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Active Land Policy for Social Equity:
A Housing Development Toolkit

Executive Summary

Many Swedish municipalities hold social equity goals such as building affordable housing and decreasing segregation, but progress towards these goals is often difficult. To address this, we offer a toolkit with nine tools intended to help municipalities improve social equity through housing development and land policy. The tools cover strategies for land ownership, ways to navigate the land allocation process, and techniques to amplify social equity gains. The tools are targeted towards Swedish municipalities at large, but specific recommendations are given for Järfälla. For any municipality, we call for shifts in mindset towards long-term thinking and towards awareness that equity progress can incur material costs. For Järfälla, key recommendations include leasing land to developers rather than selling, imposing specific social equity conditions during allocation, and taking a proactive role in setting the housing development agenda.

Introduction

This report presents the results of our study on active land policy for social equity.

Purpose & Audience

This study aims to help Swedish municipalities locate new ways to make progress towards their social equity goals. To that end, we provide a land use policy toolkit, which offers a structured catalog of relevant tools, plus guidance on when each might be suitable and how it might be implemented. Generally speaking, each tool functions by opening a pathway for a municipality to exert agency over some aspect of urban housing development, in order to bring it into closer alignment with a social equity goal. The toolkit is inspired by our project context in Järfälla, but it applies equally to any Swedish municipality experiencing a gap between its social equity goals and its means to achieve them. Common social equity goals include building affordable housing and reducing spatial segregation, but the toolkit is designed to be flexible enough to serve a broad range of municipal goals.

Scope & Focus

Social equity goals can be difficult to achieve even when they are widely supported. Although such goals can be approached from many directions, our toolkit focuses on housing development and the policies which govern it. By design, we do not enumerate every possible tool. Rather, we focus on a subset of tools that our research has indicated as potentially high-impact with respect to social equity. Further, we focus on tools which are permissible within the Swedish/EU legal and professional context, but which do not currently enjoy widespread use. This toolkit derives its value not from being exhaustive, but rather from intentionally surfacing the tools which our study has yielded as highest-value.

Roadmap

The remainder of this report begins with deeper discussion of the needs that this toolkit aims to fill, both in Järfälla and in Sweden at large. Next, we provide a brief orientation to the Swedish planning system and the EU regulatory context. We then introduce the toolkit and discuss three sections of tools in turn. Each section gives brief context, presents several tools, then offers Järfälla-oriented recommendations. Finally, we conclude with reflections on the toolkit as a whole and critical considerations to bear in mind.

Our project proceeds with the following definitions:

- *Municipal agency:* Local governments' power to realize their goals. Here, our locus of observation is the municipal planning office, but the tools and strategies we discuss involve many surrounding offices and branches of government.
- *Social equity:* Broad notions of fairness and justice as applied to diverse individuals and groups. We position our work as agnostic towards municipalities' specific goals, but our focus here is on goals concerned with delivering good and fair urban conditions to marginalized individuals and groups.

Background

Motivation

Problem Statement

Social equity is widely regarded as desirable, and many Swedish municipalities state explicit social equity goals. However, even when such goals enjoy broad support, municipalities can encounter friction when trying to achieve them. Perhaps housing prices continue to rise despite attempts to build affordable housing, or perhaps spatial segregation persists despite sincere desire to relieve it. In many such cases, municipalities may find that their interventions do not have the desired effect, or that the space of interventions available to them appears troublingly narrow. We observe aspects of this situation in our project context in Järfälla, as outlined below under the `Järfälla Municipality` section.

Focus on Housing & Land Policy

Municipalities can and must fight for their social equity goals from a variety of angles, but in this project, we center urban housing development and the land policies that govern it.[1] As authors, we have selected this approach based on our prior work, which has led us to conclude that it holds the greatest promise for social equity progress. Further, we have found it to be under-researched and challenging in the Swedish context. Many Swedish municipalities currently struggle with housing provision, but most research focuses on adjacent topics such as 'renoviction,' not the issue of equitable housing provision itself. Finally, our chosen focus is inspired by Swedish planning history, where 'active land policy' once played a pivotal role in relieving a national housing crisis.

Statement Regarding Collaboration

In this project course we have worked with representatives of Järfälla municipality. The selection of topic and the contents of the report are our own, but the municipality have provided their perspectives on their challenges which inspired our selection. We would like to thank the planners who took time to present the municipal perspective to us, as well as took time to listen to our presentations. Additionally, we want to thank the development engineers and spatial planners who took time to answer our questions. We would also like to thank Sherif Zakhour who agreed to meet with us and discuss social equity perspectives in land policy and planning in general.

Caveats

Here, we briefly seed three critical perspectives to inform readings of the toolkit.

First, although the recommendations for Järfälla Municipality that our toolkit includes are based on extensive desk research and interviews with local actors, they are not exhaustive. We have not conducted

[1] This report does not target the Swedish rent negotiation process, as this is an area where municipalities have limited influence. This process remains relevant, and it shapes the tools we propose. However, tackling rent negotiation directly is better suited for work targeting other levels of government.

a rigorous empirical study, nor do we have lived experience of the local conditions. Local planners, citizens, and other experts may thus be called on to further enrich our suggestions.

Second, in the same vein, we do not provide one-size-fits-all recommendations. The toolkit is intended for diverse municipalities, and to serve them, it must meet with professional and lived expertise from the community. Not every tool is relevant in every situation, and each tool can be implemented in different ways to suit a given context. Our recommendations for Järfälla are intended to give a flavor of this process, not to translate directly to any other context.

Third, although social equity is broadly accepted as commendable, specific steps taken to realize it can be hotly contested, just like any other interventions in urban governance or form. We wish to emphasize that, in providing a toolkit concerned with municipal agency, we do *not* adopt the position that planning offices should advance their agendas without regard for dissenting voices. It remains essential that municipalities plot a course for social equity which balances the needs of diverse and often conflicting interests. With this toolkit, our aim is to help municipalities pursue whichever course they plot, despite inevitable inertia against change. Such inertia is inherent to any complex system, but practices to overcome it are less established in the context of social equity than they are in, say, the context of physical infrastructure. In the final section of the toolkit, we offer brief pieces of guidance regarding how municipalities might navigate conflict and consensus.

The Swedish Planning Context

Readers who are familiar with the Swedish planning system and its historical development may skip this section, although we argue that the subsection A Short Historical Walkthrough of Swedish Planning remains worth reading, as it frames this report's discussion on land policy.

Urban planning in Sweden is dependent on a multitude of laws and regulations from different levels of government. There is regulation on the EU- and national level that informs the planning actions municipalities take when they exercise their planning monopoly. The purpose of this section is to give an overview of how laws and regulations shape municipal action and what is possible to do in terms of equitable land ownership and housing provision. Firstly, the relevant levels of government and their interactions will be presented. Secondly, a walkthrough of historical Swedish planning paradigms will be provided to show how policy and regulation has shifted throughout the years. Finally, the contemporary legal context will be presented, outlining what municipalities can and cannot do.

Levels of Government

As an overview, the different levels of government in a Swedish context are tied together as illustrated in Figure 1.

On the EU level, there is regulation that impacts how governments can interact with market actors to make sure that competition in the free market is upheld. This impacts both national legislation and the municipalities directly. The national level has more extensive legislation for how municipalities can act regarding planning and housing provision. State-wide strategies can also be enacted to push for certain goals. The state also decides on subsidies and other financial support. Municipalities are responsible for planning. With the planning monopoly, they have the final say in what should be built and where, while

having to follow the legislation that other levels provide. These interactions and specific details regarding planning are discussed throughout this section.

