Case Study of the City of **Stockholm**
and the Greater **Stockholm** Area

**Summary**

by Sylvain Ducas
CASE STUDY OF THE CITY OF STOCKHOLM AND THE GREATER STOCKHOLM AREA

MUNICIPAL AND REGIONAL ORGANIZATION
URBAN PLANNING TOOLS AND ISSUES
PLANNING OF TRANSPORTATION AND THE GREEN NETWORK
HOUSING ISSUES

SUMMARY

Research report submitted
to the Ville de Montréal,
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and the Société d’habitation du Québec

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Introduction

This is a summary of a research report on different aspects of the organization of local communities and urban planning in the city of Stockholm and the Greater Stockholm area. The research was conducted between April and July 2000, on behalf of the Economic and Urban Development Department of the Ville de Montréal, the Ministère des Affaires municipales et de la Métropole du Québec, and the Société d’habitation du Québec. The sponsors of the research selected the research themes.

There is much to learn from the Swedish experience, and particularly that of Stockholm, in the area of municipal and regional management, urban planning, transportation management, planning of green spaces and housing. Like any case study of this kind, the experience must be examined in light of its specific social and historical context. It is often difficult to borrow a model and apply it in a different context. Nevertheless, there are similarities between Swedish society and the urban development of Stockholm and those of Quebec society and the Montreal region. Consequently, the findings of this case study may be useful in the current debate in Quebec on municipal and regional reform, and on the methods and tools used in urban planning in general.

This report comprises five chapters. The first sketches certain characteristics of Swedish society and national and local institutions, and summarizes the municipal merger process that took place between 1952 and 1974. The second chapter examines the basics of urban planning in Sweden and discusses current urban planning tools. We will look at the metropolitan management of Greater Stockholm in the third chapter: the political and administrative structure of the County Council, the regional development plan, planning of transportation networks, planning of the green structure and international promotion. The fourth chapter deals with the management of urban planning in the city of Stockholm: the political and administrative structure of the city, the city plan, green spaces, transportation, planning of strategic areas and the science park. The fifth and last chapter addresses housing issues, i.e. the financial assistance system, issues in Greater Stockholm and assistance for the elderly and disabled.

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1 The complete 165-page version, with plans and figures, is available in French under the title Étude de cas de l’agglomération et de la municipalité de Stockholm. It may be obtained from the author: sducas@ville.montreal.qc.ca
Methodology

Documentation for the study was obtained mainly from national, regional and municipal institutions. Two collections of articles on urban planning, published by the Royal Swedish Institute of Technology in 1991 and 1997, were also excellent sources of information and analyses. The fact sheets published by the Swedish Institute (Svenska Institutet) were a valuable source of background information.

A series of meetings and interviews with some twenty representatives of institutions and people in charge of various sectors enriched and rounded out the information gleaned from documents. I wish to personally thank each of the people I spoke with for their assistance. In particular, I wish to acknowledge the help of Suzanne Dufresne, of the Stockholm County Council ORPUT, Torsten Malmberg, of the City of Stockholm, and Thomas Lundén, of the Swedish Institute, for their help in arranging these meetings.

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2 The National Board of Health and Welfare (Socialstyrelsen), the Office of Regional Planning and Urban Transportation (ORPUT) of the Stockholm County Council (Stockholms län landsting Regionplane -och Trafikkontoret), the Urban Planning Department of the City of Stockholm (Stockholms Stad Stadsbyggnadskontoret).
1. **Swedish society and institutions**

Sweden has an area of 450,000 km²; half its land surface is covered in forest. It has a population of 8.9 million, of whom 85% live in the southern half of the country, and 83% in urban areas. Sweden has three major urban centres: Stockholm (1.8 million), Göteborg (750,000) and Malmö (500,000).

4.1 **An overview of Swedish society and the foundations of social democracy**

In the early 20th century, Sweden was still a largely agrarian country, and one of the poorest in Europe. Economic growth was particularly strong, however, in the years following the Second World War, up to the mid-1970s. During this period of growth, what particularly distinguished Sweden was the introduction by Social Democratic governments of a social welfare system ensuring equal opportunity for all. Sweden became one of the richest countries in the world, with a model studied and envied by many.

The political program implemented by the Social Democrats was supported by a large majority of Swedes for many years. The party came to power in 1932 and remained there without interruption until 1976, and was then re-elected from 1982 to 1991; since 1998, the Social Democratic party has formed a minority government.

When they took power, the goal of the Social Democrats was to work toward an equitable distribution of the country’s resources. Rather than nationalizing means of production, the government instead introduced measures to ensure fair distribution of private-sector profits and equality for all, overriding individual freedoms. Social differences shrank as disparities in income were reduced. A range of social welfare measures guaranteed decent living conditions for all, in housing, health and education.

Many people have been tempted to call the Swedish experiment “socialism with a prosperous face.” Yet the Swedish state did not nationalize any economic sectors. To the contrary, the Swedish economy is characterized by a very high concentration of capital among a handful of companies, of which some of the best known are Volvo, Electrolux, Ericsson, Saab-Scania, Hasselblad and IKEA. Through its investments in many companies, including the largest ones, the Wallenberg family is said to control one-third of Swedish GNP. This concentration is even considered desirable by the State. It feels that a small country like Sweden depends on its exports and could not otherwise remain competitive and survive by competing against large industrial powers.

Accusations of corporatism are often levelled at the system along with allegations that it is dominated by industrial magnates, political leaders, senior public servants and union bosses. But the system is accepted nonetheless. Centralism and uniformity are key characteristics of Swedish society, balanced by a curious mixture of egalitarian and elitist sentiments. In the words of Olof Petersson (1991): “Reluctance that someone should not
be better than another is combined with a respect for authority.”³ Political and social institutions are largely founded on consensus, developed after lengthy consultations and studies. Working relations in the private and public sectors are also marked by this consensus approach to decision making. These characteristics must be kept in mind when attempting to understand how Swedish society operates.

Åke Daun (1999) stresses the key role of rationality in the Swedish mentality. He also emphasizes that no other Western society has given so much power to government and public planners. “The ‘philosophy of planning’ entails that one believe in the possibilities of arranging social conditions for the best of all citizens by means of rational thinking.”⁴

1.2 Political and administrative institutions

The Swedish State apparatus is considerably smaller than the Canadian and Quebec systems. Government ministries have no direct involvement in administrative matters, which are delegated to national branches or boards. In addition, local administrations play a key role in implementing national programs. They are responsible for managing medical and health services at the regional level and for managing social services and education at the municipal level. Local bodies also have the authority to levy direct income taxes to finance their affairs.

National institutions

Sweden is a constitutional monarchy with a parliamentary form of government; the King has only ceremonial functions. The Parliament (Riksdag) has had a single chamber since 1971, and consists of 349 members elected for a four-year term. All elections are by proportional representation.

Political power is exercised by the Cabinet (regering) and the party, or parties, it represents. The ten or so ministries (departement) are small units generally consisting of about one hundred people. Their role is essentially to prepare draft bills for Parliament, and to publish acts, statues and regulations. These ministries normally do not concern themselves with administrative matters. The preparation of legislative reforms affecting important issues is generally assigned to a commission of enquiry (utredning).

There are some one hundred relatively independent central administrative services responsible for implementing government decisions and legislation. The particular structure of the ministries, backed up by commissions of enquiry for legislative work, and the independence of these central administrative services has historically enabled different Swedish experts to express their opinions and be heard by the government. Sweden is also divided into 21 counties (län), territorial divisions of the national administration. In each of these 21 counties, national administrative matters are handled

by a **prefecture** (*länsstyrelsen*) and its prefect (*landshövding*), appointed by the government for a six-year term.

**Local institutions**

There are two types of local institutions in Sweden: the municipality (*kommun*) and the county council (*landsting*), governed by the Local Government Act (*Kommunallag*). There are 21 county councils and 289 municipalities in Sweden today. The members of the county councils and municipal councils are elected by popular vote, every four years, at the same time as national elections. Seats are allocated proportionally. National political parties are also represented at the local level.

The Act sets the mandatory and optional responsibilities of local institutions. Overall, county councils are responsible for health and medical services. Municipalities are responsible for social services, basic education and municipal services (roads, parks, urban planning, security). Public transit may be managed by either municipalities or county councils. The Stockholm County Council is responsible for planning transportation and managing the public transit network. It is so far the only Swedish county council with regional development powers and that is authorised to adopt a regional development plan.

Municipalities and county councils raise most of their direct tax revenue from the residents of their respective territories, i.e. 59% and 77%, respectively. Since 1991, this income tax has applied only to wages and pensions. Corporations and businesses are taxed only at the national level. According to 1997 data, the majority of municipal spending was in the social sector, i.e. education (27%), followed by assistance for the elderly and disabled (26%) and childcare (14%).

**Swedish municipal mergers (1952 - 1974)**

Local administrations play a larger role in Sweden than in Quebec. County councils and municipalities are responsible for matters generally assumed by the State here, such as health and education. This was the impetus behind the Swedish State’s drive to merge municipalities so as to improve their administrative efficiency. The reform was introduced in 1952, and was implemented gradually until 1974. The number of municipalities was reduced from 2,500 to 282.

These mergers were originally meant to be carried out with the consent of the municipalities. As might be expected, the municipal reform was a lengthy process. By the late 1960s, only 75 new “municipal blocks” had been created. The Parliament then voted in favour of forced mergers (by a small majority), requiring that the reform of municipal boundaries be completed by January 1, 1974.

