created in the service sector. This shows that the city is still in the midst of an economic transformation process.
- Berlin has an extraordinarily dynamic creative sector, which is central to the city's image as the creative young city in Germany and Europe. Nearly 140,000 people work in this sector, nearly half of which are self-employed or freelancers. There is a close interplay between Berlin's cultural and creative sector and the city's other economic sectors (tourism, for example).
- Berlin is very appealing to domestic and international tourists. In terms of urban tourism, the city ranked 3<sup>rd</sup> behind London and Paris. For years, the number of guest overnights has been skyrocketing - in 2006 there were nearly 16 million overnights in Berlin.

The development of retail and urban centres contributed to a dynamic which has had – and continues to have - a major impact on the city's transformation process. In 1990 Berlin had 2.3

million m<sup>2</sup> of sales space; in 2006 this number had grown to 4.3 million m<sup>2</sup>, and this trend is by no means over: since 2000, the sales space in Berlin's retail sector has grown by more than 500,000 m<sup>2</sup> (14%).

Currently there is evidence of two opposing trends: on the one hand sales area is growing, despite generally stagnating turnover; on the other hand, the number of vacant stores in urban centres is on the increase.

Among companies offering product ranges aimed at urban areas, and in particular among shopping centres, growth was concentrated primarily in urban centres. This means that, with the steady population size and a slight increase in retail-related purchasing power (+6%), the per capita sales area increased from 1.15 m<sup>2</sup> to 1.30 m<sup>2</sup>. Other current trends are the continuing trend toward franchising, continued consolidation among companies and ever-evolving business models. The problems and challenges present on the international level are similar.

The primary function of a city and its many centres is retail. Cities require places to identify with, and this is especially true of a city that has undergone such a transformation and at as fast a rate as in Berlin. The city centres, borough centres (*Bezirke*) and traditional multifunctional shopping avenues are taking on more and more importance; they serve as meeting places, as places of continuity and identification. Crucial components in the process of shaping identity are recreation, culture, restaurants, public facilities, but also, and in particular, (historical) buildings and public space as a whole.

The "Centres 2020" Urban Development Plan (*StEP Zentren 2020*), passed by the Senate of Berlin in March 2005, states the following as primary goals:

- strengthening the retail location Berlin
- securing basic supplies
- preserving and strengthening urban centres and
- integrating large-scale retail and recreational facilities in a sustainable way.

The focus of the urban development planning programme is on managing

- location structure: choosing the right location for major retail projects
- a project's dimension: the urban and functional integration of a project into the city's centres
- contributing toward making the advantages of building new locations compatible with the goal of maintaining basic neighbourhood supply and compatible with the creation of urban centres.

The *Centres 2020* Urban Development Plan comes at a time when new forms of cooperation with private stakeholders are becoming more and more central to developments in retail and urban areas. Urban development, if it is to be part of a larger picture, requires a new understanding of planning. Against the background of shrinking government budgets and the ever-higher expectations imposed upon urban planning, more emphasis must be placed on strategies to promote urban development and in particular to incorporate stakeholders locally. The key is for local centres to activate and benefit from their resources, whether they be material or immaterial in nature. This is only possible through joint action, with each participant contributing to the best of their ability and capacity. In the development of urban centres, it is essential to reach a common understanding.

The "MittendrIn Berlin!" competition is a major initiative in this strategy. Here, notions of urban development planning are put into practice and tested. The competition, which makes Berlin the first city-state in Germany to find a solution custom tailored to this situation, is an initiative from the "Ab in die Mitte! – The City Offensive" programme. Similar competitions are being held in the federal states of North Rhine-Westphalia, Lower Saxony, Hesse and Saxony.

Initiatives like Bavaria's "Leben findet Innenstadt" ("Life finds the city centre") or Rhineland-

Palatinate's "Werkstatt Innenstadt" ("City Centre Workshop") are other approaches linked to the topic of centre development, enabling and motivating centre stakeholders to profile and foster the city centres.

The aim of "MittendrIn Berlin! The Centres Initiative", which was launched as a competition process, was to generate new ideas to add profile to Berlin's shopping streets and urban centres. The best idea wins. Individual centres and shopping streets have to sharpen their profile, for only places that retain their distinctiveness will have an advantage in the competition between locations. Perhaps the most crucial factor in this competition is the building and cultivating of networks that integrate public and private stakeholders. The Centres Initiative is a public-private partnership, both on the city-wide level and for local projects. Private business interests from around the city support the initiative: the Berlin Chamber of Industry and Commerce, the Karstadt and Kaufhof retail groups, the Berliner Volksbank, the real estate developer Engel & Völkers and the trade association *Handelsverband Berlin-Brandenburg e.V.* Government support comes from the Senate Department of Economics, Technology and Women's Issues.

The "MittendrIn Berlin! Centres Initiative" is in its third year and has results to show: local activity is perpetuating itself, and winners from previous years are continuing their projects. The "Anstoß Neukölln" ("Kick-Off Neukölln") brought new movement into the debate. The WeitingCard introduced a local discount label, while before that businesses and customers mingled on a yellow stroll across 4500 m<sup>2</sup> of Lichtenberg district. The "Marzahn Platten Spiele" ("Marzahn Pre-fab Games") are being put on again, Friedrichshagen's initiative is organising the cultural festival "Dichter.Dran" ("Closer.") for the second time, on Kurfürstendamm boulevART2 takes place and Pankow is still celebrating.

# MittendrIn Berlin! The Idea, its Initiatives and its Significance for City Centre Development *by Petra Potz*

## Short Overview

A changing environment for urban development (structural changes, financial outlook, etc.) requires cooperation with new partners and private actors. What is needed is a more integrative approach concentrating on different interests and responsibilities. The involvement of both private and public stakeholders is especially important in the planning of retail developments and neighbourhood centres. One of the *Leitprojekte* (major initiatives) in Berlin's urban development planning which follows this approach is "MittendrIn Berlin! The Centres Initiative".

Berlin is the first German city-state using this approach to preserve an urban, historically-grown polycentrality. Berlin, with 3.4 million inhabitants and 892 km<sup>2</sup>, is the biggest city in Germany. It is the German capital and at the same time one of the federal states (*Länder*).

The Berlin Senate Department of Urban Development and the Berlin Chamber of Industry and Commerce have initiated and organised this innovative strategy to preserve and strengthen the existing (traditional) city centres and shopping boulevards. "MittendrIn Berlin! The Centres Initiative" is a commercial revitalisation programme that uses a grants competition to encourage Berlin's shopping street and neighbourhood centre associations to develop creative and innovative concepts and projects. The initiators are responsible for citywide project coordination and public relations as well as for follow-up assistance to the local winner teams.

Successful grant projects in this competition address several goals, namely:

- forming a convincing team composed of at least 15 financial partners covering a broad spectrum of the local social and economical contexts – in particular a new mix of public and private actors, such as retailers, cultural and sports institutions, real estate and property owners, business people, gastronomy and hotels and dedicated citizens,
- accepting the challenges of a competition and presenting an original and feasible concept within the short time period provided for in the call for proposals,
- developing concepts that are original, but which also build on existing local strengths and opportunities,
- organising, within the framework of the grants competition, an event or project which is limited in scope but at the same time which creates impulses for sustainable and long-term effects in the neighbourhoods and shopping streets.

Since 2005, three editions of the Berlin Centres Initiative have already successfully taken place. In order to sharpen the profile of the contributions and to better communicate the initiative at the overall city level, each competition has been organised around a special theme.

## The Initiatives – Examples of Winning Projects

The following winners of different editions of the competition between 2005 and 2007 show the variety of topics and possible fields of local commitment which can be activated. All initiatives share the common aim of creating or re-discovering the potential of city centres and shopping streets.

### *Weitlingstraße - Lichtenbergs Gelbe Seite (The Yellow Part of Lichtenberg), 2005*

The basic concept was “yellow”. Between the light railway stations of Lichtenberg and Sophienstraße, the shopping street Weitlingstraße was covered by a yellow carpet, transforming the street into the “yellow part of Lichtenberg“. The aim was to improve the image of the street as an attractive avenue for transit passengers and travellers due to its close proximity to a major train junction.



*The Yellow Part of Lichtenberg - Weitlingstraße*  
Source: Initiative Weitlingstraße

Inhabitants, local civic initiatives and shop-owners decorated facades and shop windows in yellow and offered yellow specials on yellow market stands. A new shopping guide – the “Yellow Page“ and a yellow customer card (*Kundenkarte*) were introduced. This card was established as a local discount label, and even after the event it was continued (as the Weitling-Card) as a means of binding customers and purchasing power to the shopping

street. This temporary, simple and clear initiative of turning a well-known shopping street into a yellow space enabled it to be seen from a new angle. As yellow is a colour which evokes many associations, it was easy to activate very different stakeholders - local businesses, public institutions and inhabitants - to participate with new ideas.