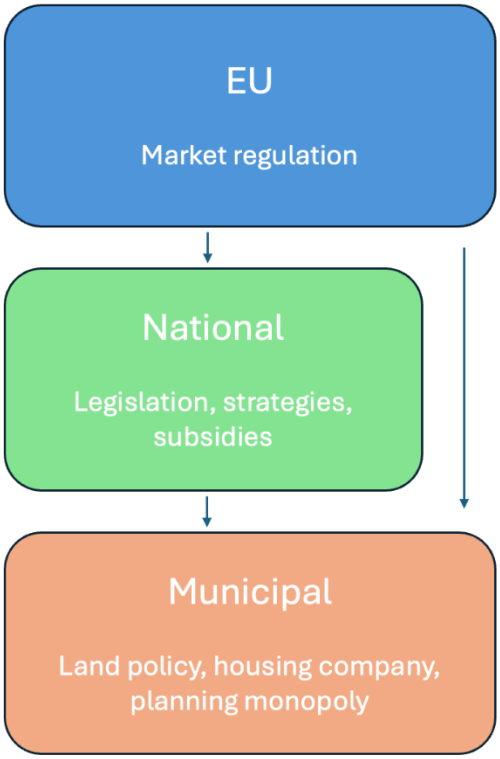

Figure 1: Planning levels (Produced by authors).

The interaction between the levels of government has shifted over the years. Sweden joining the EU in 1995 added a new level of government and legislation to adapt to, reducing the agency of municipalities to some extent. Planning and housing provision has also been exposed to different ideologies and paradigms in society which has impacted policy and goals. The following subsection deals with these topics.

A Short Historical Walkthrough of Swedish Planning

Perspectives and legislation on land policy and affordable housing provision in Sweden have changed throughout the years. In a simplified way, recent Swedish history regarding these matters can be split up into two broad paradigms. The "state-aided" paradigm during the 1950s to late 1980s, and the "deregulation" paradigm that started around 1990 and still is dominant today. For land policy specifically, these paradigms can be connected to what Zakhour & Metzger (2018b) call the "planning-led" and "development-led" regimes respectively.

The State-Aided Paradigm

A good starting point for describing the "state-aided" paradigm is a formulation for housing policy that was put forward in a government proposition in 1967. It states the following:

> "*The goal with housing provision should be that the entire population should have healthy, spacious, well-planned and well-equipped housing units of good quality and at a reasonable price*" (Blücher, 2006, p. 144).

It is openly described how access to good quality and affordable housing should be a right for all citizens. Importantly, this was a national goal expressed in a planning setting where municipalities held power over shaping development through the municipal planning monopoly. The national government thus needed certain policies and laws to ensure this development.

According to Blücher (2006), there were three main tools for housing provision: state housing loans, municipal investments, and an active municipal land policy. The standard process would work like this: municipalities acquired land for the purpose of building housing. They then invested in building new housing districts through their municipal housing companies, using the state housing loans to finance their projects. In this model, the state took on the risk in housing development by guaranteeing the loans with a set interest rate (Boverket, 2007). The state also provided the municipalities with strong tools like pre-emption rights (Blücher, 2006), giving them the ability to buy any land that was up for sale before anyone else. The famous "Million Homes Program" was built this way, with this system resulting in one million affordable homes during a 10-year period. On the municipal side, the state aided paradigm is much in line with the planning-led land policy paradigm that Zakhour & Metzger (2018b) describe. The purpose of municipal land policy was to acquire land to be able to use it for "promotion of the public interest", in this case affordable housing. Municipalities like Stockholm had an explicit policy to buy land from private actors to be able to control development. Land was then sold at a symbolic sum of 100 SEK/m2 to the municipal housing company, independently of location (Zakhour & Metzger, 2018a), creating the ability to build affordable housing in any area independent of its market price. During this period, depending on the exact year, 70-85% of all housing was built on municipal land (Boverket, 2007).

The Deregulation Paradigm

The "deregulation" paradigm that followed came about during an economic crisis in Sweden. High inflation heavily increased the costs of loans for the state which together with general ideological shifts towards deregulation, resulted in a new housing policy (Boverket, 2007). The stated goal of housing policy in 1992 became:

> "*All should have the possibility of good housing to a reasonable price […] and have influence over their own situation. Electability should increase for individuals. Wishes and needs guide the demand for housing and thus also the housing market*" (Boverket, 2007, p.101)

In comparison with the older goal, this one focus more on the role of the market and less on the qualities of housing. The current Swedish government has set the following goal for housing:

> "*A long-term, well-functioning housing market where the demand of consumers is met by a supply of housing that responds to needs*" (Regeringskansliet, n.d.)

This goal follows the trend of deregulation, with more market emphasis and a move from housing as a right to an individual responsibility and matter for the market.

Moving back to the paradigm shift, the loans guaranteed by the state were removed in 1992. New housing was now supposed to be financed by the private sector and generally through market interactions. Due to this change, the housing sector was no longer protected from swings in the economy, which previously had been the case (Blücher, 2006). As summarized by Zakhour & Metzger (2018b),"*The housing sector went from being heavily subsidized to becoming a source of income for the state*" (p.51). In 1998, the state started

to gain more income from real estate taxes than they spent on subsidies for the first time (Holmqvist & Turner, 2014). Subsidies have not been a part of housing policy since, except for the “investment support” towards rental apartments between 2016-2021. It amounted to 3 billion SEK/year, much lower than the historical amounts (Hyresgästföreningen, n.d.). State-guaranteed loans went from being a major part of housing provision to not being used at all.

In other words, the role and responsibility of the state for housing provision was reduced to non-existence. That responsibility rather shifted towards the market and the municipalities (Grander, 2020). With the focus on competition and deregulation, important tools from the previous paradigm were removed. One example is the previously mentioned pre-emption rights for municipalities (Boverket, 2007). With its removal, private landowners got a stronger position, weakening the agency of municipalities.

On the municipal side, the new paradigm led to a shift towards market-oriented approaches with financing from the private sector rather than the state. In terms of land policy, the planning-led regime shifted towards what Zakhour & Metzger (2018b) call the development-led regime. One change was the perspective that selling land was a crucial source of income for municipalities, especially in Stockholm. Public land became a financial asset rather than a tool to be used to promote the public interest of building affordable housing as it was previously. Additionally, the way land allocation was done changed. Instead of the municipality creating detailed development plans before allocating land, private developers now were able to take the initiative and pursue development options they thought attractive (Zakhour & Metzger, 2018b). As previously noted, Sweden also joined the EU during this period, which resulted in adaptation of EU law. The consequences of this will be explained in the next subsection.

The overall result of this paradigm shift is that the avenues of municipal agency have changed. It also shows how the general perspective on housing has shifted. Instead of viewing housing as a right and the public sector in state and municipalities as a guarantee to make that happen, it is now more of an individual responsibility that the market provides. However, if social equity came to be regarded as more important again, history shows that there are avenues available to achieve that, both on the state and municipal sides. Change has happened once and can do so again. The following subsection deals with contemporary regulation and what avenues of agency are left for municipalities to achieve social equity goals like affordable housing provision, if they want to.