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5 In 1996, the Swedish Parliament established four pilot regions with greater regional development powers: Scania, Kalmar, Gotland and Västra Gotland; these pilot regions will be evaluated by 2002.
In 1981, a commission of enquiry responsible for evaluating the impact of these mergers found that they had produced a major systemic change at the municipal level. Local administrations, which had formerly been handled by locally elected officials, were now run by professional administrators. Municipal employees had replaced elected officials in executing decisions and sometimes even in planning major initiatives. The Commission found that “municipal self-government had changed character, becoming increasingly similar to the national political system.”

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2. Urban planning and the tools used

There is a long tradition of urban planning in Sweden, with the most important foundations being laid back in the 1930s. The first urban planning legislation was adopted in the 19th century, mainly with the aim of controlling construction methods.

The Social Democratic government introduced a welfare state, strongly inspired by the social engineering movement. This approach relied on a powerful government, backed up by a large public sector, and an independent municipal structure responsible for applying various national policies. Over the years, all these players have worked to implement a system designed to improve citizens’ lives: adequate housing for all, an efficient public transit system, and free, high-quality social, health and educational services. This system of public intervention is based on the concept of community planning.

The origins of community planning in Sweden

The concept of community planning is relatively unknown in Quebec. The concept, a British invention, refers to measures taken by society as a whole to improve living conditions for local and regional communities. These measures may be taken by the central State or by local authorities with the aim of influencing or improving production or consumption conditions normally determined by market forces.

According to Holm and Fredlund, community planning is derived both from economic and spatial planning. Economic planning is based mainly on quantitative forecasts of population and economic development, while spatial planning essentially translates technicians’ and architects’ visions of desirable physical forms of urban development, mindful of different needs. In spatial planning, the plan is the central goal, and consequently the most important result.

Medium- and long-range economic planning, introduced in Sweden in 1945, was primarily intended to ensure a wider view in the preparation of national budgets. To date, the Swedish State has produced 11 five-year plans. Municipalities and regions attempted to apply these overall economic planning methods starting in the 1950s; such plans were formalized in the 1960s and became mandatory in all municipalities in 1973.

But the central State initiative that would have the greatest impact at the local level, in terms of central planning, was the one relating to housing. Starting in the 1930s, the Swedish government took a specific interest in the housing supply. The national policy, introduced in 1945 and accompanied by an extensive national intervention plan over 15 years (1945-1960), would have a decisive impact on the housing market in Sweden right up until the 1980s (see Chapter 5).

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**Spatial planning**, at the same time, was not ignored. The Urban Planning Act was amended in 1947 and granted legal status to the *comprehensive plan* or *master plan*, already in use since the 1930s in certain municipalities. The 1947 Act confirmed what Swedes termed the municipal planning monopoly. Under this Act, municipalities could now determine where, how and when development could take place. This monopoly power also applied to municipalities’ authority to intervene, mainly as concerns land acquisition and residential construction.

The *master plan* became the key instrument used by municipalities to plan and determine the location of urban activities. The concept of the master plan persisted until the end of the 1960s. According to Holm and Fredlund, the master plans that combined economic forecasts with local housing construction programs had tremendous influence on municipal authorities in determining land and local development policies.

**Current urban planning tools**

The Urban Planning and Building Act was amended once again in 1987. These amendments were included in the new Natural Resources Management Act. The amended Urban Planning Act begins by specifying that the main task of the local community is to ensure citizens’ right to employment, housing and education, and to promote social well-being and quality living conditions. The Act requires all municipalities to adopt a *city plan* (*structure plan*) that promotes the public interest. In other words, the plan has to translate into physical terms the conditions necessary to meet these social objectives. The urban plan must be adopted by the municipal council, but has no legal force.

Two instruments that do have legal force, also adopted by the municipal council, are intended to implement the urban plan: the *detailed development plan* and *standards for specific areas*. The detailed development plan is an agreement between the municipality, the public and landowners. It lists the different urban planning standards as they apply to uses, heights, construction density, materials, etc. It determines the location of parks, streets and infrastructure, in much the same way as zoning by-laws imposed by legislation in Quebec. The most significant characteristic concerns the time limits for applying these standards: the detailed plan must have an implementation period of at least five years and at most fifteen years; beyond this 15-year time limit, urban planning requirements expire.

A *building permit* must be obtained before any building is erected or modified. Urban plans, detailed development plans and specific sector standards are subject to *public information and consultation rules*. Under the Swedish constitution, *any citizen may object* to the application of any of these plans and standards, by submitting a written notice during the consultation hearings explaining his or her grounds for objection.
Where regional planning is concerned, the County Council of Stockholm is so far the only county authorized to adopt a regional development plan, although it has no legal force. It is used mainly to co-ordinate urban planning issues among the 26 municipalities making up the county.

Changes in the practice of municipal planning

Two main factors have transformed the practice of urban planning in Swedish municipalities over the past decade, according to Cars and Engström (1997): environmental issues and economic globalization.8

Environmental issues have been a central concern in setting planning priorities. The goal is mainly to contain physical expansion, so as to limit the consumption of energy and resources. Economic globalization and, more specifically, Sweden’s joining the European Union in 1995 have also had an impact on the municipal practice of urban planning. Sweden’s economy consists of large companies trading on the world market. These companies have understood that their performance is linked to the quality of life of their employees and harmonious development of urban centres in Sweden, in competition with the urban centres in neighbouring countries.

These factors have contributed to transforming the practice of planning in Sweden. The point is no longer to plan the construction of new residential areas, as municipal planners were busy doing over the past fifty years. Urban planning documents are no longer limited to physical plans as such, as the final results of planning. Rather, the planners are participants in ongoing negotiations among different social players and elected officials, so as to determine the steps to be taken to develop the territory. These same authors conclude, in speaking of the Swedish situation—but in terms that apply equally well to Quebec—that “(...) the role of planning must change from being a method of regulation to being a channel for possibilities.”9

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9 Idem, p. 25.
3. Metropolitan Management in Stockholm

Greater Stockholm is managed mainly by the Stockholm County Council, a regional body consisting of 26 municipalities, created in 1971. Its main mission, as is the case for the twenty other Swedish counties, is to manage health care and social services. The Stockholm County Council is in fact the only Swedish county council responsible for managing public transit and regional planning. National State agencies, for their part, are responsible for implementing national laws and policies in the county; their actions are managed by the national county administration (prefecture).

3.1 The Stockholm County Council

The county of Stockholm is the most populous in Sweden, with 1.8 million inhabitants. Two-thirds of its 6,500 km² area is forest and agricultural land. Greater Stockholm (2,230 km²) forms the heart of the county, consisting of the urbanised area (930 km²) and the regional green structure (1,300 km²). The most prominent feature of the region is its magnificent archipelago of 24,000 islands, holmes and skerries, of which 150 are inhabited.

Within the county there are 26 municipalities. Stockholm itself is the most populous, with 740,000 inhabitants, or 41% of the county population. The other municipalities range from 8,000 to 80,000 inhabitants.

The 149 members of the County Council are elected by popular vote every four years (concurrent with the national and municipal elections). The 1999 annual budget was approximately 34 billion Swedish kronor, or SEK ($5.6 billion CAN). In all, 66% of expenditures go to social and health services and 21% to public transit. Most of this (72%) is financed by the county council tax, a 10% income tax levied on residents.

3.2 The regional development plan

The Office of Regional Planning and Urban Transportation (ORPUT) of the Stockholm County Council is responsible for analyzing and conducting research into the use of land and bodies of water in the region. It co-ordinates urban planning issues with the municipalities in the county. ORPUT is also responsible for drawing up the regional development plan.
Figure 3.1 – The territory of Stockholm County

Source: Stockholm’s ORPUT (Stockholms Regionplane -och Trafikkontoret), June 2000
The 1991 development plan has been under review since 1996. This is an ongoing process of consultation and co-operation with all local and regional stakeholders, allowing all concerned to evaluate different options. A preliminary version of the plan was submitted in June 2000 for consultation purposes; it is to be adopted in 2002.

This plan is merely a guide, however, since it is not legally binding on the municipalities. Municipalities have considerable autonomy in urban planning matters. The regional plan is simply for reference and co-ordination purposes, in dealings with national, regional and municipal players. It lays out the regional infrastructure development and investment strategy.

The County Council nonetheless has important decision-making powers related to its urban transit responsibilities. In accordance with the regional plan, ORPUT advises municipalities on residential or other development projects. Since these projects must have a link to the public transit network—in the Stockholm region the availability of public transit is an important criterion for households and businesses in deciding where to locate—ORPUT also has some negotiating leverage over municipal projects. The municipalities nevertheless retain control over their own projects.

The roles of the County Council and ORPUT are primarily to influence various public authorities and organisations. Their influence is based mainly on two factors: the credibility of the studies and analyses produced by ORPUT and the co-operative process linked to the plan. The experience of the past thirty years, when it comes to regional planning in Stockholm, has convinced the different players of the need to involve the whole Greater Stockholm area in the planning process.

The entire process of preparing the plan is based on sharing the results of studies and analyses with regional partners (some 300 groups, associations, agencies, municipalities and government ministries) and discussing these results in working committees. As the head of the plan notes, the most important result is not so much the regional plan itself as the co-operative process involved in preparing it.