Another decisive factor, besides the colour yellow, was the architectural situation of a perimeter block development, which allowed for a clearly delimited space to be filled with new contents.

### *Friedrichshagen – Dichter.dran am Bölschestrاند (Closer to Bölsche Beach), 2006*

Bölschestraße in Friedrichshagen is a tree-lined promenade and shopping avenue of 1.5 kilometres stretching between a park and the banks of lake Müggelsee in the south-eastern part of Berlin. The many buildings along this avenue are protected as historical monuments and have been meticulously restored. Nevertheless, the beautiful shopping avenue remains an insider tip. With the event “Friedrichshagen – closer to Bölsche beach”, the local advertising community and the citizens’ committee joined forces and transformed



*Friedrichshagen - Closer to Bölsche Beach*  
Source: AG Bölschestrاند, A. Schulze

the boulevard into a boardwalk. Many of the visitors took a break to relax in deck chairs and read “The Place Where We Live – Seventeen Friedrichshagen Texts from Three Centuries”, which was published especially for this event. The colour blue connected the various events and activities taking place during that weekend: more than 150 blue flags waved in the wind along the street. The street itself was closed to traffic, converted into a boardwalk and turned into a stage for jugglers and comedians.

Visitors with athletic ambitions found countless opportunities for physical activity, including a beach volleyball tournament on the market square and an introductory yoga course in the Kurpark. The restored Fürstenwalder Damm will soon be completely reopened to traffic. Thanks to a citizens’ group, the railway station will again be clad in clinker brick, and residents of Friedrichshagen and the numerous day-trippers and visitors will soon be able to relax and enjoy their surroundings on inviting park benches on their way from the railway station to Müggelsee. After all, Bölschestraße is “closer to” (dichter.dran) and almost “in the middle” (MittendrIn) of the best of everything.

### ***BoulevART – Art Conquers the Kurfürstendamm, 2006***

The Kurfürstendamm: a boulevART. Berlin’s largest commercial street, 2.4 kilometres long, is much more than a shopping and tourist avenue. The consortium AG City, along with the Free University of Berlin’s Institute for Culture and Media Management, converted the Kurfürstendamm into an urban stage for young contemporary art for a period of more than ten days. In this initiative, facades and shop windows, display cabinets and lounges, malls and parks at ten locations between Breitscheidplatz and Lehniner Platz were converted into exhibition areas. The topics of these art stations, which were marked as local bus stops, were chosen based upon the particular his-

tory or atmosphere of these sites: paintings and sculptures, light and sound installations, performances and video art set new accents and were at the same time reminiscent of the art tradition of the 1920s and the post-war period.



*boulevART – BoulevART – Art Conquers the Kurfürstendamm, Source: SenStadt*

A painting machine spread across 1.000 m<sup>2</sup> of the ground floor of the Kudamm-Carré was the most successful part of the programme: Using brushes and paint, pupils, teachers and parents converted the currently unused area into a temporary room for inspiration and art. The AG City won the partnership of the famous Emden Museum Art School, the Henri and Eske Nannen Endowment and the Berlin Youth at the Museum Art Laboratory Association for boulevART’s major project with the motto “Lots of Art Forms Under One Roof”. Participants painted powerful and expressive works on large format paper and easels. The workshop “Kinder machen Druck” (Children make print/pressure) gave pupils the new experience of leaving footprints and fingerprints on various materials. Over 500 participants visited the painting machine. More than 400 pupils and primary school teachers, art classes, and painting clubs (Mal-AGs) from various city boroughs took part in the school program. Based on the success, a second round of this event, BoulevART2, has been organised for 2007.

***Anstoß Neukölln (Kick-off Neukölln), 2005***

Sports and musical offers linked to the revitalisation of retail were the main elements of this initiative to support the integration of different ethnic groups living in the borough of Neukölln. The initiator was the retailers association of Karl-Marx-Straße, the most important shopping street in Neukölln. At the same time, “Kick-off Neukölln” coincided with the start of the Football World Championships of 2006. It also was the launch of a new event which will be repeated every year at the start of the German football league. The programme is composed of a mixture of sports, cultural and music events. The centrepiece was a football goal installed in the middle of Karl-Marx-Straße.

The topic of sports and leisure is one of the easiest to communicate, and one which allows language and cultural differences to be overcome. Entertained by breakdancers and the Capoeira group “Capitães de Areia” (whose performance supported children living on the street in Brazil), many visitors had an absolutely new experience.

The dialogue process has been fostered and continued through a series of discussions and workshops about further strategies for Karl-Marx-Straße, which were attended by all stakeholders involved in the event and organised by the Berlin Chamber of Industry and Commerce.



*Kick-off Neukölln*  
Source: Senate Department for Urban Development

***Design Allez! Frankfurter Allee - Trading Places in Berlin Between Paris and Moscow, 2007***

The winning team of the business association of Frankfurter Allee initiated its concept on the central location of the architecturally and historically important street in Berlin – the former Stalinallee - and declared it the centre of the axis Paris-Moscow. The motto stressed the positive mood and the branding of an international fashion and design boulevard which will further facilitate tourist and commercial interests in the future. The reference to the partner cities of Berlin, Paris and Moscow became obvious in the variety of offers from participants from the three capital cities. These included fashion and design events such as open-air catwalks and visits to designer ateliers in the area, as well as retail and gastronomic offers from the three countries. A repeat of the event is planned for 2008.



*DESIGN ALLEZ – Moscow Berlin Paris*  
Source: Frankfurter Allee e.V.

### ***City Centre Development as an Essential Element of Urban Development***

“MittendrIn Berlin!” has produced a variety of ideas meant to activate and motivate the participants in the different city centres and shopping streets, but it is first and foremost part of an overall strategy and approach focused on strengthening the existing centres in a broader urban context.

Cities and city centres are faced with changing requirements. These include demographic changes with all its facets, the debate on energy and cost-efficient mobility due to climate change, sustainable living and environmental behaviour, questions of social segregation regarding integration and a growing hybridisation of lifestyles and consumer behaviour.

The result is that the city centre must fulfil many functions.

- It is the crystallisation point of social cohesion and identification in the city for all social groups and citizens.
- A differentiated offer of retail and services together with cultural, leisure and tourist offers is needed.
- The historical and architectural quality and physical environment of the city centres and the “Baukultur” developing this quality which distinguishes them from the situation in the outskirts must be emphasised and further developed.

Within these structural challenges, the city centre is being rediscovered in the urban debate. This debate is going on on different levels, such as:

#### ***The European context***

New and integrated approaches and strategies based on this awareness have recently been introduced in the European and German context.

The Leipzig Charter on Sustainable European Cities and the Territorial Agenda of the European Union, documents which were approved in May

2007, are programmatically fostering integrated urban development and thus liveable city centres.

#### ***The national level***

In the memorandum “Towards a National Urban Development Policy” published in the summer of 2007, the Federal Ministry of Transport, Building and Urban Affairs (BMVBS 2007) confirmed the necessity of an urban development approach based on a broad alliance of public and private stakeholders. This is the focus of the measures for city centre development.

The “Law on the simplification of planned projects for the inner development of cities” has been approved as an amendment to the Federal Building Code of December 2006 (Gesetz 2006). The decision to set up a formal urban renewal area must include a fixed time schedule. The aim is to provide clear information regarding a measure’s costs and timeframe, especially for local retailers and shop owners. Thus the measure can be considered an aid and incentive for public-private alliances such as Business Improvement Districts (BID). In general, the amendment is beneficial to retail and commerce.

#### ***The Federal State and local level***

Through a variety of programmes on different levels (Federal State, Municipality) regarding urban renewal and revitalisation, but also through initiatives of public or private institutions and stakeholders, the common objective is the revitalisation of functioning urban and neighbourhood centres (BMVBS, BBR 2007). Town marketing and city management initiatives have been established in many German towns and cities. Round tables and discussion platforms, public-private alliances, such as the business improvement districts (BID), have been legally established in different ways in the German Federal States (ISG North Rhine-Westphalia, BID Hamburg, PACT Schleswig-Holstein, BID Bremen, INGE Hesse and BID in the Saar as well as the experimental QIN Lower Saxony).

The grants competition, as an instrument to improve city centre development, has been tested

in Bavaria, Rhineland-Palatinate and Baden-Württemberg. It has been organised more as a “working, learning and communication process” ([www.lebenfindetinnenstadt.de](http://www.lebenfindetinnenstadt.de)) within integrated concepts.