Contemporary Legal Context

Overall, the ability of municipalities to provide housing in a socially equitable way is impacted by legislation. Areas like municipal land policy and municipal housing companies are impacted by national and EU legislation, which this subsection will explore. This legislation has in turn influenced the selection of tools in the toolkit below.

The most important legislation impacting municipal land policy on an EU level is that of state aid. In the Swedish context, Upphandlingsmyndigheten (The Agency of Public Procurement) is responsible for guiding municipalities in relation to said legislation. According to the agency, state aid is when the public sector supports economic activity with public means, resulting in one actor gaining an advantage over other actors. The purpose is to “protect competition [...] and ensure an efficient use of common resources” (Upphandlingsmyndigheten, 2024b). It is explicitly stated that municipalities must follow State Aid legislation in their land policy and thus need to sell or lease land at a market rate.

> "*When a municipality sells land, leases it through "tomträtt" or in any other way conducts detail planning it is important that no individual company is set to gain (from that). […] it is necessary for the municipality to ensure that selling or leasing is done at a market price*" (Upphandlingsmyndigheten, 2024a)

These formulations are not only found on an EU level. In the Local Government Act (Kommunallagen) 2 kap. 8§ it is stated that municipalities cannot support individual actors/companies (Kommunallag, 2017). In summary, there is legislation on both EU and the national level that prohibits the municipality from selling land at a non-market rate. The price of land must be the same for all actors, but how that market rate is set can be influenced by municipalities, as some of the tools in the toolkit will show.

A consequence of this and other legislation is that municipalities cannot specifically support their municipal public housing companies, as was a core strategy during the state aided paradigm. During that time, the companies were tasked to provide good quality housing for the public good (Grander, 2020) and were helped by previously described land policy and state loans. In 2005, the Swedish Property Federation (Fastighetsägarna) filed a complaint to the EU regarding state aid in municipal dealings with their housing companies. As a result, the Swedish government initiated a committee to evaluate the current situation (Elsinga & Lind, 2013). The result was a new law stating that "public housing companies should be run based on business-like principles" and that they can only be given support in in accordance with EU law, meaning the above-mentioned state aid regulations (Lag Om Allmännyttiga Kommunala Bostadsbolag, 2010). At the same time, the proposition for the law notes that the companies should have a "public purpose" (Elsinga & Lind, 2013).

While this law has been interpreted in different ways it is rare for municipalities to use their housing companies as they did historically. This toolkit will thus not focus on dealings with municipal housing companies specifically but rather creating opportunities for developers in general to be aligned with State Aid regulation.

At the same time, while municipal housing companies cannot be given exclusive benefits, there is nothing that hinders municipalities from indirectly lowering the price of land for all developers by demanding the building of rental apartments in allocation agreements. State aid regulation is then rather concerned with making sure that the apartments are actually built as rentals and not condominiums. If the latter becomes true, the municipality has broken state aid regulations due to the lower price of land they created through the planning monopoly (Upphandlingsmyndigheten, 2024a).

The point here is that municipalities can create favorable conditions for developers through their land policy if they want to. As a result, this toolkit focuses on allocation agreements while selling and leasing land as tools for building affordable housing. Additionally, it explains how to shape these tools to make sure that developers deliver the wanted result of increased social equity.

Järfälla Municipality

Readers that are familiar with Järfälla municipality and their governing documents can skip to the Current Strategies subsection below.

Järfälla municipality is located in the Stockholm region, northwest of the city of Stockholm (see Figure 2 below). It is a midsized municipality with a population of 86 330 in 2023, making it the 26th largest

municipality in Sweden and 6th largest in the Stockholm region (SCB, 2024). Additionally, it is a growing municipality, with the fifth highest population growth in Sweden between 2020-2023 (Ekonomifakta, 2024).

Figure 2: Järfälla municipality's location in the Stockholm region (Nordelch, 2006).

According to the municipal map service, the municipality itself or its municipal housing company owns most of the land within the municipal administrative borders (Järfälla kommun, 2024c). The exceptions are already built-up land where residents or companies own their properties, building plots in Veddesta and a few other areas like the golf course. The central and denser areas of Barkarby and Jakobsberg are pointed out as a "regional city core" in the RUFS 2050 regional plan of Stockholm. The goal is to create a more polycentric region through cores with a high population density, service accessibility and proximity to important nodes in the public transport system (Region Stockholm, 2024). Barkarby in particular is receiving infrastructure investments with two new subway stations and a regional hub for intra- and intercity trains (Järfälla kommun, n.d.-a). The municipality is also getting close access to the bypass highway that is currently under construction (Trafikverket, 2024). These investments increase land values in parts of the municipality, even though it is located relatively far from the central city of Stockholm. Together with these investments, new housing developments are planned or under construction, which largely explains the municipality's recent and fast population growth.

Municipal Plans & Goals

A number of municipal plans and documents have been identified as relevant for understanding Järfälla's ambitions regarding social equity in housing development, the focus of this report. There are three main relevant governing documents, the comprehensive plan (översiktsplan) for 2050 that is under development, the sustainability plan (miljöplan) and the housing provision program (bostadsförsörjningsprogram). There is also a strategy for reduced socioeconomic segregation that is currently under development and not yet available at the time of writing.

While titled “The Sustainability Plan” by municipal officials, the contents only concern ecological sustainability, and it is not deemed relevant for discussing social equity. This section will therefore rather be based on the new comprehensive plan, the preparatory works carried out for said comprehensive plan, the housing provision program and the presentation carried out by municipal officials.

The comprehensive plan presents four main goals for the municipality by 2050. Regarding social equity, only one of these goals is relevant, titled “inclusive” and “alive” living environments. It is mentioned that the municipality should have variation of housing types and sizes, and that each district should have housing for each income level, type of household and age. Emphasis is also put on enabling a “housing career”[2] within each district. To reach these goals, the municipality presents three general strategies, “inclusive”, “robust” and “circular”. The inclusive strategy works towards the above stated goal, mentioning interventions like a varied supply of housing, building based on human needs, and access to services (Järfälla kommun, 2024d). Overall, the comprehensive plan is very general in its descriptions and has a limited focus on social issues and solutions for them. This is partly to be expected due to the purpose of the plan, but there are no references to more detailed plans nor other goals regarding social equity.

One relevant preparatory work for the new comprehensive plan is the “Sustainability Consequence Description” which, as the name alludes to, tries to evaluate the consequences of the comprehensive plan in advance. The document describes two aspects not discussed in the comprehensive plan, socio-economic integration and housing provision. The latter is only discussed in technical terms like daylight, noise pollution, and general supply of housing. The integration part states that *“small positive consequences are possible […] through connecting segregated areas”* (Järfälla kommun, 2024b, p.10). Additionally, the document argues for different housing types and tenancy forms but states that there are *“insecurities” regarding setting (allocation) demands”* (p.10).

Every municipality in Sweden is required to have a housing provision program that describes the local housing situation, the municipality’s plans for future development, and other housing policies. The stated overall purpose in Järfälla’s program is that *“everyone in the municipality should live in good housing […] [and the municipality should] contribute to regional housing provision and reducing segregation both in housing and socioeconomic terms”* (Järfälla kommun, 2024a, p.3). Five challenges, seven tools and two sets of goals have been identified by the municipality. Out of the tools identified, “land policy and land allocation” and “detail planning” are deemed relevant. The directives and renting policy of the municipal housing company and municipal work with social contracts for specific groups are out of the scope for the report's housing development focus. It is stated that the municipality owns a lot of land which enables a socially sustainable use. The main method of allocation is tender allocation through competitions (see the `Tool: Allocation With Conditions for Leasing & Selling` subsection below) where “social programs” can be a criterion. Finally, it is stated that the municipality can control tenancy forms, special housing forms like LSS for people with disabilities, and give themselves the right to buy or rent constructed housing at market-rate levels (Järfälla kommun, 2024a). The program also refers to Järfälla’s land allocation policy, which mentions social sustainability criteria for allocation processes. Examples are “socially sustainable business,” “social programs,” “housing tenancy and type to fulfill provision goals,” “equal access to green space and playgrounds,” and “architecture policy” (Järfälla kommun, 2023).