The preliminary June 2000 document, distributed for consultation purposes, lists three main perspectives:

- economic and demographic growth in the region;
- housing needs and pressures of urban development;
- public and freight transportation and improving accessibility.

The proposed strategy consists in orienting urban development toward existing urbanised areas. The goal of this strategy is to increase density in certain areas, make the most of existing infrastructures and preserve the green structure in the region. The preliminary plan also recommends developing a multi-centred regional structure, to complement the existing downtown core. These multifunctional centres would add onto existing areas, particularly work areas, accessible by public transit.
Similarly, for transportation, the key issue is the road and rail link between northern and southern Stockholm. In the centre of the community, 500,000 jobs are located on the north shore and 300,000 on the south shore. In the downtown area, there is a single major artery linking the two shores, and a single rail and metro corridor; an additional railway line is considered necessary.

3.3 Planning of regional transportation networks

In the Stockholm region, road and public transit networks converge in a radial pattern toward the centre. Moreover, since Stockholm is built on an archipelago made up of dozens of islands, this network includes numerous bridges and tunnels, all representing potential bottlenecks.

The goal is to maintain the relative share of public transit, which remains especially high in comparison with other large cities in Europe and North America: 73% at rush hour, into downtown, and 40% as a daily average. In addition, only 40% of the 850,000 households in Stockholm County actually own a car. This proportion falls to 20% in the central core.

Responsibility for public transit in Stockholm is shared among three institutional authorities. National infrastructures (national road and rail networks) are managed at the national level. The County Council is responsible for regional transportation planning (studies and analyses) through ORPUT, as well as the planning and management of the public transit network by Stockholm Transport (SL—AB Storstockholms Lokaltrafik), owned by the County Council. Finally, the City of Stockholm manages local transit matters through three municipal bodies.

The public transit system

The planning of public transit networks has traditionally been a key aspect of urban planning in Stockholm. This fundamental choice was made possible by the substantial urban planning powers granted to municipalities, mainly under the 1947 Urban Planning and Building Act. Since then, the construction of new residential and industrial areas has been co-ordinated with the growth of the public transit system. This planning tradition explains the importance of public transit in Greater Stockholm, and it is acknowledged and supported by public authorities, companies and the public. It also goes a long way toward explaining the low rate of car ownership per household as compared with the Montreal average (even though Montreal has one of the lowest rates of car ownership in North America).
The network managed by Stockholm Transport covers the entire urban territory of the County, i.e. about 2,000 km² and just under 1.8 million inhabitants. For purposes of comparison, the Montreal Urban Community has a similar population over a territory of 500 km² and the Greater Montreal region has 3.3 million inhabitants spread out over 4000 km². Stockholm Transport vehicles carry 617 million passengers a year (1999), or 620,000 passengers on an average weekday (some 350,000 passengers use public transit on an average weekday, in 1998, in the Montreal region). The share of public transit moving toward downtown Stockholm during the morning rush hour is 73% (a figure that has fallen to 51% in 1998 in Montreal).

The role of the Office of Regional Planning and Urban Transportation

The main role of the Office of Regional Planning and Urban Transportation (ORPUT) is to produce analyses and studies on regional development trends and phenomena. Transportation is one of the major concerns of ORPUT. It works primarily with the County Council, from which it receives its mandates. It also works with the municipalities, State agencies and regional planning associations. ORPUT has limited powers to intervene, but fairly significant influence.

This main role as an analyst and advisor allowed the Stockholm County Council ORPUT to take the initiative in planning all transit systems, leading to the signing of the Dennis Agreement, discussed below. ORPUT took the initiative in forming this political and technical committee and provided administrative services. It was an exceptional exercise in co-operation, and one that would probably not have been possible without ORPUT.

Management of the public transit system by Stockholm Transport

Stockholm Transport (SL) is the government corporation, owned by the Stockholm County Council, responsible for planning and managing the Stockholm County public transit system. Its operations are financed almost equally by user fares (45%) and by the Stockholm County Council (55%), from income taxes and State subsidies. In 1999, operating costs were 6.6 billion SEK ($1.1 billion CAN).

What makes SL management unique is the fact that it contracted out its responsibilities for operating the public transit system about ten years ago. SL still owns the infrastructure.
The companies are selected through a call for tenders, and are awarded a five-year contract, renewable for another five years. SL constantly monitors the quality of services provided, and quality criteria are stipulated in the contracts. Now, after just over ten years, passengers are more satisfied not only with punctuality, but also with service and the attitude of personnel throughout the network—the result, it would appear, of good personnel management by the companies responsible for operating the system.

The Dennis Agreement: an original approach to planning and co-operation

The analyses and studies prepared for the publication of the 1991 Stockholm County regional plan noted major concerns with respect to public transit in Greater Stockholm. The question of how to improve transportation networks was accompanied by environmental concerns, as is often the case in Sweden. The transportation system has to move goods and people quickly and efficiently, while respecting the environment.

A task force, with administrative support provided by ORPUT, met over the space of nearly four years (1989-1992), bringing together political representatives from the highest national and regional levels, along with leaders of national and regional bodies responsible for road and public transit systems.

These negotiations led to an agreement signed on January 23, 1991 by the three main national and regional political parties, and known as the Dennis Agreement, after the name of the chairperson who headed the task force, Bengt Dennis. The agreement set out the investment necessary for road and public transit systems for the 1992-2006 period. One or more of these three parties (Social Democrat, Moderate and Liberal), it should be noted, is in power from one election to the next, at the national, regional and municipal levels. Either the Social Democrats or the Moderates hold power, and sometimes enter into alliances with the Liberals (or, in recent years, the Greens). In this respect, the Agreement was a historic first and laid out a medium-range investment structure accepted by all the political parties.

The main objectives of the Dennis Agreement were to reduce the number of cars in central Stockholm, and thereby reduce air pollution and noise. It suggested two major bypass roads, at a total cost of 18.7 billion SEK (CAN$ 3.1 billion), to be financed by tolls on these new highways. A bypass road west of Stockholm would link the highways leading north and south, while the other bypass road would be a ring road around the inner city (see figure 3.3).

Figure 3.3 – Initiatives suggested under the Dennis Agreement
Source: The Dennis Agreement, Traffic system of the future, 1992
Numerous improvements to the public transit system, at a total cost estimated at 15.8 billion SEK (CAN$ 2.6 billion), were funded entirely by the public purse. Upgrading work on the public transit system consisted mainly of renewing and modernising infrastructure and rolling stock, that is the train and metro, and developing the light rail system.

Work to improve the public transit system began in 1993. The suggestions to improve the highway network created some controversy, however, and a number of politicians also found the prospect of highway tolls unacceptable. In 1996, the Prime Minister decided to abolish the Agreement. Only those projects already approved or underway were continued.

Today, in 2000, all the work on the public transit system has been completed or is about to be; one last section of the light rail system remains to be built. The southern part of the ring road is under construction, and planning for the northern section is in progress. Some minor improvements to the network will also be carried out. The sections of the bypass roads that ran into opposition have still not been approved by authorities. Nevertheless, two-thirds of the work proposed under the Dennis Agreement has been completed.

Although the whole exercise was deemed a partial failure by some, the failure actually lies in the way the Agreement was terminated. The official reasons remain vague, and it is thought that politicians were concerned about the controversial tolls. To conclude that the Dennis Agreement was a failure simply because the government killed it does not do justice to an original process designed to seek agreement between different national and regional government authorities. The originality of the approach, its pragmatic nature and the resulting achievements deserve recognition.

The light rail system

Starting in the late 1980s, SL began making plans to build a light rail system to link up the sections of the radial public transit system leading into downtown Stockholm, while providing rapid public transit in an area that was not well served. The overall proposal included a line of about 25 kilometres (see figure 3.4), which would link up the metro and train lines and form an almost complete ring around the downtown. The proposal was integrated into the Dennis Agreement in 1991. A first leg of 7 kilometres was inaugurated in 1999 (Gullmarsplan - Liljeholmen) and a second, 5-kilometre leg was opened in May 2000 (Liljeholmen - Alvik). There are 13 stations in all.
Figure 3.4 – The light rail system

Note: The dots show the various subway lines, whereas the lines with dots show the suburban and local trains network.

Source: AB Stockholms Lokaltrafik, 1999
3.4 The regional green network

Greater Stockholm represents 2,230 km² (out of the 6,500 km² in Stockholm County). The natural and developed green spaces, combined in a network (grönstrukturen) alone cover an area of 1,300 km², larger than the 930 km² urbanized area. This network consists of ten long corridors, each at least 500 metres wide, spreading out like spokes from the centre (see figure 3.5). The corridors are narrower in the central area and widen as they stretch farther out. They even extend beyond the urbanized zone. They consist of municipal parks, gardens, natural spaces (forests, woods, rock formations, hills and lakes) and farmland. In addition, in many places the network benefits from the constant presence of water, around Lake Mälaren and in the many coves and arms of the Baltic Sea archipelago. For Stockholmers, this regional green structure is vitally important.

The authorities have certainly managed to make the most of a privileged geographic situation rarely found in the world’s great capitals. The urban planning practices that have allowed the adaptation of development to the geological and topological character of the region also deserve credit. The regional green network is an extension of the city of Stockholm’s green network, the principles of which were laid out back in the 1930s and adopted by neighbouring municipalities.