The pioneer initiative to activate local stakeholders to commit themselves to their local centres in 1999 was “Ab in die Mitte!” in North Rhine-Westphalia. Later, this initiative was extended to the German Federal States of Lower Saxony, Saxony and Hesse.

What is unique about the Berlin competition “MittendrIn Berlin!” is that it is not a competition of towns and cities, which often have professional city marketing structures at their disposal. Instead, as the competition takes place within a single city-state, there is a cooperation between local centres, neighbourhoods and shopping streets with motivated, but mostly voluntary stakeholders that have no professional marketing experience. Despite this structural risk, “MittendrIn Berlin!”, in its three editions starting in 2005, has mobilised 64 candidates with 13 awards and an annual budget of € 200,000.

These projects contribute to the creation of a unique profile for the local centre and the city as a whole (Hatzfeld, Imorde, Schnell 2006) and are part of an integrated and sustainable urban development approach.

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## Other Approaches to City Centre Development in the Baltic Sea Region

The following overview intends to put the ideas and experiences of “MittendrIn Berlin!” as an innovative form of public-private partnership aimed at strengthening urban centres into an international context in order to contribute to a larger debate on the revitalisation of European town and city centres. “MittendrIn Berlin!” has provided central lessons to this debate:

- Involving and motivating citizens and local stakeholders to dedicate time and efforts to their urban centres helps them get to know each other better and strengthens their identification with the place.
- Strengthening established centres as opposed to suburban sites and developing a functional variety contributes to a functioning and balanced polycentric structure.
- One central quality of these locally based stakeholder networks is the contextualisation, within a broader integrated perspective, which creates a general consensus on sustainable development objectives.
- The public-private partnership established for the competition is a way to deepen and make reliable the cooperation between important economic and public stakeholders in the city and to use it fruitfully in further common activities.

The examples of the three capital cities of Copenhagen, Stockholm and Helsinki stand for different perspectives on the future of the city and different approaches and strategies regarding how to re-invent the cities, and one of the vital functions of city centres, namely retailing. All strategies of city centre development, revitalisation and strengthening show the necessity to strengthen the European cities starting from their cores.

Urban structures and requirements have changed, and they are still undergoing dramatic transformation. Town and city centres in particular have been found themselves under enormous pressure for quite a few years as a result of several factors. The cities represent historically grown centres of economic, social, cultural, and political life that have a major impact on the development of our societies. Cities are places of cultural identity and cohesion.

### The Slow Path Towards a New Urban Culture in Copenhagen

*by Louise Kielgast*

In the last century cities have undergone immense changes. All over the world, cities have been heavily invaded by cars, and this invasion has had a great impact on the ways in which we use and enjoy our cities. During the 1950s and 1960s the urban spaces that were once filled with a multitude of daily activities became inundated by cars and parking facilities. This flood of cars has had an effect on the quality of public spaces in the city: full of noise and pollution and with very little space left for walking, many public spaces have been abandoned by people. As a consequence, we have witnessed a loss in terms of urban life. Many city centres are dominated by asphalt-covered spaces which are neither suitable nor inviting places for people to take leisurely walks, stop or talk. Instead, these spaces are tailored to cars. As the use of cars has made it easier to quickly move from one place to the other, the need for good pedestrian infrastructure such as sidewalks has diminished.

In recent decades, however, the importance of public space and public life has received renewed attention. Cities in very different contexts have become aware of the role of public space in securing an urban quality of life, and we have seen the emergence of what can be termed ‘reconquered cities’. These include cities such as Barcelona, Lyon, Melbourne, Curitiba, Bogota, Freiburg, Copenhagen and others. The overall idea is to reclaim public spaces and utilise them for social and recreational purposes, thus cultivating the possibilities for a diverse urban life. As a result of the increased focus on public spaces, we are now witnessing people from many different kinds of user groups making more extensive use of public spaces, and for very different purposes, participating in both passive and active forms of recreation.

Taking this complexity into consideration, the question is this: What is the best way to reconquer the city and create attractive urban spaces? Indeed, different strategies and processes may lead to different results. In Copenhagen the approach chosen has been a long and slow process.

### *Copenhagen in the 1960s*

By the 1960s Copenhagen had, like many other cities, become a city heavily dominated by cars. As a result, planning concerns centred around issues of parking facilities and securing a car-friendly infrastructure for the rapidly increasing number of private cars that entered the city every day. In the historical centre of the city, many public squares merely served as places for car parking, thus ensuring that people could easily access the city centre and its shopping facilities by car.

In contrast to urban life around the turn of the 19th century, when many daily (necessary) activities took place in public spaces, in Copenhagen in the early 1960s there was a very limited urban life in the sense of people spending time in the streets and on the squares out of pleasure rather than out of need. For many people, the automobile-based organisation and planning of the city was the natural development for Copenhagen. Besides the necessary activities which had previously taken place in the city, there was no tradition of a recreational urban life in Copenhagen - or in Denmark as a whole, for that matter.

As a result, the suggestion to turn the city's main street into a pedestrian street provoked strong reactions, opposition and even mistrust. In

the intense public debate following the conversion of the street, commercial interests argued that denying people the chance to park their cars close to shops would result in a decline in customers and thus a reduction in business for the city centre. Others made use of cultural arguments, stressing that "pedestrian streets would never work in Scandinavia", and that compared to southern Europe there was no tradition of outdoor urban life in Scandinavia. But as it turned out, the decision to reduce and push back the flood of cars became synonymous with a new era for Copenhagen.

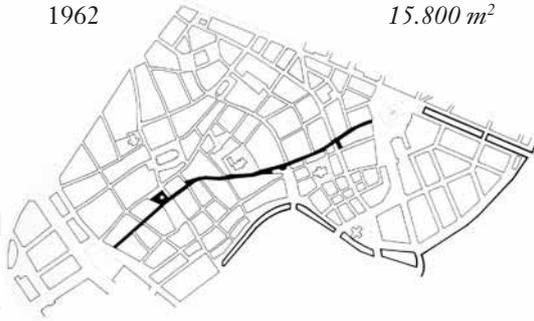
### *A Step by Step Approach*

The first step towards changing the inner city and enhancing urban life was made in 1962. The main street, now called 'Strøget', which in fact comprises several streets running from the City Hall square to Kongens Nytorv (The King's New Square) – another major square in Copenhagen – was turned into a pedestrian street. Within a short period of time, this 11-13 metre wide street became a very popular street for walking. As part of the conversion from a busy traffic avenue to a street reserved for pedestrians, several squares along 'Strøget' were renovated and former parking facilities removed. This new pedestrian stretch

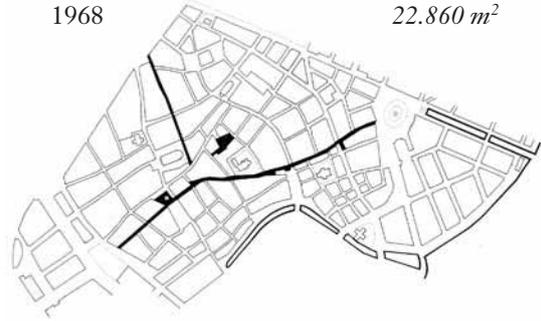


*The inner city's main street – 'Strøget' – before and after its conversion into a pedestrian street in 1962  
Source: Jan Gebl & Lars Gemzøe*

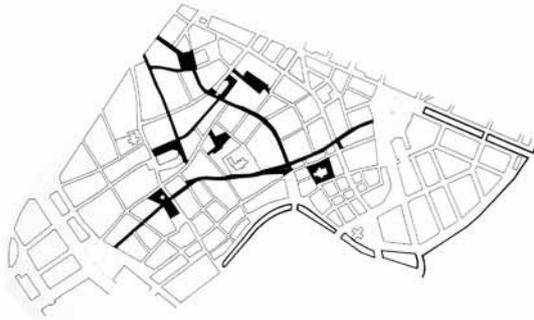
1962

15.800 m<sup>2</sup>

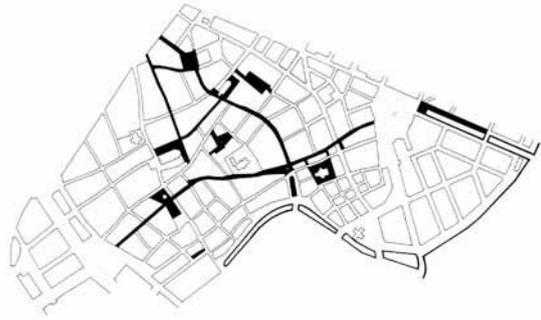
1968

22.860 m<sup>2</sup>

1973

49.200 m<sup>2</sup>

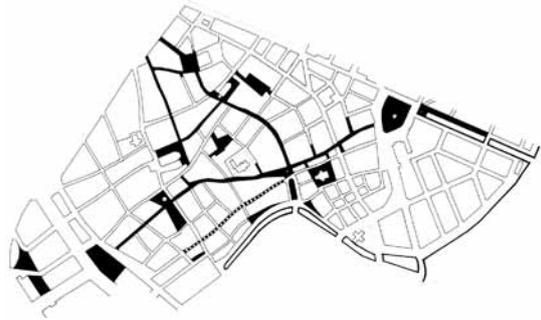
1988

66.150 m<sup>2</sup>

1992

82.820 m<sup>2</sup>

1996

95.750 m<sup>2</sup>

*The six small maps illustrate the gradual development of car-free streets and squares between 1962 and 1996.*

was approximately 1 km long and accounted for 15.800 m<sup>2</sup> of pedestrian area in total, including the renovated squares.