[2] ”Housing career,” bostadskarriär in Swedish, refers to (repeatedly) selling a condo or house at a profit and using said profit to be able to buy something more expensive.

The housing provision program concludes with two sets of goals. The first is titled “A varied supply of housing on a neighborhood level.” Included are goals such as:

- 1.2 Create a larger variation of tenancy types, housing types, and apartment sizes on area level
- 1.4 Create vacancy chains to free-up housing in the current stock

The second set is titled “Stronger possibilities to acquire housing for groups with low ability to do so,” e.g. low income. Included are goals like:

- 2.2 Make it easier for exposed groups on the housing market

Finally, the challenges identified by the municipality are low ability to pay for exposed groups, the harsh (macro) economic situation, large socio-economic differences and segregation, a need to renovate the existing municipal housing stock, and a split responsibility between municipal actors.

As described in the above listed documents, Järfälla recognizes a need for better conditions for vulnerable groups, especially in terms of housing provision. The ambition to provide a variation of tenure and type of housing reoccurs throughout and is emphasized. At the same time, there is a lack of spatial detail in where this housing will be provided. Additionally, there are no specific commitments towards realizing a certain amount of said housing. This weakens the perceived commitment towards social equity in housing provision and leaves pathways forward somewhat unclear.

Current Strategies

Based on available planning documents, interviews with municipal planners, and presentations held by municipal planners, a number of strategies towards housing provision used by the municipality have been identified. It should be noted that these strategies are our interpretation and not direct quotes from documents or individual planners.

According to interviewed public servants, the municipality is financially reliant on selling land. When developing new projects, the selling of land is supposed to finance any infrastructure, roads, water etc. that is needed for the development. Not much profit is made, but no attempts at reducing prices to create affordability are made. No strategy for leasing exists at all (Interview with planners from Järfälla municipality, personal communication, November 19, 2024).

While a municipal goal is to develop mixed areas regarding housing types, tenancy, and size of housing, there is a strong political focus on ownership. Using Barkarbystaden as an example, politicians want to see a 70/30 split favoring condominiums. It is easier to get support for building rentals in smaller infill projects in other areas (Interview with planners from Järfälla municipality, personal communication, November 19, 2024). Housing types and sizes have not been a focus in this project.

In land allocation processes, aspects like rent levels and affordability are not influenced by the municipality. Social sustainability aspects are limited to health, safety, and social interaction. Instead, the main way of trying to assure affordability is the focus on vacancy chains, as mentioned above. New developments have high costs and frequently become too expensive according to the development engineers we talked to (Interview with planners from Järfälla municipality, personal communication, November 19, 2024).

Gap Between Goals & Strategies

The municipality has identified a number of social equity issues: insufficient housing affordability, a lack of different types of housing, and segregation. At the same time, the actual strategies used to solve these issues are limited in scope. As per given examples, there is a focus on building condos in Barkarbystaden and utilizing vacancy chains to “free-up” affordable housing in the existing stock. Other than aiming towards building for different tenancy types, no further investments in affordability nor more detailed interventions are specified in planning documents.

It thus appears that most of the possibilities considered in the municipal housing provision program are not actually pursued. For example, although the municipality observes that it could seek to initiate special housing forms or build social sustainability criteria into the allocation process (see above), our research does not indicate that this happens in practice. Market-rate condo development and vacancy chains appear to be the dominant strategies, and as noted in the housing provision program and in interviews with planners, the efficacy of vacancy chains is limited. One can question if newly developed condos in Barkarbystaden will truly free up affordable housing for exposed groups elsewhere.

The purpose of this report is not to criticize the goals, approaches, or outcomes of Järfälla or any other municipality. Rather, we embrace the municipality’s goals, and in such spirit, we identify a gap between these goals and the strategies currently used to approach them. This toolkit aims to present alternatives strategies that may help the municipality create the types of change it seeks.

Key Shifts in Mindset

Performing this study has led us to conclude that two shifts in mindset are necessary to meet social equity goals in Swedish municipalities. First, we call for a shift away from short-term thinking, centered around budget and election cycles, and **towards long-term thinking, centered around generational resilience**. Second, we call for a shift **towards acceptance that social equity progress comes at a cost**, so municipalities may earn less monetary profit from urban development projects that advance social equity.

The tools we present below concretize these shifts, and our implementation suggestions contain clues as to how such shifts might be achieved incrementally. In some cases, these shifts will demand departures from traditional ways of municipal business. If portions of the toolkit provoke strong reactions or stand out as unconventional, we suggest that they be considered in light of these two shifts in mindset.

Toolkit

Introduction

Here, we present nine tools with potential to help Swedish municipalities make progress towards social equity goals. Generally speaking, each tool functions by opening a pathway for a municipality to exert agency over some aspect of urban housing development, in order to bring it into closer alignment with a social equity goal. As noted, the toolkit does not seek to be exhaustive; it aims to assist municipalities by intentionally surfacing the tools which our study has yielded as highest-value.