In geological terms, the city and the region are characterized by long troughs in the hollows of rock formations. The urban areas have been concentrated mostly in these depressions, forming long axes stretching along the public transit infrastructure. Neighbourhoods are organized around train and metro stations, where services and homes are most densely concentrated. These development principles have been widely adopted by suburban municipalities as they have developed. This form of urban organization has left many open spaces, both natural and developed, and it is these spaces that make up the regional green network.

The Stockholm County regional plan acknowledges the importance of this green network. It should be emphasized that none of this huge network, made up of State and Crown lands (including the gardens surrounding the castles), municipal and private lands (mainly farms and forests) belongs to the Stockholm County Council. It has no direct authority over how the green network is made up.

Some local observers have identified certain threats to the integrity of this exceptional network including the absence of a regional body responsible for its development. For the moment, it is up to the municipalities and property owners to understand the importance of the different parts of this network and to manage them wisely.

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Figure 3.5 – The green network of Greater Stockholm

Source: Stockholm’s ORPUT (Stockholms Regionplane -och Trafikkontoret), June 2000
The role of the County Office of Regional Planning and Urban Transportation (ORPUT) is limited to producing studies and analyses on the condition of the green network. It sets out guidelines to restrict development alongside the network and to prevent the exploitation of its more valuable parts. In 1996, it published a summary study\textsuperscript{11} on the condition of the overall structure, characterising the different sectors of the network according to their social, scientific and cultural value.

3.5 Promoting Stockholm internationally

At the initiative of the Office of Regional Planning and Urban Transportation (ORPUT), the Stockholm County Council undertook a strategic study on the international development and promotion of the region. The goal of this process was mainly to strengthen the region’s international competitiveness.

The re-emergence of the Baltic states in the wake of the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989 and Sweden’s joining the European Union in 1995 gave a whole new international perspective to Sweden and Stockholm, in political terms. Economic and political leaders became aware of the international role that the city can and must play to ensure its economic prosperity. Stockholm is an international city-region, competing with other city-regions on the Baltic Sea, in Europe and North America.

This awareness first emerged among the large companies that found themselves forced to restructure to meet the challenges of globalization. Many large Swedish companies do most of their business on foreign markets, which for a medium-sized country such as Sweden, is an unusual, even exceptional, situation in the Western world. As a result, these companies wield tremendous influence in economic and political circles.

As political allegiances are shifting, the role of ORPUT on the international stage is now being questioned to some extent by the County Council. Regardless of the final outcome, the re-evaluation process initiated by ORPUT can serve as an example for a similar process to evaluate the international role of the Montreal region. It shows the role that a planning office can play in shaping the economic and international development of a region.

4. Management of Urban Planning in the City of Stockholm

Stockholm’s urban growth began during the Industrial Revolution, in the second half of the 19th century. The city reached 100,000 inhabitants by 1870. The tradition of urban planning in the city dates from this time. By the dawn of the 20th century, Stockholm had 300,000 residents. The population peaked at 810,000 in 1960. Since then, demographic growth has been mostly outside the city. The city of Stockholm today has 740,000 inhabitants and the Greater Stockholm area counts 1.8 million inhabitants.

Between 1945 and 1975, Stockholm underwent its most extensive urbanization phase in the 20th century. It was during this period that its planning model was established. This post-war period also allowed the Social Democratic government to implement all the planned measures and policies, primarily in the area of housing, whose application had been delayed by the war.

The City of Stockholm had already set up two housing corporations in 1936 and 1937, and created a third in 1944. Moreover, starting early in the century, the City had set aside a huge land bank to prevent land speculation. In addition, the provisions of the Urban Planning Act, amended in 1947, granted extensive powers to municipalities to determine the pace and type of development.

With these tools at its disposal, the City began, between 1945 and 1952, drawing up a master plan to serve as a reference framework to guide urban development over the next 20 years. This master plan would determine the urban form and pace of development, types of housing, location of transportation infrastructure, the green corridors, community facilities, etc. It had no legal force, but was scrupulously followed by the authorities. The City also began building a metro network. Despite its high cost, this appeared to be the most efficient solution to congestion, since Stockholm stands on fourteen islands and its bridges were already causing major traffic bottlenecks.

The originality of the approach adopted in Stockholm, after 1945, lay in the fact that new neighbourhoods were laid out according to the master plan, as part of an integrated process. The plan systematically determined the location of neighbourhoods along public transit axes, mainly the metro. In addition, these axes of urban expansion took Stockholm’s unique topography into account. The municipal green structure is made up of long axes, mainly in the troughs of the rocky depressions that characterize the region. These green corridors run through the neighbourhoods and make for an impressive network. The residential projects from the 1950s, 1960s and 1970s are known as “metro neighbourhoods” (tunnelbanestad). The first and best-known of these neighbourhoods is Vällingby, which dates back to 1950.
4.1 Political and administrative structure of the City of Stockholm

Stockholm, Sweden’s largest city, has 740,000 inhabitants. It covers an area of 187 km², almost entirely built up. The City is divided into 18 districts.

The City Council is the supreme decision-making body of the City of Stockholm. It oversees the provision of services to all citizens. It adopts municipal policies and by-laws and the budget, and sets taxation levels. The 101 Council members are elected by popular vote, with a proportional representation system.

The 2000 municipal budget was approximately 28.6 billion SEK (CAN$4.8 billion). Two-thirds of the City’s funds are raised through income taxes, and the other one-third through charges, fees, etc. (18%), site leasehold rent (5%), State grants (11%), and interest and investment income (1%). Stockholm residents pay 17.93% income tax to the City (the national average is 21%) and 10.32% to the county. In other words, Stockholmers pay over one-quarter (28%) of their income in local taxes.

**District councils**

Since 1996, the City of Stockholm has decentralized many of its activities to its 18 district councils. Seats on a district council are allocated to political parties in accordance with the proportion of seats they hold on the City Council. Their decision-making power is limited to issues delegated by the City Council.

The main activities managed at the district level are education, local social services, cultural activities, including libraries, youth centres and playgrounds, and road and park maintenance.

**Municipal corporations**

The City of Stockholm has established a large number of municipal corporations over the years to manage its vast property holdings, consisting of housing and schools, the supply of drinking water and management of wastewater, energy production, port operations, parking and the professional hockey arena.

The largest of these municipal corporations are the three real-estate corporations, which generate two-thirds of revenue:

- Svenska Bostäder, founded in 1944, is Sweden’s largest real-estate company, responsible for 49,000 flats and 850,000 m² of commercial premises;
- Stockholmshem, founded in 1937, owns and manages 35,000 flats and 4,000 commercial premises;
- Familjebostäder, founded in 1936, owns and manages 30,000 flats and 3,000 commercial premises.
4.2 The city plan: content, process and structural role

Between 1874 and 1947, the City of Stockholm traditionally managed its territory by means of zoning by-laws. The master plan, drawn up in 1952, then became the reference and was later replaced by detailed development plans with legal authority. The 1991 and 1998 plans added the overall perspective necessary for municipal management. The 1998 plan, more specifically, has a strategic dimension that gives more weight to the planning approach.

The analysis by the Strategic Planning Division of the Urban Planning Department emphasized the most fundamental changes affecting the city of Stockholm from a regional and international perspective.

The business and the industrial sectors have undergone major transformations over the years, with a decisive impact on the way in which the territory is organized. Current economic growth is derived mainly from businesses involved in the knowledge industry, telecommunications and new technologies. They have a totally different approach from the manufacturing industries, many of which have now closed.

Environmental issues revolve around maintaining and improving the green spaces and parks, as well as alleviating problems caused by automobile traffic.

The population of Greater Stockholm has grown by 7,000 to 8,000 people a year since the 1980s, due mainly to migration from various parts of Sweden to the Stockholm region. Maintaining the quality of services remains a challenge especially as concerns the elderly (17% of the population) and immigrants.

The main strategy is essentially aimed at building the city inwards. Stockholm, as such, has already been built. The changes mentioned above do not call for extending the urbanized zone, even within the municipal boundaries. Rather, the idea is to seize opportunities to transform older industrial zones or revitalize existing areas.

The most relevant aspect of the plan, then, is the designation of 12 strategic development areas, all of them former central industrial zones destined for re-use. Together, these strategic development areas represent important potential for conversion into work and living areas. A summary evaluation estimates the construction potential in these areas at 40,000 to 70,000 dwellings.

The second element of the urban strategy concerns the outer city, those areas where the quality of services and living conditions are not comparable with those in the inner city. In this case, the goal is to enhance the attractiveness of these somewhat outlying areas.

12 The expression used in the English version of the Stockholm urban plan: Build the City inwards.
Figure 4.1 – Proposed land use under the City of Stockholm city plan, 1997

*Source*: City of Stockholm, Stadsbyggnads kontoret, Översiktplan Stockholm, 1997
Just as in Quebec, the official adoption of an urban plan by municipalities is a recent event in Sweden. Note also that such plans carry no legal weight. Nonetheless, the long tradition of urban and economic planning in the country leads people there to see the role of the plan or the need for such an exercise in a different light. The urban plan is primarily a reference document to guide municipal intervention.

### 4.3 Municipal green spaces

Environmental issues are playing an increasingly important role in city planning and initiatives. From this perspective, the City of Stockholm has developed a vast network of parks and natural spaces that makes it unique among large Western cities. This development program is known as *Stockholms grönstrukturen* (Stockholm’s green structure).