At first, the conversion of 'Strøget' was seen as a purely experimental effort, but six years later, in 1968, the first north-south pedestrian street, called Fiolstræde, was established; only five years later it was followed by another, Købmagergade, as well as a few smaller ones connecting the two. These con-

versions, for the most part, completed the network of pedestrian streets as we know it today.

In addition to the establishment of pedestrian streets, a number of public squares have equally been emptied of cars and converted from parking lots into spaces where public life of different kinds could take place. This work was started with Gammeltorv and Amagertorv in 1962, but a major step was taken in 1973 with the renovation of



*The transformation of the Town Hall square in 1996 was meant to create a better link between the Central Train Station west of the square with the inner city to the east. The traffic artery that once divided the square has been removed, and busses have been concentrated on one end of the square, leaving space for various public events to unfold on the square throughout the year. Source: Jan Gehl & Lars Gemzøe (1996)*

three squares in the city centre. Still others were added in 1988, including converting the street of the northern part of the Nyhavn canal into a pedestrian street. In 1992 a different kind of pedestrian zone was completed: In 1989, a small (8-11-metre wide) street, 'Strædet', which runs parallel to 'Strøget' was experimentally reclassified as a pedestrian priority street. This makes it a street where pedestrians and cyclists have priority, but where cars may enter at a slow speed. As the experiment was a success, the street was repaved and the sidewalks eliminated in 1992, thus establishing its role in the rest of the pedestrian street network. Also in 1992, two stretches along a canal close to 'Strøget' were renewed, thus adding two attractive public spaces to the city centre; additionally, in front of Tivoli, a new pedestrian axis was created. Finally, in 2000, traffic was pushed back from the City Hall square, which today constitutes one of the city's major squares for public events. With these different improvements, pedestrian areas now amount to a total of approximately 100.000 m<sup>2</sup>. The process of transforming Copenhagen's city centre has largely been a government initiative, with the City of Copenhagen being the driving force. In some cases, such as Amagertorv located on 'Strøget', local businesses took on an active role, initiating the big renovation in 1993 and also acting as main sponsors.

The above description of the development of Copenhagen's city centre is a demonstration of what can be achieved through an incremental approach, by which small steps are recognised as

valuable and worthwhile towards creating a lively and attractive urban centre. This slow process has had a number of advantages. First of all, both city residents and visitors have had time to get used to and participate in the development of a completely new urban culture. Given the lack of tradition for an active outdoor urban life in Denmark, this slow habituation process may have proved crucial in securing the success of the development of public spaces. In a similar vein, car owners have had time to get accustomed to the fact that the city centre is no longer easily accessible by car, as many streets have been closed off and parking possibilities in the centre have been eliminated to make it more attractive for people using bicycles and public transport. Equally important, the slow and incremental approach may have proved strategically wise from a political standpoint, as the effects of the initiatives have been able to be measured and evaluated throughout the process. This has secured the success of and support for many new urban spaces in Copenhagen.

The development of public squares may not, however, be understood in isolation from other policies. Indeed the improvement of urban life in Copenhagen is part and parcel of a more general traffic and urban development policy, in which traffic concerns and urban quality concerns are integrated into a more holistic strategy. The strategy to tame city traffic and reclaim streets and squares in order to create quality spaces has involved, among other things, an expansion of the bicycle network. This in turn has helped sustain

and facilitate a more pedestrian-friendly city. In 2005, Copenhagen boasted a total of 343 km of cycle lanes, and since 2004 the number of bicycles has surpassed the number of cars travelling to and from the city centre during rush hour.

Furthermore, the development of pedestrian streets and quality public spaces has gone hand in hand with academic efforts to record developments in the pedestrian use of the city centre and in public space in general. This work was started in 1968 by researchers from the Centre for Public Space Research at the School of Architecture in Copenhagen, and a number of comprehensive studies have since been carried out (1986 and 1995) and supplemented with many smaller studies of individual locations. These studies, which document the many improvements in Copenhagen's city centre and the development of urban life in the city since 1962, constitute a rare activity: whereas most cities record trends in car traffic, surveys documenting patterns of pedestrian and bicycle activities are more unusual.

The findings in Copenhagen show that pedestrian activities have remained notably constant since the heavy growth that occurred immediately following the conversion of the main streets into walking streets in the 1960s (for a more detailed account of the findings, see Gehl/Gemzøe 1996).

What has changed, however, is the use of public space and the various activities taking place in Copenhagen's city centre.

In the last decade the focus has shifted from the city centre to include the dense housing areas surrounding the city centre. Here a similar development has taken place, with cars being pushed out of city squares to make space for urban life to unfold in these neighbourhoods.

### *A Different Urban Culture Today*

As described earlier, the conversion of 'Strøget' in 1962 proved to be a major success. The same can be said for the many other improvements made to the city centre in the following decades. Copenhagen residents have truly adopted the pedestrian network, and numbers indicate that 80% of all movements in the inner city are made on foot!

The variety of experience that the inner city of Copenhagen offers today helps explain why many different user groups choose to spend time in the city centre every day. People used to come to the city centre for work or shopping – i.e. out of necessity. When asked today, many more people say they come to the city centre simply for the pleasure and excitement of being in the city. 'Strøget' remains Copenhagen's main shopping street and also serves as the city's major promenade – a place to see and to be seen. During the summer, pedestrian volume reaches 55,000 people a day, while during winter the street accommodates some 25,000 pedestrians between 10 a.m. and 6 p.m.. Along 'Strøget' one finds highly diverse retail selection, ranging from very fancy shops on one end to more modest shops, restaurants and bars on the other end. The more mainstream shops along 'Strøget' are also supplemented by small, specialised shops on 'Strædet', which is a small parallel street.

Compared to 'Strøget', Fiolstræde is a quieter pedestrian street. Here the number of pedestrians remains virtually constant all year round. In summer the street is taken over by tourists; once summer is over, however, the tourists are replaced by the many students in the area.

The squares in the city centre provide another kind of variety. Some of the busiest squares are found along 'Strøget'. Amagertorv in the eastern part is an important meeting place in the city and boasts different kinds of street entertainment, and Gammeltorv/Nytorv has become a very popular square to sit and watch the ever-changing crowd of people – it also hosts a continuous stream of activities, both ordinary and festive. More hidden to the crowds passing along 'Strøget' is Gråbrødre Plads, which provides a quiet oasis within the city centre.

These different urban spaces provide the basis for an urban culture of great diversity. From their former roles as pure shopping areas, the pedestrian streets and public squares in Copenhagen's city centre have become an important public forum – a meeting place for different groups of people and a stage for various activities. Whereas in the 1960s street musicians were shooed away by the police,

today they have become an integral part of the urban life that takes place in the city centre.

While the number of pedestrians has remained almost constant since the 1960s, major changes have taken place in terms of the activities that people now engage in. People no longer just pass through; now they stop and observe the urban life taking place or lounge on benches or café chairs. Indeed the growth of a café culture, which was virtually absent 30 years ago, has changed the inner city immensely. The many sitting possibilities provide an important basis for urban life to unfold. Another important element is to create a framework for activities to take place, regardless of season and time of day.

Today most of the activities taking place in Copenhagen and many other cities are nonessential in nature, meaning that they are recreational in character and not related to job functions. Subsequently the quality of the urban space becomes very important in order to attract people to spend time in the city.

People's motivations for spending time in the city vary and change over time. Thus, providing quality spaces for life to unfold in city centres remains a constant challenge. In doing so, important decisions must be made. Is there a need for an overall plan? Does a political will and vision for change exist within city government? Who should take part in the planning of such initiatives? And are changes to happen quickly or slowly? In the case of Copenhagen, the slow process of many small steps was chosen and has proven effective in terms of creating a more liveable city.