User's Guide

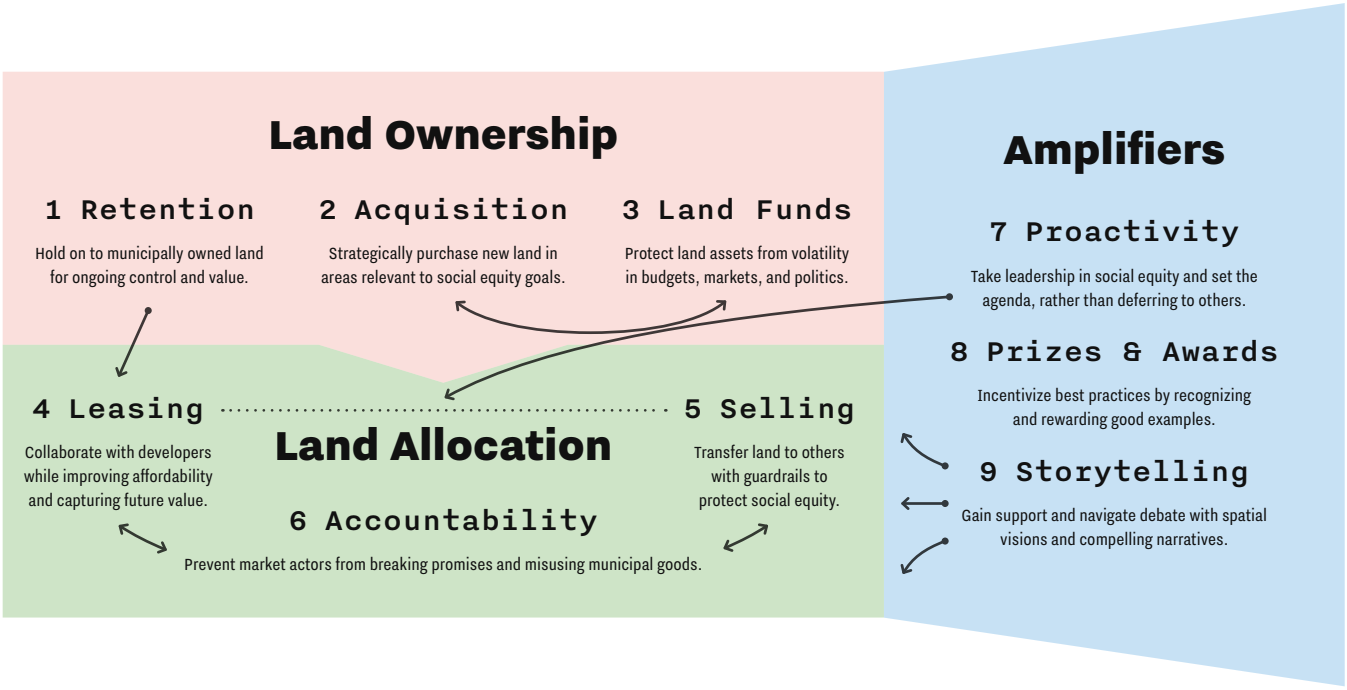

Figure 3: Diagram of toolkit.

The toolkit is divided into three sections: Land Ownership Strategy, Allocation of Municipally Owned Land, and Amplifiers. Various connections between tools are discussed below, but broadly, the land ownership tools create conditions for the land allocation tools, and the amplifiers increase the effectiveness of the others. This is illustrated above in Figure 3, where each colored region represents one section, each numbered heading represents one tool, and arrows represent key connections between tools.

Below, we move through each of the three sections in turn. In each section, we begin with a brief discussion of background, present several tools, and then use these tools to offer recommendations for Järfälla. When presenting each individual tool, we discuss when it is most relevant, how it can best be implemented, and what risks and limitations it carries. When relevant, we offer examples of Swedish and foreign municipalities who have adopted the tool already.

To best use this toolkit, we recommend an initial scan to understand how the tools fit together, as described at the top of each of the three main sections. We then suggest reading to identify which may be suitable in your context, as covered in the Relevance subsection of each tool and color-coded against a yellow background. We then propose a closer reading of the relevant tools. Finally, readers from Järfälla – or anyone interested in samples of how the toolkit can be applied – can emphasize the recommendations given at the end of each of the three sections, marked under a green heading.

Land Ownership Strategy

The first section of the toolkit is the land ownership strategy, which aims to give municipalities an alternative perspective on how to think about land ownership, and to present specific tools to acquire and retain land. In the context of the Swedish planning system, municipalities have significant control even when land is owned privately but municipal land ownership further increases their control. According to

Caesar (2016) there are two main functions of municipal landownership on a general level. One is to prevent development, and another is to realize development. These are two similar but different aspects which matter for the end result. In a Swedish context, municipalities already have control of the built environment due to the planning monopoly and can legally stop developments that they do not agree with. Development has to be aligned with detail development plans (detaljplaner) (and later building permits) that are approved by municipal politicians, no matter who owns the land (Caesar, 2016).

What the municipality cannot do is to force a landowner to develop their land, in Caesar's (2016) words, to actually implement the built environment. In other words, a municipality can create and approve a detail plan that sets conditions to reach municipal goals, but the landowner has every right to then not build. The only way for a municipality to guarantee that what they plan is built is to own the land. Of course, they also have to find a willing developer, a balancing act with setting conditions, which will be discussed later in the report. Finally, it should also be said that a municipality in theory can expropriate land to build, but they very rarely do.

Caesar (2016) thus concludes:

> "*Landownership coupled with planning monopoly thereby persistently empowers municipalities with a possibility to better ensure that planned projects get implemented*" (Caesar, 2016, p. 21).

When it comes to fulfilling municipal social goals, owning land is crucial since factors like tenancy types and apartment sizes are not regulated in detail plans. The municipal position is much stronger when they are landowners. As explained by Holmqvist (2016), owning land makes three aspects possible that matter for reaching social goals in housing development. The first one regards choosing the developer. When allocating the land (see Allocation of Municipally Owned Land below) the municipality can pick whichever developer aligns with their vision the most. Holmqvist (2016) cities evidence that smaller developers can build cheaper and be more flexible with social goals, for example. The second one is building for whom, meaning that the municipality can choose to build what people need and not what the market wants to build. It can be about setting fixed prices, but also building larger apartments instead of one-room ones. The third and final one is what to build and where. It can control tenancy types and try to reduce segregation by building with a social mix in mind.

Figure 4: Diagram of Land Ownership toolkit section.

The land ownership tools (see Figure 4) form the basis of increasing social equity within our housing development framework. Without land ownership, it becomes harder for municipalities to achieve their goals as they lack legislative tools to plan and control housing development. Ownership is a precondition for the second section of allocation and is supported by the proactivity amplifier, especially if the

municipality does not own land already. Ownership can be a precondition to allocation in different ways. The retention tool is explicitly connected to allocation by leasing, while the other two tools can be used while both leasing and selling.

The land ownership section consists of three tools:

1. Retention: Discusses the need of retaining land and how leasing can be used to ensure socially equitable development of housing.
2. Land acquisition: Highlights how municipalities can work with strategies to acquire more land.
3. Land funds: Separate land assets from the normal municipal budget to protect them from volatility in budgets, markets, and politics.

Tool: **Retention**

Definition

Retention, as this tool is titled, regards the importance of municipalities not selling the land that they already own. To be clear, not selling land does not mean that municipalities should retain it forever and do nothing. This does not help to reach social equity goals. The tool rather concerns how to develop housing without selling land (selling being standard practice in a contemporary Swedish context). Retention is rather explicitly connected to the concept of leasing in this toolkit, which gives municipalities the ability to still own the land and also develop housing. As a result, this tool does not only describe why and how land should be retained, but also why and how to use leasing and how that can contribute to reaching social equity goals.

Relevance

Retention is relevant as a tool when a municipality wants to control the use of land over time. Since aspects like tenancy cannot be controlled in detailed planning, there is nothing (except for separate legal agreements) that guarantees that sold land remains, for example, rental apartments. If a municipality wants to make sure that a certain tenancy mix remains, retention is a powerful tool. This control can also concern student housing or LSS-housing (for people with disabilities). Furthermore, since the municipality still owns the land, they can change land use in the future if they see fit. A leasing agreement (discussed below) can be terminated under the right conditions, and the municipality can then negotiate a new agreement. If the land was sold, they would depend on the goodwill of the new landowner for any changes.

There are also financial reasons for retention, both for the municipality and other actors. Retaining the land and then leasing it gives the municipality a stable and constant income over time, rather than a large one-time sum at the moment of selling. This makes them less vulnerable to changes in the economy and able to produce housing during downturns. Additionally, the municipality can increase their income if the value of land increases due to infrastructure investments or market growth (see `Description` below). Finally, leasing lowers building costs for developers since they do not have to pay the large upfront cost of land. This is especially beneficial for constructing rental apartments, which are less profitable, and for smaller developers who have a hard time competing with larger ones with access to more extensive resources.

Description

The rest of the tool description will regard leasing, how it works, how it is implemented and its risks.

In the Swedish context, leasing is done through so called site leaseholds (tomträtter). The concept was first introduced in the early 1900s with the goal of municipalities providing land to developers at a lower price than when selling it up front. In times of housing shortages, smaller costs for developers or families would help with building new units. At the same time, municipalities benefited by taking part in value increases of land due to investments in schools and roads (Bengtsson et al., 2018).