The development of this municipal green structure began back in the 1930s, with the objective of making the physical form of the city conform to the local topography. The city grew outwards from the centre, along axes formed by low-lying areas, and the public transit system followed the same axes. Consequently, broad open spaces were preserved between neighbourhoods and were set aside as parks or nature reserves, in the form of long corridors. According to the 1952 master plan, this system of corridors would appear to be more efficient and appropriate than a green belt around the city. The green corridors, along with the transportation networks, shape the urban environment.

Today, the city of Stockholm has 85 km² of green spaces, or 45% of the area of the municipality (187 km²), distributed as follows.

**Table 4.1 - Area of green spaces - City of Stockholm - 1999**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Area Description</th>
<th>Area (km²)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Area of the municipality (excluding water surfaces):</td>
<td>187</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Area of all green spaces:</td>
<td>85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- 12 large parks, each measuring over 100 ha:</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- neighbourhood and walking parks, community gardens:</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- woods, former farm fields (fallow), owned by the municipality</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Source: Urban Planning Department, City of Stockholm*

In addition, 80% of the shoreline in Stockholm is open to the public, most of it with walking paths and bicycle paths. This network of shoreline paths alone stretches 150 km.
The quality of the city’s parks is also remarkable. There are huge planted areas, sometimes left in their natural state, highlighting the relief. Some have rest areas or outdoor cafés (especially along the shorelines), which are very popular with Stockholmers. In addition, there are hundreds of children’s playgrounds in municipal parks and squares.

Safeguarding these green spaces, most of them linked to a network, is one of the main objectives of the urban plan. The municipal green spaces are part of Stockholm’s identity, and they are very well used. It is estimated that 90% of Stockholmers visit these parks and green spaces at least once a year, and 45% every week.

The Urban Planning Department was instructed by municipal authorities to draw up a program for developing the network of parks and green spaces, with a view to preserving them. The program has three dimensions:
- identifying different components of the green structure;
- designating areas to be protected;
- determining the characteristics of the landscapes to be protected in areas slated for development.

4.4 Transportation planning

Given Stockholm’s role as a central city and the Swedish capital, municipal authorities must take both local and regional traffic concerns into account. Professionals in the Strategic Planning Division of the Urban Planning Department are responsible for ensuring that these concerns are properly integrated into the urban plan.

What makes transportation planning in Sweden, and in the City of Stockholm, unique is the way in which it is adapted to environmental and social concerns. Policies, initiatives and project evaluations systematically include environmental and social factors. Training for civil and transportation engineers has included these dimensions since the 1970s.

For instance, the City of Stockholm considers adequate accessibility for travel to work and for other purposes (school, shopping, entertainment, etc.) and for the transportation of goods, a key objective. This efficiency in transportation is intended to support residents’ employment and well-being, and is accompanied by safety and sustainable development goals.

Accordingly, for over a decade now the City has supported the aim of reducing the number of automobiles downtown, so as to limit noise and air pollution. The Swedish experience, where transportation planning is concerned, could serve as a model for integrating these concepts of environmental and social promotion into our transportation policies and plans, at both the municipal and provincial levels.
4.5 Planning of strategic areas: two examples of recycling industrial land, two planning approaches

Hammarby Sjöstad and Liljeholmen are two of the designated strategic development areas in the urban plan. They are former industrial areas that have now been redeveloped to provide housing, shopping and office space. They deserve to be examined for two reasons.

First of all, these projects are examples of how former industrial zones can be converted into housing and office space in the inner city. They benefit from their proximity to downtown and are situated near large bodies of water. Moreover, they are located on the new light rail train line, which will link the two areas to downtown and to the other metro and train lines. These projects have also made it possible to create new residential spaces and to innovate in technological and environmental terms, while respecting the basic characteristics of the built environment.

Second, as planning exercises they are fine examples of the transition between two planning modes. The planning process began in 1991 in Hammarby Sjöstad, and in 1997 in Liljeholmen. These are significant dates, for since 1995 there has been a trend away from the planning tradition for which the city of Stockholm has long been recognized. Since the late 1940s, the City, as a large landowner, exercised nearly complete control over neighbourhood planning and development, determining the pace and type of development. Hammarby Sjöstad is the last of this type of municipal projects.

In the mid-1990s, it was decided to transform the City’s traditional role as a planner and developer. Under the new policy, the City is to work with private promoters and to act as a go-between for promoters and citizens, with the aim of defending the public interest. This is the role it has played in the Liljeholmen area.

The basic reason for this new approach lies mainly in the fact that the municipal land reserve has been almost exhausted, and it has become too expensive to acquire new land. The City of Stockholm no longer enjoys the exceptional conditions it turned to its advantage in the 20th century when it built up an immense bank of properties that allowed it to act as a real-estate promoter.

4.6 Kista Science Park and its metro neighbourhood

Kista Science Park is Sweden’s largest industrial park, and the fifth largest in the world, for companies working in the fields of new information technologies and telecommunications. Planned and developed in the mid-1970s, it is located northwest of the City of Stockholm, about 12 kilometres from downtown. The science park is home to 600 companies and research centres, large and small, employing 27,000 people and all related to the fields of telecommunications and new information technologies.

The metro neighbourhood
The science park is bordered by two residential areas: on the east, the suburban municipality of Sollentuna, with 60,000 residents, and on the west, a residential area of Stockholm, with over 30,000 residents. The Stockholm neighbourhood, made up of the three districts of Kista, Husby and Akalla, is a typical example of a metro neighbourhood (Tunnelbanestad), one of the twelve architectural types defined in the city plan.

Whole neighbourhoods have been built on this model, not only in Stockholm but also in suburban municipalities served by the metro. Inspired by the rational approach, planning in these new neighbourhoods separates functions and traffic. The metro station is located in the centre of the new neighbourhood. Commercial and public services (health clinic, library) are also located there, generally in a shopping centre. The highest-density residential buildings (5 or 6 storeys) are built near the station, at most 500 metres away, and density declines with distance from the station. Small individual rowhouses are built on the edges of the neighbourhood, at most 800 meters from the metro station. Daycare centres, elementary and high schools are built in the heart of the residential areas, along with parks for the youngest residents. Most of these new neighbourhoods are bordered by green corridors, elements of the municipal and regional green network.

The uniform, even drab appearance of these vast residential neighbourhoods has provoked a great deal of criticism, however. Architects focussed on the quality of the dwellings and gave little attention to creating the sort of attractive atmosphere that would make for a vibrant neighbourhood.
5. **Housing issues**

Sweden is known worldwide for its social policies, particularly in the realm of housing. At the beginning of the 1940s, the Swedish Parliament adopted a national housing policy that would become one of the pillars of the Swedish social system. This policy recognized that every citizen was entitled to adequate housing at a reasonable price.

Today, it can be said that this objective has been largely met. A system of financial assistance for housing allowed the authorities to ensure very good housing conditions across the country. There are no slums and no ghettos. This assistance system was intended for all levels of the population, not merely the most disadvantaged. An income supplement allowed even the poorest households to afford decent housing. There are no social housing projects in Sweden as they are generally understood in Western countries.

After 50 years, however, the crisis in public finances that struck the country so hard in the early 1990s led to a reform of this financial assistance system. The new assistance system, introduced in 1992, has brought about numerous changes in the way in which new housing is built.

### 5.1 Housing policy and financing

In the early decades of the twentieth century, the housing situation was rather catastrophic in both urban and rural areas. More than half of all dwellings were overcrowded, and two-thirds lacked modern conveniences. The measures adopted were intended to impose a form of rent control and regulate the building of housing. The main reasons for the introduction of the financial assistance system were political and ideological, with a view to creating social equity. State intervention was intended to eliminate fluctuations in the production of housing and the frequent housing crises.\(^{13}\)

Housing policy became one of the pillars of Sweden’s welfare policy. Its primary goal was to ensure adequate housing at reasonable prices for all. Housing was considered a legal right. Another aim of the policy was to eliminate overcrowding and cap rents at 20% of household income. By law, every one-person household was entitled to at least 30 m², that is a one-room flat, along with a kitchen and bathroom, which had to meet strict national standards. For each additional person in the household, there was to be an additional room measuring at least 10 m².

Municipalities were also called upon to play an important role because they were responsible for implementing the housing policy. Accordingly, they were encouraged to create municipal housing construction and management corporations. Over the years, their role became even more central on the property and real-estate markets, by purchasing land and building hundreds of thousands of dwellings. Today, Swedish

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municipal corporations own and manage 22% of the country’s 4,220,000 dwellings. Municipalities also have significant powers, under the Urban Planning Act, allowing them to determine not only where and how housing will be built, but also the timing of development. Swedish sources often refer to the monopoly powers granted to municipalities for land planning and development (see Chapter 2); this is particularly the case where housing is concerned.

Table 5.1 – Number of dwellings according to the tenure in Sweden (1999)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tenure</th>
<th>Nb of dwellings</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Owner occupied (individuals)</td>
<td>1,780,000</td>
<td>42.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Municipal rental</td>
<td>928,000</td>
<td>22.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Private rental</td>
<td>745,000</td>
<td>17.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Co-operative</td>
<td>711,000</td>
<td>16.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>State or church property</td>
<td>56,000</td>
<td>1.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>4,220,000</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Europe Actualités HLM, No. 684, June 30, 2000

From the beginning, financial assistance for housing was available to almost all levels of society. Through a system of loans and interest-rate guarantees, the State ensured favourable mortgage conditions for the construction and renovation of buildings. These financial measures were granted for all kinds of residential construction and renovation, provided that they were permanent dwellings.