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## Stockholm - the "City in Cooperation"

by Malin Hansen

### *An Ever-growing Interest in and Focus on City Centre Development in Sweden*

In Sweden there is an ever-growing focus on and attention being paid to the topic of city centre development and the organisation of such activities. These issues are being discussed in many different forums and among many different stakeholders. One example is a project called "The Good City" ("Den Goda Staden"), in which national stakeholders such as the Swedish Association of Local Authorities and Regions, the Swedish Rail Administration, the National Board of Housing, Building and Planning, and the Swedish Road Administration work alongside three municipalities (Jönköping, Norrköping and Uppsala) (see Tornberg and Hansen, 2007). The goal of the project is to find creative solutions for city centre development and for the development of the built environment, and to create an understanding of the factors that enable a development that moves toward a more attractive and sustainable society. The hope is that this project will lead to possible changes in national regulations in order to promote better cooperation between public and private actors, for example.<sup>1</sup>

As in most Western countries, city centre development in Swedish cities is no longer an exclusively public task. Nowadays it seems more a rule than an exception that the processes involve public as well as private stakeholders. This is becoming more and more common, particularly with the existence of various forms of public-private organisations or cooperation initiatives responsible for working with city centre development issues. In Sweden there is a steady growth of this kind of initiative; a rough estimate is that about 85-90% of Swedish cities currently have some sort of city centre management initiative in place. These range from very formal organisations in the form of a limited company or an incorporated economic association to more informal arrangements

<sup>1</sup> Swedish Rail Administration

like projects or informal agreements “to work together”. Today the most common activity within these initiatives is focused on building a “unique” image of the city centre (Berggren, interview). The key questions are: What is special about our city? What is its identity?

### ***Stockholm Aims to be a “Safe, Secure, Clean and Beautiful City”***

Following the municipal election in September of 2006, there was a power shift in Stockholm, and the Stockholm Alliance - comprising of the Moderate, Liberal and Christian Democratic parties - now has the responsibility for the City of Stockholm.<sup>2</sup> The political platform of the Alliance rests on six defined objectives, one of which is “a safe and picturesque city”, i.e. that Stockholm should be a “safe, secure, clean and beautiful city”. In order to improve security, the city is channelling resources into combating crime and crime-prevention efforts. Furthermore, lighting programmes, the removal of graffiti and cleaning of public areas are important measures meant to create a safer and more beautiful Stockholm. One project aimed at making Stockholm a cleaner city is the “Stockholm Cleaning and Beautification project” (“Stockholm Ren och Vacker”), which coordinates the activities of different stakeholders. This project is carried out in cooperation with the city centre management organisation “City i Samverkan”, which is described below (Ericson, interview; Stockholm Stad 2006; 2007).

### ***The Emergence of a Stronger Focus on City Centre Management in Stockholm City***

Cooperation between different stakeholders focusing on the development of the central parts of Stockholm (called city) has actually existed since 1997, although the exact form of this cooperation has changed over the years. When it was originally started it was a kind of loose network organisation.

After a couple of years it was decided that an organisation representing the retail and wholesale commerce, the Swedish Trade Federation,<sup>3</sup> would host this small group of four participants. In the end that approach did not really work out, and three years ago a freestanding incorporated economic association was established. This association consisted of four consultants working together, offering stakeholders in the city centre the possibility to work on different projects of common importance and relevance. About two years ago some urban stakeholders reacted and demanded that either the form of cooperation be changed or that the work should cease altogether. As a result a new organisation called “City i Samverkan” (CiS, City in Cooperation) was launched in January of 2007 (Ericson, interview).



*Map showing the activity area of City i Samverkan; Source: City i Samverkan*

The guiding principle of CiS is that “Stockholm City should always be worth a trip” (“Stockholm city ska alltid vara värt en resa”). This is in fact an idea that had already been in use before CiS entered the arena. The organisation aims to bring together private as well as public stakeholders in the city centre with the goal of developing Stockholm City. Among the qualitative objectives

<sup>2</sup> “City of Stockholm” (“Stockholm Stad”) is the semi-official name for the municipality of Stockholm.

<sup>3</sup> The Swedish Trade Federation (Svensk Handel) is a member-based organisation that deals with economic policy and employer issues on behalf of Swedish companies involved in retail and wholesale commerce.

for the year 2007 are the following (City i Samverkan AB 2007):

- a common marketing strategy,
- improved city cleaning,
- a safer city and
- a marked reduction of graffiti and illegal bill-posting.

### ***Reasons Behind the Launching of the New City Centre Management Organisation***

There are a number of reasons for launching the CiS organisation, the most important of which is that Stockholm is the capital of Sweden and as such needs a professional and coordinated management of issues concerning the city centre. The previous organisation did not provide this management; the numerous different stakeholders were not involved and the organisation focused only on smaller areas of the city and particular streets. With CiS the network of stakeholders has been vastly expanded and the focus is now on the entire city area. The involvement of more stakeholders strengthened the “muscles” of the organisation as well as the financial possibilities to carry out different projects. This will also increase the potential for creating a strong brand. Among the push factors are the increasing intraregional competition from the suburban shopping centres - which continue to grow and as a result have recently become a more real threat to the city centre - and the increasing competition between medium-sized cities in the global arena, especially concerning the flow of tourists (Ericson; Söderlind, interviews).

### ***The Organisation of “City i Samverkan”***

Despite the fact that the current organisation is quite young, it builds on ten years of experience with different ways of organising city centre activities. The team responsible for the design of the new organisation has been studying how other Swedish cities have organised their work (especially Malmö and Västerås); in fact, CiS is to a great extent modelled on the city centre management organisation in Malmö.<sup>4</sup> Additional inspiration has

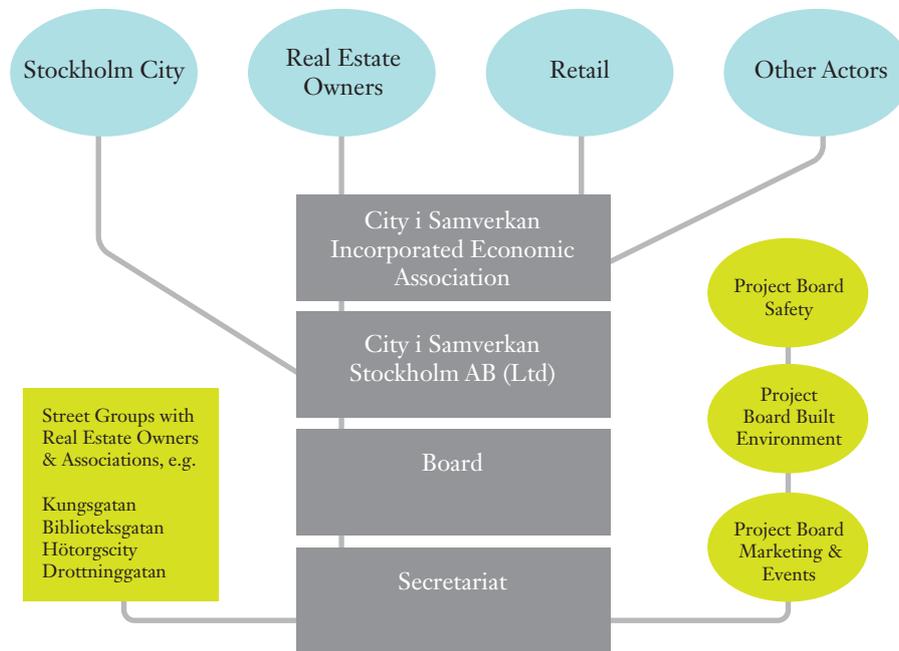
come from the local Chamber of Commerce and its organisational methods.

CiS is an organisation that is quite “small and fast”. This means that politicians get good returns on their investments. It is kind of a shortcut from the political level to the actual civil servants responsible for specific tasks, such as street cleaning. The Stockholm City is a large organisation with a vast area of responsibility, within which decision-making and the delegation of tasks take a long time. It is much easier for CiS to contact the appropriate civil servants directly.

The new city centre management organisation is organised as an incorporated economic association and a limited company. The incorporated economic association owns the limited company, in which all members, including local real-estate companies, retail chains, malls, the Chamber of Commerce, the Swedish Trade Federation etc. are represented. Both bodies share the same board, which makes all strategic decisions. The limited company takes care of various legal and administrative matters, such as drafting contracts, with the members. The secretariat is the executive organ that focuses on such matters as the short-term progress of various projects. Practical work is organised within three different thematic groups linked to the secretariat; these focus on the built environment, marketing & events, and safety.