The use of site leaseholds is regulated in Jordabalken (law on land ownership rights), chapter 13. Site leaseholds can only be used for properties/land that is owned by the state, a municipality or other public institutions. There are four criteria for the "right to use" to be given out: that the entire property is included, that the leasing time is indefinite, that it happens for a specific purpose and that the owner is paid a yearly fee (Jordabalk, 1970).

Regarding the fee, the law states that it should be renegotiated every 10 years if nothing else is agreed upon. The renegotiation period cannot be shorter. The fee is based on two parts, the value of the land and an interest-based measure (Jordabalk, 1970). How the land value is calculated differs a lot between municipalities depending on their evaluation methods; see the Implementation & Examples subsection below. The interest rate also varies but many municipalities put it at 3%, again see below for examples. A leasing agreement is separate from an allocation agreement, but an allocation agreement can include the signing of a leasing agreement (see Allocation of Municipally Owned Land). In a thesis by Skog Åkerlind (2024), it is mentioned in interviews with municipalities that "side agreements" are often used to subsidize the fee in different ways. For example, Stockholm municipality reduces the fee by 50% for student housing and Huddinge municipality reduces the fees of charity organizations.

Implementation & Examples

There are broadly two kinds of municipalities that work with leasing in Sweden, those that actively work with them to fulfill goals like constructing rental apartments and those who only manage old leasing agreements. The older agreements often concern single family homes built during the early 1900s. The way a municipality works with leasing also correlates with how they evaluate/decide on land value.

One example of a "manager" is Västerås municipality who does an independent evaluation of land value and asks for an interest rate of 3% (Västerås Stad, n.d.).

When it comes to more active leasers, Stockholm municipality is one of the few municipalities who have used leasing for a long time. They only initiate leasing agreements with rental property owners and the leasing fee in SEK/m2 is set by the city council to both control and make the evaluation process easier. The fee varies in different parts of the city, corresponding broadly to variations in land values (Stockholms Stad, n.d.). However, all fees are heavily subsidized, meaning they are lower than the market rate (Skog Åkerlind, 2024). State aid regulations do not become an issue as the prices are the same for all developers.

Solna municipality, on the other hand, has just started using leasing. In a new policy document from 2023 they state that they want to build more rental apartments using leasing to make sure they are affordable. Regarding the fee, an independent assessment of land value is done first. Then, the municipality sets the

fee at 70% of that, meaning a subsidy of 30%. The interest rate is set to 3% according to legal precedent. When renegotiating the fee after 10 years, the subsidy is removed (Solna Stad, 2023).

Limitations & Risks

Site leaseholds are quite a rare form of allocating land in Swedish municipalities, which means that politicians, practitioners and the public do not necessarily know how they work. One consequence of this is that they are almost only mentioned in the media when a condominium organization (BRF) receives a large increase in their fee. For example, an organization in Gothenburg received a 700% increase, with others in the city and in Stockholm receiving similar increases (Svenska Dagbladet, 2024). The cause is likely that the properties a located in areas that have seen heavily increased land values due to other developments and new infrastructure. This is one reason it is argued that only rental apartments should be allocated with leasing, as developers/landlords better understand this process. Stockholm and Solna both only use leasing for rentals for this reason. This strategy should help reduce pushback from politicians who worry about bad press.

Another consequence of leasing being more of a niche practice is that there is limited regulation in place. Calculating increases in land values is hard, and there is no established method to do so, which can become a worry. Additionally, the interest rate is hard to decide, and municipalities have to navigate what the legal precedent is. Finally, it is not possible to demand the renter help fund public spaces (streets etc.) as when land is sold, see 5§ in chapter 1 of PBL (Plan- Och Bygglag, 2010).

Tool: **Land Acquisition**

Relevance

Acquiring land is a relevant tool for municipalities who want to have more of a say in how land is developed. As described in the introduction to this section, owning land is crucial for municipal agency in this regard. If a municipality already owns a lot of land in areas relevant for housing development, this tool is of less importance. However, if a municipality does not, a strategy for how to acquire new land becomes important.

Recent survey results from the Swedish National Board of Housing, Building and Planning (Boverket) confirm that many municipalities lack land for housing construction. In 2024, when asked if they have enough municipal land for housing construction, only 56% of municipalities responded positively (Boverket, 2024a). For the other 44% of municipalities, this tool is very relevant. Most municipalities plan to acquire land, but others do not, some citing high prices as the problem. For these municipalities, the Land Funds tool below might be of particular interest.

Description

Land acquisition plans are not a legal requirement for Swedish municipalities and there is no definition of what such a plan should include. In general, the strategy should include why, where, and when to acquire land. The *why* in this case is related to the social housing goals that prerequisite the need for the policy. The *where* is related to the location, meaning where the municipality wants to develop housing areas or infill in the future. It can also be related to social equity and tenancy, for example building rentals in areas

dominated by condominiums. This requires collaboration between planners and a shared long-term view of how the municipality will develop. The *when* mostly concerns the timing of acquiring land in relation to highlighting locations in public documents. For example, land should be bought before an area is mentioned in the comprehensive plan as "developable" to give the municipality maximum agency and lower costs as pointing out an area as developable will increase its value.

Implementation & Examples

Land acquisition plans can be inspired by other municipalities that already explicitly mention acquisition in their policy documents. The *why*, *where*, and *when* to acquire land introduced above can be found, at least partly, in these documents.

In Lund municipality's land policy, it is stated that municipal land ownership gives them better preconditions to defend municipal interests (Lunds kommun, n.d.). These interests include achieving certain qualities in the built environment, like housing for special groups, tenancy form, variation, and costs. The overall goal is to always have a reserve of land, which requires civil servants to perform a list of tasks. They list updated knowledge about the local property market, actively following movements on the local market, actively increasing the amount of municipal land, to agree with current owners on acquisitions and not having to expropriate land (Lunds kommun, n.d.).

Gävle municipality has an active land policy to acquire strategic land to be used in subsequent planning and allocation processes (Gävle kommun, n.d.). They add that owning land contributes to a negotiation position where land can be traded rather than expropriated. For example, if the municipality owns more rural land they can trade it for current industrial land in central locations. Furthermore, they want to acquire land in areas pointed out as "buildable areas" in the comprehensive plan and have a land policy that helps fulfill housing provision goals. In addition, they strive to own land close to already developed areas to densify and not have to pay for new infrastructure. Finally, they stress the need to follow and understand the local property market (Gävle kommun, n.d.).

There are also other municipalities who note interesting land acquisition aspects in their broader plans. Uppsala municipality puts away some money each year to strategically buy land (Zetterlund, 2016), see the Land Funds tool for a similar method. Örebro municipality states that it is "foundational" to continuously acquire strategic land for them to develop the city in accordance with the "Örebro model" where they sell land at a fixed price and put extensive demands on developers (Örebro kommun, 2018).

To summarize, there are some important aspects to include in a municipal land acquisition plan. All municipalities talk about strategic land, but no one really defines what that is. What is strategic is the outcome of established social equity goals and plans for future development. Is reduced segregation by building rental apartments in "villa areas" a goal? Then acquiring land in villa areas becomes strategic, which points to the importance of an understanding *why* the municipality acquires land in the first place. Additionally, the point of buying land that does not require infrastructure investments is interesting in the context of affordability and leasing, see below. Finally, having expertise that can follow and understand the local property market is important to know when there are opportunities to buy sought-after land.