Municipal corporations, co-operatives, private builders and citizens were all eligible. Between 1950 and 1970, the busiest construction period in the 20th century, 90% of the dwellings built in Sweden received assistance under this system of loans and interest-rate guarantees.14

Between 1965 and 1974, a vast program for building one million dwellings accelerated the construction of multifamily dwellings. The program was introduced to meet the huge demand for housing.

There is no assistance for so-called low-income housing. Swedish sources tend to refer more to “assisted housing”. However, in the 1940s the government instituted a housing allowance for low-income households to cover housing expenses, to which they are entitled regardless of the type of dwelling. Most of the beneficiaries are pensioners. Just under 22% of Swedish households receive a housing allowance or supplement. The State pays out just over 5 billion SEK in housing allowances every year, or roughly CAN$850 million.15


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5.1.1 The housing assistance program up to 1992

The financial assistance program in effect in Sweden for close to 50 years had two major facets: an interest subsidy for first mortgages, and government loans at preferred interest rates, for housing projects approved in advance by both a national agency and the municipality. A first mortgage represented 70% of the cost of construction or renovation of the approved housing project, and was granted by financial institutions. Government loans covered the remaining 25% or 30%, depending on the project promoter.

To be eligible for this assistance, projects had to meet certain conditions: they had to be approved by municipal authorities, meet government housing and production cost standards, obtain a bank guarantee (for owner-occupants and co-operatives), and be put out to tender for construction.

Starting in the early 1980s, the government announced on several occasions that the total volume of subsidies could not be increased, and that general assistance in the form of interest subsidies would be converted to assistance for individuals. The government’s studies showed that interest subsidies, in the form applied up to that point, did not lead to equitable distribution of housing or ensure fair distribution of costs between the various types of tenure and between old and new dwellings.\(^{16}\)

Furthermore, over the years, the gap between nationally established rents and the real costs of construction and maintenance widened. Rents were set by the State following negotiations between government representatives and the National Tenants’ Association (Hyresgästföreningen).

In 1990, the Swedish State paid out 48.7 billion SEK (approximately CAN$8.1 billion) in housing support. The value of all the subsidies combined rose by 60% between 1975 and 1990 and represented 30% of the average cost of a dwelling, including housing allowances, interest-rate subsidies and tax exemptions applied to housing.

The Swedish state found itself supporting an even larger share of the financing of housing than planned. The State’s role had become too large, preventing the production system from becoming self-regulating, whereas the initial intention had been for the State to gradually withdraw its support for housing.

5.1.2 The reform of the financial assistance system in 1992 and its consequences

\(^{16}\) CARS, Göran and HÅRSMAN, Björn, *op. cit.*, p. 64
Steps to reform the assistance system began in 1990. The Swedish Parliament adopted fundamental changes, one of which was to abandon the whole system of interest-rate guarantees. These changes were implemented in 1992 and 1993.

Overall, the government loan policy has been radically altered. Loans are now granted at interest rates equivalent to those on the mortgage market. Gradually, over the years from 1992 to 2002, loans to municipalities will be eliminated. Repayment terms have been spread out, limiting the share of the State and saving borrowers from having to make large repayments in the early years. Interest subsidies, formerly intended for owner-occupants, have been replaced by government assistance in the form of guaranteed loans or income tax deductions for mortgage interest, corresponding to a maximum of 30% of interest expenses. Private companies and co-operatives can obtain grants amounting to at most 30% of interest expenses.

Since interest rates on mortgage loans are set by the market, construction costs have risen. The buoyant market of the 1980s led to a housing surplus with the exception of the three metropolitan regions of Stockholm, Göteborg and Malmö, where there is a shortage. With construction costs remaining high, developers do not feel that they can make enough of a profit and are not interested in starting new construction. Housing production is at its lowest point since the beginning of the twentieth century.

Most observers agree that the Swedish system for producing housing is going through a difficult transition period. While the private sector is now subject to market conditions, with reduced State assistance, rent controls are not. Municipalities no longer have the funding to intervene, yet in an urban area like Stockholm, which is experiencing economic growth, demand for housing remains strong. Many companies have been obliged to bring in skilled foreign workers, and have trouble finding housing for them. In addition, this shortage has led to a staggering increase in the price of existing housing.

Nonetheless, a certain consensus is emerging on the issue of revitalizing some neighbourhoods built in the 1960s and 1970s, containing large housing projects. They have functional and physical problems that make them less attractive, and are plagued by however social problems, including vandalism. The appearance of these problems must not be linked to the concentration of the most recent immigrants in certain specific areas. There are no ghettos in Greater Stockholm. Housing conditions and the physical condition of these areas are quite similar to those in other areas of Greater Stockholm built around the same time. The rise of social problems would appear to be common to areas with large housing projects and would therefore seem to be more related to functional problems with the layout of these neighbourhoods.

A decision made in 2000 by the Stockholm City Council, ruled by the Moderate Party (conservative), may well guide the debate on housing policy reform. In 1999, the Council decided to divest itself of its assets in municipal housing corporations, either by selling municipally owned flats to their occupants or by privatizing the three municipal

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corporations which own close to 120,000 dwellings, or 28% of all housing in Stockholm. The Council’s initiative is linked to the national electoral situation, pitting the Moderate (conservative) party against the Social Democrats, who have headed a minority government since 1998.

It must be remembered that housing policy and the financial assistance system, along with social welfare measures, are among the most important achievements of the Social Democratic regime. In the space of just a few decades, Sweden managed to reverse a housing situation considered one of the worst in Europe at the dawn of the 20th century. This general approach targeted all citizens, not just specific segments of society. Overall, the housing policy led to constant improvements in the housing situation.

The assistance system was unable to regulate itself, however, and became too expensive for the State to maintain, especially after 1980. The crisis in public finances, in the early 1990s, required far-reaching reforms to this financial assistance system.

The different players have had to alter their approaches. The mission and management of municipal housing corporations are now being transformed by the government; they no longer receive State support and do not build any housing. The private companies being called upon to build most housing are accustomed to generous subsidies and do not feel that they can earn sufficient profits under the current market conditions.

As a result of all the above, the Swedish housing production system is now undergoing extensive changes. Experts themselves acknowledge that Sweden is experiencing a difficult period and there is no unanimous agreement on the directions to be taken or actions to be supported. The basic objectives of housing policy have not been rejected in the new approach to financial assistance, however. Its application may cause certain problems during this transition period, but the financial assistance system may not be the only factor involved.

5.2 The current housing situation in Greater Stockholm

The housing situation in Stockholm was particularly precarious in the first half of the 20th century. The housing existing stock had been built over the previous two centuries and most neighbourhoods consisted of four- to six-floor multifamily dwellings, densely packed together, where the city’s working population lived. Their homes were often just one- or two-room flats and lacked basic sanitary facilities; most of them were overcrowded. A few neighbourhoods (Östermalm, for instance), were populated by the emerging industrial and commercial middle class, and were similar to the Haussman-designed districts in Paris. These dwellings were spacious and luxurious, needless to say.

As outlined above, the housing policy introduced in the 1930s would lead to extensive construction and renovation of existing housing. The City of Stockholm played a leading role and took advantage of a huge land bank it had gradually assembled since the 1910s.
In 1936, it created municipal non-profit construction corporations to carry out a number of housing initiatives.

This control over real estate, along with its regulatory powers, allowed the City of Stockholm to guide residential development and determine the character and pace of construction. Huge residential projects were built between 1950 and 1975. Stockholm built a new neighbourhood of 10,000 people every year during this period. In all, 30% of the existing dwellings in the city of Stockholm were built during this period.

Moreover, between 1975 and 1985, the City of Stockholm supported a renovation and upgrading program for dwellings in the inner city, many of which dated from the 18th and 19th centuries. Often these were just one- or two-room flats. Some were enlarged to meet the minimum regulatory living space of 30 m² per individual. In most cases, they simply needed to be upgraded to meet current standards.

**Housing objectives in Greater Stockholm**

Unlike municipalities, the Stockholm County Council has no authority in housing matters. Nonetheless, through the Office of Regional Planning and Urban Transportation (ORPUT), it attempts to influence municipal decisions on housing related initiatives.

To keep pace with population growth, housing needs are expected to grow by 9,000 to 10,000 dwellings annually. However, only 3,000 to 4,000 new dwellings have been built annually in the entire Greater Stockholm area in recent years.

ORPUT maintains that to meet existing demand and overcome the current housing crisis in Greater Stockholm, from 6,000 to 10,000 new dwellings a year are needed. Otherwise, ORPUT fears that this crisis could affect the region’s economic performance by making it more difficult to hire skilled employees from abroad. Moreover, the situation could exacerbate some social problems, especially among young people unable to find a place to live.

ORPUT also maintains that these new dwellings should be built in the areas surrounding the inner city, in areas that are already built up, with a view to creating a more dense regional urban structure.

**Housing objectives in the City of Stockholm**

The City of Stockholm played a leading role in housing in the second half of the 20th century. Municipal real-estate corporations, with huge holdings, halted all construction in 1998 at the direction of the City Council. The City also stopped acquiring any new land and is even attempting now to sell some of its land holdings back to the private sector. In addition, as outlined above, in 2000 the Council decided to divest itself of the assets of its
municipal housing corporations, either by selling municipally owned flats to their occupants or by privatising the three municipal corporations.