All major stakeholders, as well as those generally affected by the activities of the CiS, are involved as members (amounting to approximately 60% of city centre stakeholders). As such they pay a fee to the management of the organisation. Larger actors pay more than smaller ones. In other words, each actor pays according to his “muscle power”. The biggest support comes from Stockholm City. CiS currently has a yearly budget of about 3.2 million SEK (about €350,000) and about two to three full-time employees. The current budget level is comparable to spending levels of a similar organisation in Malmö, the third-largest city in Sweden. Stakeholders in Stockholm feel that this must be changed, as Stockholm is not only bigger, it is also the capital of Sweden. Over the next years they hope to increase their budget and expand the organisation. Although the organisation is small, the CiS network consists of about 100 different persons within different organisations. The time and

<sup>4</sup> See [www.malmocity.nu](http://www.malmocity.nu) (Malmö Citysamverkan)



Organisation of "City i Samverkan" (CiS)  
Source: City i Samverkan

money they invest are very important to the successful work of the CiS.

A crucial change within the new organisation is the involvement of Stockholm City. Previously the public authority had not been directly involved in the activities of the city centre organisation. Instead, its participation was only indirect, through the different civil servants that took part in specific projects in the city centre. Today the city supports the organisation in the form of an annual fee; it also has representatives on the board and the three thematic groups who are there only to observe the activities of the CiS.

### ***Two Projects - Stockholm Cleaning & Beautification and Pink October***

CiS and its partners have already launched a range of projects. One particularly successful project is "Stockholm Cleaning & Beautification". This project is a collaboration between CiS, Stockholm City, the Swedish Trade Federation and the

police. One of the activities within this project was the employment of a number of teenagers during the summer of 2006 to do some extra cleaning in the city centre and to hand out information to visitors. The project was well received. For example, the Chinese embassy expressed interest and asked if the information handed out could be made available in Chinese. A second project, "Pink October", is a cooperation between CiS, the Swedish Trade Federation and the Swedish Cancer Society.<sup>5</sup> During the entire month of October, which is international Breast Cancer Month, the city centre and its stakeholders raise money for the Swedish Cancer Society, specifically for breast cancer research. Participants sell the "pink ribbon" as a fund-raising measure; shops and other participants are encouraged to decorate the city in pink - among other things, entire buildings are illuminated in pink

<sup>5</sup> The Swedish Cancer Society (Cancerfonden) is an independent non-profit organisation with the main task to raise and distribute money for cancer research.

light. In addition, at the end of October 2007, CiS arranged a small gala in the city centre for representatives of the retail stakeholders to raise money for the Pink Ribbon campaign.



*Drottninggatan, the main shopping street in Stockholm City;  
Source: City i Samverkan*



*Five famous buildings in the city centre called Hötorgsskraporna lit up by pink light during Pink October  
Source: Karl Gabor*

### ***In Search of Tools to Measure City Centre Management Performance***

CiS uses different indexes to control and evaluate the performance of the city centre and its own actions within the city centre. Some are common indexes such as real-estate values and sales figures, while others have been constructed by CiS based on employees' long-term experience with city centre development. One such example is the "satisfied customer index" (NKI, "Nöjd Kund Index"), which measures the level of satisfaction among different customers regarding different streets, functions etc. CiS is in the process of improving its control and evaluation of the organisation's performance. Today they have five to six different measurement indexes, and they are in search of new tools. They hope to expand the list to about 10-15 different measurement tools (Ericson, interview; [www.city-isamverkan.se](http://www.city-isamverkan.se)).

### ***Highlighting Some Initial Experiences***

Even if the city centre management organisation in Stockholm City, in its current form, is still very new, it has already made some interesting experiences that deserve attention:

During the phase of designing the new organisation, stakeholders made sure to anchor and secure acceptance for the initiative among all political parties. This was important in the short run, since an election took place just before the launch of the organisation. It is also very important in the long run, in order to ensure stability even if the political mandate changes (Söderlind, interview).

The organisation has succeeded in creating shortcuts between politicians and public civil servants so that action can be taken much faster than has been the case in the past.

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## Helsinki – City Centre Retail for the Finnish Metropolis

by Peter Ache and Anna Nurmi

### *Establishing a Finnish Metropolis*

After an initial period in the 1960s, a strong 'second' urbanisation process is now underway in Finland. Whereas elsewhere in western European countries the percentage of people living in an urban environment already varies between 80 to 90%, in Finland the figure is currently at 66% (European Environment Agency 2006). Both the United Nations and Statistics Finland predict that the urban population in general and in Finland in particular will increase considerably by 2030. Thus, a rapid and extensive urbanisation process is still expected to continue in Finland, particularly the region around Helsinki. With approximately 600,000 inhabitants, the capital is the largest city in Finland. The entire capital city region (Greater Helsinki Region, GHR) comprises about 1.2 million inhabitants, Espoo and Vantaa being the largest cities<sup>6</sup>. Small wonder that the Greater Helsinki Region, comprising fourteen municipalities, organised a vision competition to develop, among other things, residential space for an additional 700,000 inhabitants. Providing housing is one of the major challenges in the region. Already today the domestic migration of population groups, a majority of which are Finns<sup>7</sup>, is resulting in considerable urban sprawl - for which the region was recently earmarked by the EEA as a negative example (European Environment Agency 2006).

There is a strong political debate in Finland concerning the metropolitan region of Helsinki. So far the state government has not enforced metropolitan regional cooperation from above; instead, a voluntary regional cooperation between the municipalities of GHR is in effect on the basis

6 Each with about 200,000 inhabitants. Other major cities are Turku, Tampere, and Oulu, also with about 200,000 inhabitants each, and Lahti with about 100,000 inhabitants.

7 Which will change in the future, when more foreigners are expected to migrate to Finland.

of a contractual solution. Specific fields of cooperation include, in particular, land use coordination, housing and traffic. The cooperation will be reviewed in 2008. Still, the topic of the metropolis is very prominent: during the pre-election period in early 2007, politicians and party representatives were asked about the importance of Helsinki as a 'metropolis' and, secondly, whether there should be a minister in the new government who is exclusively responsible for the metropolis. Whereas the latter question received a positive answer by only one party representative, the answers to the first question provide an interesting document on the common mental map of the notion of the 'metropolis'. Across the party spectrum, all politicians shared a major concern for the metropolis. However, a comment once made about a 'pocket-sized metropolis'<sup>8</sup> might best capture the actual potential of Helsinki as a metropolis, at least when compared to other cities on a European if not global scale.<sup>9</sup>

### *Partnership in Planning?*

Partnership ideas rank very highly in Finland, following the so-called 'triple helix model'. The OECD (2006:76) used the example of the Helsinki-based *Culminatum* as a positive role model which epitomises this approach. *Culminatum* is a business promotion company in mixed partnership focusing on Helsinki's economic development. This company brings together representatives of the city (political, administrative), the universities (innovation aspect) and various private enterprises. While such partnerships are well established in terms of economic promotion, the planning system is different in the sense that the area of planning and development is very much a matter of public control and steering, following the tradition of physical planning; in the case of larger development projects, the position of chief planning officer is usually a strong one. The master plan is a guideline defining the ultimate feasibility of projects. In addition to that, only in Helsinki does the city still own large

amounts of developable land.<sup>10</sup> This puts the city in a very strong position, as it can sell development rights. In all cases of private sector interest in development, the negotiating position of Helsinki is therefore actually quite strong.

### *Helsinki Strategy*

In many respects Helsinki is the hub of the Finnish economy and society. In the analysis of Hanell and Neubauer (2005), Helsinki plays an outstanding role in the national urban system. This is due in part to historical dimensions (a belated urbanization process of an agricultural and lumber producing country). Another reason is the overall smaller population size (5 million inhabitants - just as many as St. Petersburg in Russia, only about 300 km away). The outstanding role can be defined in terms of HQ and service industries, R&D and universities, but also in terms of its role as a demographic magnet - and the economic importance of resulting job opportunities. The Helsinki Master Plan 2002 (currently under revision) formulates the vision for Helsinki as follows: "... Helsinki will be developed as a European capital city. This means an enriched and diversified urban structure, functionally as well as physically. [...] At the same time Helsinki is a significant part of a growing metropolitan area. The urban structure is becoming more integrated and dense, however moderately without damaging the city's basic characteristics or compromising its spaciousness and natural features. The utilisation of the urban structure is becoming intensified." As already highlighted, housing supply and a diversified urban quality are the major concerns in Helsinki, mainly meant to counteract urban sprawl tendencies towards the cities in the hinterland (Espoo, Vantaa, but also Lahti, thanks to a fast commuter train connection). The city is preparing major development sites for this purpose, in particular on either already dysfunctional or soon to be abandoned harbour areas (Jätkäsaari) or railway sites (Pasila) - but also greenfield developments.