Limitations & Risks

While owning land as a municipality is generally a good investment, there are also some risks. The timing of acquiring land can impact its price, both due to general market volatility and announcing development intentions in political documents, as previously outlined. Selling the land at a lower price than it was bought at then becomes a risk. There is also an aspect of opportunity cost. If money is spent on land that ends up being unimportant, not used, and not producing any income in the long term, it can be argued that the money could have been better spent on other initiatives to promote social equity.

Tool: **Land Funds**

Relevance

Land funds are a financial tool for municipalities that are struggling with:

- having a municipal budget that is negatively affected by unpredictable changes in revenue from the sale of land
- having land available for the provision of municipal infrastructure by building a portfolio of land in the municipal hand

In addition, this tool is particularly relevant for municipalities that only own a small part of the developable land within their borders.

Description

A land fund is a fiscal tool that decouples the sale and purchase of land from the regular municipal budget. Instead, a fund is created where all revenues from land sales and leasing are collected and that is exclusively used for purchasing new land (Rosa-Luxemburg-Stiftung, 2020). If the municipality comes to own most of the strategically important land and hold surplus reserves in the land fund (more than required for future purchase of key plots), it can consider transferring some of its yearly revenue, particularly from leasing, back into the regular municipal budget.

This model has several benefits (Rosa-Luxemburg-Stiftung, 2020):

- It enables the municipality to purchase land that is important for their urban development and housing goals.
- It supports and institutionalizes an intentional long-term land strategy.
- It enables the municipality to benefit from increases in land value.
- It makes the municipality less vulnerable to changes in the economy by decoupling the municipal budget from the sale of land.

According to the German Institute of Urbanism, land funds do not replace other instruments of a housing policy for social equity, but rather increase their efficiency (Dullien et al., 2020).

Implementation

A land fund that is separate from the municipal budget is created by passing a motion in the city council. As a next step, municipal land holdings are transferred to the fund. Income from leases and land sales is redirected to the fund. When specific privately-owned plots of land are identified as strategically important, they can be purchased using money from the fund. Municipalities that currently rely on the sale of municipal land to balance their budgets might consider a slow transition towards no or minimum dependence on land revenues.

For many municipalities, the establishment of a land fund would require a significant shift in mindset, from municipal land as a way to improve the municipal budget, to municipal land as a crucial resource for a long-term urban development and housing strategy focused on social equity. However, most likely, if a municipality is at a point where a land fund is considered, this shift in mindset is already underway.

Limitations & Risks

Land funds can be vulnerable to changes in the political climate. Since they are intended to be a long-term policy measure, they should either be implemented based on a broad political coalition, so that the value of the fund is generally accepted. Alternatively, the motion to introduce the fund can include clear stipulations which govern how the fund is used and which make it hard to dissolve. It might be tempting to use the fund as a quick solution to shortfalls in in the municipal budget. This short-term thinking is to be avoided. Instead, the land fund must be understood and protected as a crucial enabler of the municipality's long-term agency.

One way to avoid a situation like this is to establish a separate corporation (similar to a Swedish municipal housing company) or committee that controls the fund (Rosa-Luxemburg-Stiftung, 2020). Under the standard model, the fund is controlled by the municipal council. Conversely, a separate committee might include, besides members of the municipal council and administration, citizen representatives and members of key social organizations. The idea is that a committee of this composition is less focused on short-term goals for political gain.

Examples

Land funds are currently not used in Sweden but have been used by some German municipalities as part of their land strategy, for example in the city of Bocholt.

Bocholt is a city with 74.000 inhabitants in northwest Germany, a similar size as Järfälla, that implemented a land fund in the 1990s as part of an active land and housing strategy (Rosa-Luxemburg-Stiftung, 2020). At that time, the city was impacted by land speculation, which led to high land values negatively affecting housing construction. In addition, the municipal budget was frequently supported by the sale of land, which resulted in financial instability and undermined the construction of housing with high social equity standards.

The land trust has enabled them to purchase, sell, or swap land for housing development without affecting the budget, as the fund is largely self-balancing (Böcker et al., 2020). In addition, the municipality has been able to benefit from increases in land value. In 2005, the municipality founded a separate corporation

entrusted with managing the land assets, allowing for shorter processing times for projects and more flexibility in the land management (Böcker et al., 2020). Even though the political leadership has changed over the last 35 years both in terms of specific people and political orientation, the city has stayed committed to the land fund, due to its institutionalization and positive results.

Compared to Sweden, German municipalities often only own a fraction of the land within their borders (Dullien et al., 2020). For them, land funds are an especially helpful tool for acquiring new land for housing development with high social standards. Many Swedish municipalities are already in a favorable position here. However, shifting political agendas can still impact municipal ability to manage land assets strategically, which land funds can help guard against. This example demonstrates how, through a land fund, the municipal budget can be stabilized and a long-term land use strategy can be institutionalized.

Recommendations for Järfälla

This subsection discusses how the three land ownership tools could be implemented in Järfälla.

Retention

Currently, Järfälla exclusively sells its own land while developing housing. This makes the municipality's income vulnerable to local and broader market trends, and the municipality loses control over future development. We propose that Järfälla starts retaining land when developing instead, meaning favoring leasing agreements over selling. Allocating land in this way could be a useful and different approach for Järfälla in the future, giving increased control over affordability, tenure, and types of housing like LSS, while also reducing the risk of market downturns destabilizing the budget. Instead, a constant stream of income from fees is gained every year. This strategy can be combined with the Land Funds tool for added stability. Over time, sufficiently large fee incomes can remove the need to borrow money for infrastructure investments, while also reducing the need to sell at the highest possible price. The result would be both a stable economy and increased social equity.

The leasing strategy we propose is similar to those of other municipalities. The design of this strategy depends on how comfortable the municipality is with leasing fee technicalities. One option is to be inspired by Solna and rely on independent market valuations of land with an applied subsidy for socially equitable developments. The other is to be inspired by Stockholm and politically decide subsidized prices of land for different areas. The Solna case is "easier" as the market value is decided by an expert. For the Stockholm case, politicians become responsible for land values, which can be uncomfortable. At the same time, the Stockholm method increases control over relative affordability between areas. In either case, the strategy must be transparent and clearly state its social equity aims. Note that, as discussed above, we only recommend leasing for rental apartments. When introducing this strategy, the municipality should do so gradually. Since developers cannot be forced to pay for infrastructure, and no income is received from a sale of land, funding must come from another source. As mentioned, this source can be a land fund at some point. Until then, some land needs to be sold rather than leased, if funding is not otherwise available in the municipal budget.

Land Acquisition

The acquisition tool is less relevant for Järfälla, as the municipality already owns a healthy amount of land. Still, Järfälla could adopt a land policy strategy where some aspects of this tool are included. This mostly

involves knowing where they want to build in the future and making sure that they own land there before the start of development. This strategy can help avoid situations like the current one in Veddesta, where private landowners make it difficult to impose conditions for development. See also Tool: Proactivity in the Amplifiers section.

Land Funds

Here, too, Järfälla's current land ownership reduces this tool's importance. Regardless, the "technical" method of decoupling dealings with land from the regular budget might be relevant to pursue. In this way, the municipality can be less impacted economically as discussed under Tool: Retention above. In combination with 'Retention,' income from future land sales and leasing fees can be put into a fund, either to buy land when necessary or to fund infrastructure investments for new leasing developments.