The tradition of planning and construction that has shaped the city of Stockholm to such a large extent is being transformed. This tradition was based on three fundamental factors:

- the powers granted by the Urban Planning and Building Act, allowing the City to determine the location, pace and type of development;
- the City’s control over real estate, as owner of most of the land in the city;
- State support, providing low-cost financing for municipal real-estate corporations.

Only the City’s regulatory powers remain as strong as before. In most cases, land to be built on is not municipally owned, and State support for construction has been abandoned over the past decade. The transition period appears to be difficult.

The City of Stockholm, like most Swedish municipalities, is faced with a substantial challenge as it attempts to redefine its role in shaping urban development. This reform is closely linked to the reform of housing policy. The City will probably have to take the initiative in revitalizing certain neighbourhoods.

Housing policy orientations as such are related to the general objectives of the urban development plan. The main strategy of the plan is to build the city inwards. The idea is to seize opportunities to transform old, run-down or abandoned peripheral industrial areas and create new work areas (office and commercial space) and new residential neighbourhoods; many of them are located next to bodies of water. A summary evaluation has shown that between 40,000 and 70,000 dwellings could be built in these former industrial areas.

Table 5.5 - General housing statistics – County and City of Stockholm, 1996

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### Stockholm County vs. City of Stockholm

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Stockholm County</th>
<th>City of Stockholm</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Population</td>
<td>1,763,000</td>
<td>740,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Population density (urbanized areas)</td>
<td>1,895 res./km²</td>
<td>5,522 res./km²</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of dwellings</td>
<td>847,000</td>
<td>400,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Individuals/household</td>
<td>2.1</td>
<td>1.85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% of dwellings in multifamily buildings</td>
<td>73%</td>
<td>90%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% of dwellings in single-family homes</td>
<td>27%</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ownership of dwellings (%)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- municipal corporations</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>28%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- co-operatives</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>27%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- private corporations</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- owner-occupied</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### 5.3 Elder care and home care

Out of 9 million Swedes, about 1.6 million, or 18%, are over 65. People over 80 alone represent 5% of the total population.

This high proportion of elderly Swedes is becoming a major social and financial issue. The Social Services Act (Socialtjänstlag), introduced in 1982, laid out the principles and measures to be taken to assist the elderly. Sweden has always taken a global approach to caring for the elderly. Legislation defines the measures to be applied to this age group with regard to health, housing, home care, financial support and pensions. Similarly, the Act designates the authorities responsible for applying these measures (National Board, county council or municipality). Consequently, housing assistance must be considered in conjunction with other types of assistance: home care, specific health care, etc.

The family continues to play an important role in caring for the elderly. Public facilities are available when a person can no longer be cared for by his or her family or has no family.

Historically, care of the elderly has always been the responsibility of local communities or municipalities. Despite the global approach to care laid out under the Social Services Act,

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18 Much of the information in this section was drawn from a publication by the Swedish Institute, *Fact Sheet on Sweden, The Care of the Elderly in Sweden*, July 1999.
institutional co-ordination between county councils (responsible for health care) and municipalities (responsible for social services and housing) is complicated.

Starting in the 1950s, generous programs were introduced to improve housing conditions for the elderly. The overall goal of these measures was to give Swedish citizens access to decent housing from cradle to grave. The principle of keeping the elderly at home as long as possible was already established at that point. Every individual was henceforth entitled to a dwelling of at least 30 m², with a kitchen and bathroom. Specific standards were also established for dwellings for seniors, adapted to their needs and designed for safety.

Pensioners receive a State housing grant (housing supplement) that varies depending on their revenue. Nonetheless, old peoples’ homes of varying types have been built by municipalities in recent decades. In 1998, 8.2% of elderly Swedes age 65 and over were living in special accommodation, including 20% of all those 80 and over.\(^\text{19}\)

**Home care**

Concrete assistance for the elderly generally begins with home care, a municipal responsibility. In the early days of this program, home care was almost exclusively limited to housekeeping, shopping, meal preparation, cleaning and laundry. Over the past 20 years, more attention has been paid to personal care, mainly because of the growing number of elderly people.

The major revision of the Social Services Act, in 1992, marked a turning point in care for the elderly. Its purpose was also to reform health care, so as to limit the length of hospital stays. It was accompanied by a reform of home care, to ensure that most convalescence would take place at home. The impact of these changes are now being evaluated by the government.

Nevertheless, the health care reforms in the 1990s, along with the growth in the number of very old people, have brought about substantial changes in the distribution of services for the elderly.

Simultaneously with the changes occurring in hospital care, and partly as a consequence, municipal authorities have radically re-prioritised their domiciliary care input in favour of those who are most severely ill and most in need of help (...) Fewer people are receiving help, but the average input per person assisted has increased.\(^\text{20}\)

### 5.4 Housing assistance for people with disabilities

20 Socialstyrelsen, *op. cit.*, *Summary and conclusions*
As noted previously, Sweden has a general welfare policy that guarantees the material security and social rights of all citizens. In addition to general provisions, a number of financial rights and assistance measures are provided to round out the social welfare net. Specific programs for physically and mentally disabled people fall into this category.

The Social Services Act adopted in 1982 defines municipalities’ responsibilities as follows:

"local authorities (...) must work to enable people with physical or mental functional impairments to live in a way that corresponds to their needs and to play an active part in the community by travelling and moving about, gaining access to public premises and so forth. The local authorities’ social services have ultimate responsibility for ensuring that all those who are resident in the area receive the support and help they need."[21]

Under the Act, municipalities are also responsible for building or adapting dwellings specifically intended for people with disabilities. These dwellings, old or new, must meet their specific needs, for all kinds of disabilities, for all functions: sleeping, resting, personal hygiene, cooking, eating, and moving around. The local authorities are also responsible for ensuring that housing areas are well planned and offer residents a good environment, services and communications. The aim is housing on equal terms for all.

**Assistance for people with mental disabilities**

The reform of health care some ten years ago in Sweden has also meant increased autonomy for many people with chronic mental disabilities. Institutional care is being increasingly replaced by integrated housing of various kinds.

Despite the provisions of the Social Services Act of 1992, municipalities have not been able to meet all the specific needs of mentally disabled residents, or so concluded the report of the Parliamentary Commission on psychiatric care in 1992. These findings led to a reform of psychiatric care implemented in January 1995.

This reform resulted in the transfer of some 4,000 patients and hundreds of rehabilitation programs from the health sector, where they had been managed by county councils, to social services, managed by municipalities. County councils also received specific grants of over 1.2 billion SEK (about CAN$200 million) to co-ordinate psychiatric care and social services during the transition period.

The main difficulty, according to the study by the National Board of Health and Welfare, lies in the lack of support by municipal social services for social and recreational activities and employment for mentally disabled people. Social rehabilitation cannot be limited to housing assistance. The major difficulty in rehabilitating mentally disabled people is that they tend to stay at home and to be inactive.

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There are from 40,000 to 46,000 chronically mentally disabled people in Sweden, or about 0.65% of the adult population, equally distributed between men and women. 78% of them live in their own homes. When necessary, they receive assistance for disabled people as well as a housing allowance. Another 12% live in institutions or therapeutic establishments, while 10% live in municipal centres for disabled people.
Conclusion

The value of studying the way things are done in other countries, as in this report, lies essentially in what we can learn and how it leads us to reflect on and compare our own ways of doing things. At a time when, in Quebec, the way in which municipalities are organised, as well as the tools used to plan them, are being reformed, the experience of Stockholm and Sweden as a whole offers much food for thought.

The important role of local communities

First of all, it is important to emphasise Sweden’s substantial decentralisation of powers over health, social services and education, which have been delegated to local communities. County councils manage the health system. Municipalities are responsible for social services as well as elementary and secondary education. Funding for government activities and local communities is provided primarily from income taxes.

To ensure quality local services and improve the efficiency of municipal management, the Swedish government was obliged to undertake a reform of municipal boundaries. The process, which was launched in 1946 and lasted over twenty years, has resulted in the reduction the number of municipalities from 2,500 to 300. The goal of the reform was primarily to group together the very great number of rural municipalities. The government finally had to force them to merge, in the early 1970s. A Parliamentary Commission, reporting at the beginning of the 1980s, confirmed the tangible improvements in municipal management as a result of these mergers. Today, no one continues to question the validity of this reform and some people are outspoken about its benefits.

This reform of municipal boundaries was carried out with the goal of improving administrative efficiency in the context of a decentralised State. In the current context of municipal amalgamations in Quebec, the Swedish experience should be useful in terms of deciding on the basic objectives and the methods to be employed.

A tradition of planning and co-operation

It must be noted that Swedish public institutions have a long history of being responsible for urban planning. This tradition dates back to the 19th century and was strengthened by the economic and spatial planning approach promoted by Social Democratic governments starting in the 1940s. It is also important to underline the country’s consistent integrated approach to planning, and the way it links different urban issues: housing, transportation, green spaces, community facilities, workplaces and, more recently, environmental concerns. This approach is not limited to urban or regional planning boards, but is also applied by bodies responsible for urban transit, housing, green spaces and even social services. For these organizations, it makes complete sense to look at all aspects of an urban problem.
One of the most striking examples of this planning tradition is the approach taken after the Second World War in response to the pressure of urban development. The City of Stockholm managed its most rapid urban growth of the century by adhering to the guidelines set out in its master plan, which placed the emphasis on integrating new residential neighbourhoods with the new metro system, extending the green network, and adapting to the landscape and topography. The model was also adopted by suburban municipalities served by the metro. Today, the benefits of this approach can still be felt. The rate of public transit use is one of the highest among Western countries. Only 40% of households in Greater Stockholm have a car, and this rate drops to about 22% in the inner city. Furthermore, the extent and quality of the regional green network are among Stockholm’s incomparable assets.