8 The true source of this term remains unclear. Here it is quoted from Schulman (2000).

9 Peter Taylor (2004) classified Helsinki as a 'Gamma-City' in his analysis of world city networks.

10 This dates back to the situation under the Swedish Crown and before Finland became an independent Grand Duchy in 1809, when the Swedish Crown donated all land to the municipalities.

## Retailing in Helsinki

According to the Finnish Council of Shopping Centers (2007), there are fifteen large-scale shopping or retail centres in Helsinki: Arabia, Forum, City-Center, Columbus, Itäkeskus, Kivopuisto, Kamppi, Kämp Galleria, Kluuvi, Lanterna, Malmin Nova, Malmintori, Megahertsi, Ogeli and Ruoholahti. The oldest is the 'City-Center' building,<sup>11</sup> founded in 1967. By contrast, the majority of larger centres were built in the 1980s and later. Itäkeskus Shopping Center in eastern Helsinki (built in 1984 and expanded in 1992 and 2001) is still the largest shopping centre in the Nordic Countries, with a sales volume of €439 million and leasable retail facilities of over 100,000 m<sup>2</sup> in 2006 (Finnish Shopping Centers 2007). Today it is owned by the Dutch company *Weldhave NV*, which bought the property from the Finnish *Sponda Oy* in 2002.



*Kamppi Shopping centre, Helsinki*  
Source: Anna Nurmi

One example which has already shown that the aim of combining locations of high centrality (especially in terms of communication) with retail and housing functions can be accomplished is the conversion of the Kamppi Area, a central urban site for a bus station (formerly surface level, now underground) and the historic Russian military barracks close to the railway station and next to

<sup>11</sup> Built by Viljo Revell, architect of Toronto City Hall (1965/66) and Lasipalatsi (1936), among other projects.

the Lasipalatsi (built in 1936 and used as an information centre for the Helsinki Olympics in 1952). The Kamppi Center was opened in 2006. It has 35,000 m<sup>2</sup> of retail facilities and a sales volume of €140 million (statistics of 10 months in 2006). The surface bus terminal is now located in a tunnel beneath the centre, providing a very good interchange to the Metro line and express bus lines to the rest of Finland. The new centre also consists of apartments, restaurants and office facilities. The very ambitious city plan was ratified in 2000 with the intention of creating 'a new living room for the people of Helsinki' (City Planning Department 2006). In June of 2002 the City of Helsinki and the *SRV Viitaset Oy* company agreed to implement the plan and realize the project.<sup>12</sup>



*Shopping street in Helsinki*  
Source: Heike Hanbörster

Currently, the most prominent retail project in the city of Helsinki is the renovation of the traditional Stockmann department store. The project is called 'Kaikkien aikojen Stockmann - Alla tiders Stockmann - Stockmann of all ages'. Construction work has already begun, and completion is planned for 2010. This entirely privately financed

<sup>12</sup> In April 2006, *SRV Yhtiöt Oyj*, together with its sister company *Pontos*, sold the Kamppi Center to the British real estate company *Boulton* and the *Royal Bank of Scotland* (RBS) for € 345 million. *Helsingin Sanomat*, international edition <http://www.hs.fi/english/article/British-investors-buying-Helsinki-s-new-downtown-Kamppi-Center/1135219522740>.



*The warehouse Stockmann in Helsinki (under reconstruction); Source: Anna Nurmi*

project will result in an expansion of the store's shopping floor space by about 10,000 m<sup>2</sup> to a total of 50,000 m<sup>2</sup>. After the conversion Stockmann's Helsinki will be, by its own account, the largest department store in the Nordic countries. A special feature of the extension is the underground levels: a 600-car parking garage will be built beneath one of the main inner city roads. The three-story garage will also be connected to the central maintenance tunnel planned for and provided by the city. The investment for the store extension amounts to €125 million. The central maintenance tunnel<sup>13</sup> is already under construction and will cost about €60 million (figures for 2006). It will be a two-way road for trucks and vans, servicing the various inner city office, retail, and housing locations. The tunnel entrances will be on two major feeder streets to

<sup>13</sup> Helsingin Sanomat 22.4.2007: <http://www.hs.fi/autot/artikkeli/Keskustatunneli+on++Helsingille+liian+kallis/HS20070422SI1MA014tv> (15.9.2007).

the city centre (in Ruoholahti and Kaisaniemi), with an overall length of 1,800 metres<sup>14</sup>.

Besides large-scale retail structures, city planning also looks at small-scale retailers. Here the master plan takes a strong position, emphasising the importance of preserving supply structures in the sub-centres. The network structure of these (sub)centres is based at least partly on the old shopping centres (although some of these are in decay and will be replaced soon). In addition, this retail sector belongs by and large to several chains, like the *S-company* (*Siwa*) or *Kesko* (*K-shops*).

### *Innovative Practices?*

One of the long-standing principles of Helsinki's city planning has been to provide retail at central locations which is accessible by public transport, as epitomised by the Kamppi Center - which actually combines all these functions, including housing. The city follows this strategy very consequently, doing as much as possible to back up the importance of the city centre in competition with surrounding cities and suburban developments. This takes various forms - such as a recent discussion initiated by local architects in the print media as to whether parts of the inner city are suitable for glass roofing and conversion into year-round shopping districts. In the context of such considerations, new strategies need to be developed, also for small, older suburban shopping areas and facilities fulfilling irregular daily consumption requirements.

For obvious, mainly revenue-related reasons, the cities of the greater region do not share the same approach, but rather react to market requirements, in particular by providing greenfield locations with motorway connections (like the Jumbo Center in Vantaa, close to the Helsinki-Vantaa-Airport). As mentioned before, in addition to the close functional interconnectedness of the cities in the metropolitan area, the strong position of the municipal authority often leads to a competition between the cities in terms of new inhabitants (i.e. income taxation) and jobs (i.e. corporate tax). Aspects of this competition include not only the

<sup>14</sup> Insinööritoimisto Esko Hämäläinen Oy: [http://www.eboy.fi/Keskustan\\_huoltotunneli.pdf](http://www.eboy.fi/Keskustan_huoltotunneli.pdf) (15.9.2007).

construction of (quasi) countryside housing developments for single-family homes, but also the construction of shopping malls and centres with convenient private transport access, especially plenty of parking spaces. It remains to be seen to what extent the voluntary cooperation in land use policies and in core projects will be able to cover such processes and channel these in a sustainable way.

Having said this, there are of course also 'planned' retail locations outside Helsinki, such as the Leppävara Area in Espoo, an already existing multi-functional shopping complex (including a public library and a theatre complex) at the intersection of railways, bus lines and motorways with high accessibility. New office buildings and a major hotel are currently under construction. A private investor is considering a complementary entertainment complex nearby.

The private sector, at least in Helsinki, must adhere to the requirements of city planning to a wide extent. In one respect this exempts cooperation, in another sense this of course facilitates a broader agreement on shared aims and objectives (like public transport).

From a more general perspective however, when looking at current policy documents like the new economic development strategy, retail does not receive much attention. The housing theme has a much more prominent position; of course, as a secondary feature, this will also mean a shifting emphasis toward retailing.

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## *The Contributions from the three Capital Cities*

The model of the European City with its history, cultural heritage and density as well as the mix of functions and the distinctive character of the city centres forms and preserves identity. From an urban development perspective, but also from a cultural and economic point of view, the value of a balanced city centre is obvious. There is more and more consensus on the necessity of an active and integrated strategy to revitalise and revalorise the city centre.

Copenhagen is an example of a very slow and cautious way of intervening in the structure of the city centre. It is first and foremost an example of a public intervention of urban development planning within the Danish tradition of a strong public authority, but it also emphasises how important

and how difficult it is to achieve the acceptance and a local consensus among inhabitants and other city users and stakeholders so that they can identify with activities and transformations. It is described as a long and patient patchwork strategy moving from car-orientation towards people-orientation, which at the same time focuses on key elements of urban development including the following: the use of public space with all its facets, the differentiation of functions like access by different means of transport, walking in the city, spending time and meeting in the city, events in the city.

The Stockholm experience shows the growing importance of an integrated approach towards city centre development that leads to a city centre management in which all important stakeholders are involved from the beginning. The focus is on image-building and the branding of the capital city, but - and this is a new quality - also on the institutionalised cooperation between public and private stakeholders concerned with city centre development. Here the emphasis is on bundling stakeholders and financial possibilities as a precondition to a stronger and more efficient strategy to attain the objective of an attractive and lively city centre.