Over this same period, nearly all major urban centres in the Western world were facing similar development pressures. The response in North America was to rely on the highway system, individual cars and single-family housing, resulting in the urban sprawl we now know. Even elsewhere in Europe, with a few exceptions, the integration of public transit systems has not been so closely linked to the development of new residential neighbourhoods, and there are few urban centres that can boast the quality of green spaces enjoyed by Stockholmers.

It is also worth noting that institutional planning does not depend on coercion based on official planning tools. Stockholm’s urban plan and the regional development plan were not adopted officially until 1991. Yet guidelines in previous plans (with a semi-official status) were followed, in keeping with a tradition dating back to the 19th century. The reason for this positive attitude toward planning lies in institutions’ and politicians’ acknowledgement of the need for planning, so that all possible options will be taken into account and public funds invested wisely. This attitude is also evident in the Swedish economy and public opinion in general.

Another explanation lies in the fact that planning is always based on broad consultation with social and economic organisations. One of the characteristics of Swedish society is this reliance on managing by consensus, with the aim of ensuring collective well-being. The influence of parliamentary commissions of enquiry (utredning) responsible for preparing legislative reforms is revealing. This attitude toward consultation generally means lengthy discussions, but does result in choices that are not constantly disputed. Moreover, these are ongoing exercises. As Swedish professionals emphasise, the most important result is not the plan as such, but rather the process of negotiating the plan, leading to consensus on issues and priorities. For instance, during the entire period leading up to the official adoption of its plan, the Office of Regional Planning and Urban Transportation (ORPUT) constantly carries out analyses and encourages reflection by political authorities and regional organisations in Stockholm. The same applies at the municipal level, where the reform of Stockholm’s 1991 urban plan began in 1993 and continued until the plan was adopted in 1998.

Nor is this type of consultative approach to development limited to official plans. The Dennis Agreement is an example. All the parties involved in the different means of...
transportation (management of highways, public transit, railways, local roads) met for four years, as part of a broad-based, high-level political committee. The committee’s decision led to a consensus report on the actions to be taken, a budget and an implementation timetable. Once again, the integrated approach adopted in this case is worth noting: transportation planners looked beyond mere traffic flow concerns. Their primary objective was to improve public transit service, so as to reduce the environmental impact of vehicle traffic. The actions were also linked to economic and social objectives. This experience should serve as an example for planning transportation in large urban communities in Quebec.

**Metropolitan management**

The experience of Greater Stockholm with respect to metropolitan management is unique in Sweden. With the exception of Stockholm, county councils play no role in development, although many people recognise today that urban issues mainly affect the regional level (the results of pilot projects in four other counties will probably lead to changes in this situation). Nevertheless, this experience can certainly provide food for thought for the current debate on planning in Quebec. Generally speaking, the Stockholm County Council has limited urban development powers. Its strength lies in its influence over municipalities, national organisations and civil society.

This power has to do mainly with the County Council’s role in planning and managing public transit. As noted earlier, the public transit system plays a key role in the structure of Greater Stockholm’s urban space. Furthermore, the quality and efficiency of this service guarantee a high rate of use, not to mention its decisive effects in preventing urban sprawl. Finally, one of the fundamental criteria for locating new development projects in Stockholm is their proximity to the public transit system. The Office of Regional Planning and Urban Transportation (ORPUT) and Stockholm Transport (SL) have input into project planning, based on the objectives of the regional development plan.

Another aspect of the influence wielded by the County Council lies in the quality of the studies and analyses produced by ORPUT. This agency enjoys unquestioned credibility. Moreover, the co-operative and consultative approach that characterises regional planning work by ORPUT adds to this influence, since it also extends to civil society, and includes social and economic organisations. Thanks to this influence, regional development plans have historically had considerable weight, albeit no legal standing, in shaping actions by municipalities and national institutions.

The example of the above-mentioned Dennis Agreement, initiated by ORPUT, also shows the importance of its consultative approach. No other organization could have initiated this kind of process.

ORPUT also conducted a study into development factors and Stockholm’s international presence, at a time when the city is experiencing economic growth based on new information technologies (as is Montreal). This reflection was promoted by major
companies interested in ensuring a strong position for Stockholm, in competition with other large city-regions in Europe. The conclusion was that the quality of urban planning and the efficiency of the public transit system were among the criteria making city-regions more attractive and adding to their competitiveness. Stockholm therefore intends to reinforce these assets to build an even more positive international presence, mainly in the Baltic Sea region.

Nonetheless, this does not mean that this regional body should not have more extensive powers, even as concerns the regional development plan. Another weakness of the Stockholm County Council is its legal and administrative inability to manage the regional green network, despite its importance as one of the fundamental ingredients in Greater Stockholm residents’ quality of life.

The decisive role of municipalities in guiding urban development

Swedish municipalities in general, and Stockholm in particular, have played a decisive role in urban development over the past fifty years, particularly in the area of housing. They were responsible for implementing the national housing policy, and benefited from the financial assistance system introduced.

Furthermore, municipalities have broad powers to regulate development. They can determine not only land use, but also the timing of development. Detailed development plans for the city of Stockholm authorise a period of 5 to 15 years for completing projects meeting the provisions of these plans. These plans represent a useful urban planning tool, for controlling not only the type of development, but also where and how it will occur.

Municipalities were also given the power to acquire land and to set up municipal construction and housing management corporations. It is mainly through these powers and these tools that they played a decisive role in implementing housing policy. Many of these achievements remain remarkable, even though they are now experiencing certain functional problems.

The 1992 State reform of the financial assistance program for housing raised questions about the role of municipalities as real-estate developers. Since then, municipal corporations have built almost no new housing in Greater Stockholm and the urban and municipal planning departments are at a turning point with regard to their working and intervention methods. For over 50 years, urban planners and architects for the City of Stockholm oversaw and carried out the construction of nearly 100,000 dwellings and urban facilities. Today, they find themselves acting as intermediaries between real-estate developers, on the one hand, and policies and citizens on the other hand. Municipal public servants have vast and valuable expertise in development and urban planning which should allow them to adjust to these new challenges.

Benefits of housing policy
One of the most important achievements of the Social Democratic regime, along with social welfare measures, is definitely its housing policy. In the space of just a few decades, Sweden managed to reverse a housing situation considered one of the worst in Europe at the dawn of the 20th century. Beginning in the 1940s, Swedish law recognized every citizen’s right to adequate and affordable housing. This general approach targeted all citizens, not just specific segments of society. There are no “social housing projects” as such, in Sweden.

For more vulnerable groups, including the elderly and disabled, specific measures were introduced in the social welfare system to provide adequate housing that met their needs. Once again, as is often the case in Sweden, these measures were not limited to housing considerations, but included a whole range of services to guarantee these individuals quality of life equal to that of every other citizen. Home care and personal assistance measures for such groups are guaranteed by law.

Today, housing conditions in Sweden are among the best in Europe. Every citizen is entitled to a minimum standard of 30 m², with a kitchen and bathroom. There are no slums or shantytowns in Sweden. Although recent immigrants tend to concentrate in certain districts of Stockholm, there are no ghettos. Housing conditions in these districts are similar to those in other parts of Stockholm.

The financial assistance system introduced in the 1940s was intended to support the ongoing construction and renovation of dwellings, rather than sporadic construction or specific types of housing. This approach led to constant improvements in the housing situation. However, the assistance system was not self-regulating and became too expensive for the State to maintain, particularly after 1980. The crisis in public finances in the early 1990s prompted an in-depth reform of this financial assistance system, albeit without calling into question the fundamental goals of the housing policy.

Today, the housing production system is in flux in Sweden; some even say it is in crisis. Municipal housing corporations no longer receive State support and are no longer building new housing. The private companies that were to have picked up the slack feel that potential profits are insufficient, as they are used to generous subsidies, and are not building either. Moreover, the national system for negotiating rents is interfering with any kind of adjustment in housing management costs. The mission and means of managing municipal housing corporations are now being reviewed by the government, and are even being disputed by the Moderates in power in the City of Stockholm.

Even the experts acknowledge that Sweden is in a difficult situation and there is no unanimous agreement on the direction to be taken or actions to be supported. Meanwhile, there is a housing crisis in the urban centres with a shortage of housing for the growing population. In the longer term, this situation may have negative repercussions on the formation of new households and the ability of urban centres to attract highly skilled labour, which is in great demand.
The major municipalities and county councils will probably be called upon to play a decisive role in finding a way out of this situation, since they are the ones facing the problem. Neither will the State be able to stand aside, since the problem is jeopardising the benefits of its housing policy.

As a general conclusion, it must be remembered that the inhabitants of Greater Stockholm enjoy a quality of life found in few other Western urban centres. This is not an accident, but the result of concerted and well-organised planning and development over many decades, aimed at ensuring social equity and well-being for all.
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