In Helsinki another approach was chosen. The municipal principle of strengthening the city centre is realised by developing retail concentrations in integrated locations with good public transport accessibility. Beginning with physical planning interventions as a public responsibility, cooperation between public and private stakeholders for city centre development is not yet being pursued as a strategy. Here the pressure from competition with retail centres in surrounding cities and suburbs under conditions of general growth and further urbanisation expectations has led to a focus on a public strategy of integrated retail development.

## **Experiences with City Centre and Shopping Street Development in the Baltic Sea Region**

by *Petra Potz*

### ***Lessons Learned in the RENET Context: Retail is Essential in Urban Development***

Besides the differences in settlement structure between the above described capital regions as main agglomerations and the small and medium-sized towns and cities located in large rural areas with a very low population density, there are significant differences between old and new Member States, in particular when it comes to political cultures and traditions. What this means for urban and city centre development is that different traditions and relations between market and state, private and public competences and roles and different planning systems need to be taken into account.

In the course of two and a half years of common work and exchange in the RENET project, an awareness for the essential function of liveable and viable city centres has emerged in the partner cities located in the Baltic Sea Region, both in the old and new Member States. The city centre with the high street is considered the identity-forming “face” of a city.<sup>15</sup>

In many partner cities, retail has often been considered more as a business sector to be promoted with no distinction based on location. But in many cases retail has been determined to be an issue that is central to keeping city centres alive and motivating the activities that take place there. “This is the first time that we have actually looked at retail, specifically as a component in urban development.”

<sup>15</sup> All citations are from RENET partners interviewed during the 3rd Transnational Retail Forum in Tallinn, Estonia in May 2007, by Aude Boisadan.

### *The Quality of Cooperation for City Centre Development*

This explains why cooperation is generally considered to be essential in terms of an opportunity to be informed early enough to adopt and to be prepared for changes. Seen from this perspective, cooperation and competition work hand in hand, especially in a business sector like retail in the cities, since they bring together very different interests and competencies. The complexity of problems means that different stakeholders need to be involved and hence that cooperation is essential. City centre development depends on co-financing, which usually comes from the public and private sectors. But cooperation in terms of enabling and activating different stakeholders for city centre development in many partner cities is still at a very early stage. “It’s a little bit early because our retailers are not ready to cooperate with the city administration and they’re not ready to be initiators.”

Cooperation is also considered to be an important tool in the competition between city centres and shopping centres in suburbia, or between smaller cities and nearby larger cities. This means that the whole marketplace is also in competition with one or more other marketplaces. In this competitive situation, therefore, different stakeholders need to be convinced to work together to strengthen the city centre. “Having all the stakeholders involved means that you can easier have a better description of what you want, what the success would look like, because you have all the different actors bringing out their view. You can define the problem better.” A very important instrument in the German debate, the regional or intermunicipal cooperation for retail development is much less known or only starting to be developed in some cases, such as in the Karlstad region in Sweden.

Cooperation is essential in city centre development. But it is not only a question of the good will and intentions of participating forces. For an initiative to be successful it also needs a clear framework of conditions such as strong planning instruments, retail structure concepts, urban development plans and concepts, and reliability.

The elaboration of common objectives and a strategy for the development of the city centre and the city as a whole has become more and more crucial in the work within RENET. But it is first and foremost a question of the quality of initiatives: “Many cities work with slogans and logos and perhaps a festival to show off, but city marketing has to be something more genuine, something much more rooted in the local place and the local identity.”

One of the lessons learned by some partner cities is to consider city centre development as a process with possibilities and necessities for active intervention. Having and maintaining a viable city centre cannot be taken for granted. The future of local retail depends on urban development strategies and, conversely, it is important for the public administration to have a well-balanced retail structure and to be informed about the ideas of retailers for the future. The revitalisation of the city centre cannot be thought of as a single isolated project; instead, it should be based on and integrated into a larger citywide development concept.

“MittendrIn Berlin!” is an important contribution to the objective of RENET to establish the Competence Network in the Baltic Sea Region on retail development. Learning from the “MittendrIn Berlin!” experience means, first and foremost, to learn methodologically from the activating approach for neighbourhood and city centres. It is an innovative concept to gather various stakeholders in a centre (who often cooperate for the first time in such a team) around a common purpose, namely the strengthening and revitalisation of their centres using simple and creative means and clear messages. This form of civic commitment and corporate citizenship of small and medium-sized businesses is an important test field.

Besides “MittendrIn Berlin!”, it is necessary to develop further activities to support Berlin’s centres in preparation for the economic and social challenges they face. Further impulses in this direction are provided by the new orientation of federal programmes of urban development promotion, e.g. the programme of “Active Centres”.

Local identity is fostered when measures in a single centre are anchored in that place as a result of the motivated contribution and cooperation of local players. The knowledge and enthusiasm concentrated in such a jointly developed and realised activity is often underestimated. The “MittendrIn Berlin!” case proves that some activities continue beyond or take place even without the external (financial) input, and that the networks continue to exist after the events have taken place. This means that it is not a “festivalisation” of the centres by singular events, but a more solid base of development enabling local stakeholders.

This network of local initiatives is an important element of local and city-regional development. It is embedded in a broader and integrated view and represents a process-oriented strategy of urban development planning, like the Centres 2020 Urban Development Plan; this integrative approach is one of the success factors. Besides events and local projects, binding instruments and clear objectives are also needed to lead such an experiment to success.

All examples described in this publication prove how important the elaboration of an overall idea and concept is for the future of the city (centre). Although the means and instruments

differ and must be adapted to local and national conditions, in all the metropolises presented the administrations have systematically and creatively followed a long-term strategy behind single interventions.

What is still needed is an evaluation, in course of the process or ex-post, of the relationship between binding plans and concepts and the relatively new experience of communicative public-private alliances. The involvement of sectors, stakeholders and the general public at all levels is a necessary step towards an integrated urban development policy in the European context.

As one approach in Berlin’s urban development, “MittendrIn Berlin!” has demonstrated that a functioning urban centre is hard and ongoing work that requires many joint efforts from all participants. At the same time, it is an important experimental field for new forms of cooperation. The long-term effects of this kind of cooperation are:

- the reconciliation of diverging interests,
- more identification with the urban centre and
- a broad consensus about the future of the centres and traditional shopping streets.

Sustainable urban development can only be successful if it takes into account urban centre development. The competition “MittendrIn Berlin!” must be acknowledged within this general consensus as a successful contribution to the integrated urban development objectives in Berlin, namely: keeping the polycentric structure alive and balanced, preserving and strengthening urban centres, securing basic supplies and integrating large-scale retail and recreational facilities in a sustainable way.

To summarise, the cliché of the complaining merchant does not apply here. Instead, Berlin’s centres and traditional shopping streets are not weakening, but rather strengthening the city as a whole.

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*Prof. Dr. Peter Ache* is Professor of European Metropolitan Planning at the Centre for Urban and Regional Studies (YTK), Helsinki University of Technology (HUT) in Helsinki.

*peter.ache@tkk.fi*

*Malin Hansen* works as a researcher focusing on city centre governance at the Royal University of Stockholm (KTH), Department of Urban Planning and Environment in Stockholm.

*malin.hansen@infra.kth.se*

*Louise Kielgast* is an anthropologist and works with Gehl Architects in Copenhagen since 2007.

*louisek@gehlarchitects.dk*

*Anna Nurmi* is research assistant at the Centre for Urban and Regional Studies (YTK), Helsinki University of Technology (HUT) in Helsinki.

*anna.nurmi@tkk.fi*

*Elke Plate* works in the Unit Urban Development Planning in the Senate Department of Urban Development in Berlin.

*elke.plate@senstadt.verwalt-berlin.de*

*Dr. Petra Potz* is an urban planner and is the owner of the urban planning office „location3“ in Berlin.

*potz@location3.de*

*Thorsten Tonndorf* coordinates the Unit Urban Development Planning of the Senate Department of Urban Development in Berlin.

*thorsten.tonndorf@senstadt.verwalt-berlin.de*

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*For the Lead Partner:*

Stefan Tietjen, City of Osterholz-Scharmbeck, Germany  
[tietjen@osterholz-scharmbeck.de](mailto:tietjen@osterholz-scharmbeck.de)

*Commissioned by:*

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*Concept:*

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*Contents:*

Dr. Petra Potz, [www.location3.de](http://www.location3.de), Berlin

*Translation and language check:*

Peter Rigney, [rigney@bakedinberlin.de](mailto:rigney@bakedinberlin.de)

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