Allocation of Municipally Owned Land

This section addresses the allocation of municipally owned land, both for leasing and selling, as well as holding developers accountable for fulfilling agreements (see Figure 5). In the Swedish planning process, municipalities are in one of the most powerful positions when they allocate land they own to developers. The precondition here is that the municipality owns land fit for development, which is addressed under Land Ownership Strategy. Since the allocation process is for the most part the same whether land is leased or sold, the two tools of Leasing and Selling are considered jointly in the following subsection. As argued earlier, leasing land allows a municipality to maintain control over land use over time. It can also be a way of lowering the economic threshold for constructing certain housing tenures, such as rental apartments (SKR, 2021). However, this section highlights the broader advantages of the land allocation instrument, regardless of whether the land is sold or leased. Primarily, it enables municipalities to guide housing development by setting requirements and conditions.

Figure 5: Diagram of Land Allocation toolkit section.

Tool: **Allocation With Conditions for Leasing & Selling**

Relevance

As mentioned above, Swedish municipalities' land holdings, often of a substantial size, give them a strong position to influence where, by whom, and for whom housing is built (Holmqvist, 2016). When a municipality wants to convey municipally owned land for the development of housing, it is done through the process of land allocation (Boverket, 2024b). Land allocations are negotiated agreements between the municipality and developers where the municipality can set conditions to guide housing development. Such a negotiation ultimately results in the municipality and the developers signing a land allocation agreement (SKR, 2021). This agreement formalizes the sale or lease of land but also what other conditions or requirements the municipality sets for the land to be transferred.

Description

Land allocation agreements are civil law contracts where the municipality, in the capacity of landowner, is given greater opportunities to set requirements for developers than what is otherwise stipulated by Swedish planning regulation in PBL (Plan och Bygglagen) (Caesar, 2016). Specifically, the municipality has a greater freedom to set requirements on, for example, the number of dwellings, architecture, and tenure forms. The setting of conditions and requirements during land allocation has been highlighted as an important tool for promoting various social equity related objectives such as the mixing of tenures, and types of housing (for example Candel, 2021; Zetterlund, 2016).

Implementation

To implement land allocations as a tool for addressing social equity goals, the following three aspects should be considered: stating goals and ambitions, selecting developers, and timing of land allocations.

Firstly, municipalities should *state clear goals and ambition*s in the land allocation guidelines. Municipalities are required by law to establish guidelines regarding their goals for land allocation and how it is handled. The purpose of the guidelines is to create structure, transparency, and predictability for developers (Zetterlund, 2022). We argue that these guidelines also provide a good opportunity to inform developers in advance concerning their ambitions for a socially equitable housing provision. For example, Uppsala municipality can set requirements such as the ratio between rental housing and condominiums and that that developers must present initiatives aimed at integration or providing job opportunities or internships (Uppsala Kommun, 2018). Similar requirements for developers' social commitments, like providing jobs/internships or to work with the local community on safety-enhancing measures, are also utilized by both Göteborg and Malmö municipality (Göteborgs Stad, 2021; Malmö Stad, 2021).

Furthermore, municipalities can set requirements for what type of housing is developed, which goes beyond forms of tenure. For example, Göteborg (2021) may require that a share of built rental apartments is made available to the municipality for subletting as a part of their housing provision within the social service. They can also set requirements for the affordability of housing. The ongoing urban development project Älvstranden in Frihamnen, Göteborg will serve as a case example of how land allocation has been used to develop rental apartments with differentiated rents and will be presented later in the section. Another example is that Uppsala municipality can require and set criteria to encourage developers to bring

forward new ways of creating more affordable and accessible housing (Uppsala Kommun, 2018). In such cases, developers get to present their own ideas and solutions for lowering housing costs for residents through, for example, production methods, procurements, and building design.

The second aspect to consider is the *selection of developers*. Land allocation can, in essence, be viewed as the distribution of municipal assets, often with a substantial value. Therefore, the process of selecting developers becomes an important question in land allocation (Caesar, 2016). By controlling who builds, the municipality can influence both pricing and quality in housing projects, which are important for promoting social sustainability (Holmqvist, 2016). Moreover, since municipalities' housing provision largely relies on market actors for implementing their goals, the municipality should choose the actors who are the most willing and capable to achieve these goals.

In summary, there are two types of processes for choosing a developer in land allocation (Caesar et al., 2013).

- *Tender allocation.* Based on some form of comparison between several developers and their project proposals
- *Direct allocation:* Based on municipalities choosing a developer directly, without any comparison with other developers

Tender allocations can take many different forms, with the common factor being that proposals from at least two developers are compared based on price, and potentially other qualities such as design or innovation (Konkurensverket, 2015). This form of allocation can, for example, be done through competitions, where developers can participate with project proposals. The benefits of tender allocations include, among other things, that it is viewed as a fair way of distributing municipal land, where several developers can compete within a given framework. Furthermore, competition is also viewed as a way of pushing developers to bring forward new and innovative projects. However, potential downsides are that tender allocations often are seen as administratively resource demanding.

Direct allocation is the most common type of land allocation (Konkurensverket, 2015). Among other things, it allows municipalities to directly choose which developers they want to work with, such as reliable and well-established actors (Caesar et al., 2013). Similarly, it can be used to allocate land to new developers and, like with tender allocations, be used to increase competition. For example, Örebro municipality (2023), which primarily uses tender allocation, also applies direct allocations in some cases, for example to increase competition by directly allocating land to developers without existing projects in the municipality. It can also be used to prioritize certain projects such as those addressing social inclusion, certain tenure forms, or securing municipal services.

Direct allocations are often seen as less administratively demanding in comparison to tender allocations (Caesar et al., 2013; Konkurensverket, 2015). However, there are also potential drawbacks with this method, such as potentially overlooking other alternatives, and lack of transparency concerning the reasons and justifications behind land allocations. For example, participation in previous projects and established municipal contacts have often played an important role in land allocations conducted through direct allocation (Konkurensverket, 2015). It is therefore common to combine or include some kind of comparisons or tender aspects in direct allocations (Caesar et al., 2013).

Holmqvist (2016) highlights that promoting a diversity of developers can be desirable to influence the pricing of housing in a municipality, primarily by increasing competition between developers. In addition, enabling smaller developers to compete for land allocations, who often struggle to gain access to the market, has shown to influence the pricing of housing. This phenomenon was explained by smaller developers being able to build at lower costs and being more flexible. For example, Uppsala municipality has the principle to only allocate smaller land plots and one plot at a time, which is seen to promote a diversity of developers active in the municipality (Uppsala Kommun, 2018). This, in turn, has been reported to have widened the range of housing in Uppsala, both in terms of price levels and tenure types (Finansdepartementet, 2021).

Lastly, Zetterlund (2016) highlights how the *timing of land allocation* is an important factor for municipalities' ability to influence what is planned and built on their land. For example, Örebro municipality carries out land allocation in the later stages of the planning process (Örebro kommun, 2023). The argument is that this strategy counteracts land speculation as well as strengthens municipal control over the development. In addition, the municipality is working with pre-made and flexible detailed development plans, which means that when land is allocated, there is already an established detailed development that regulates future development. Furthermore, the land is transferred to the developer only when building permits have been granted. Uppsala municipality similarly utilizes late land allocation together with flexible detailed development plans (Uppsala Kommun, 2018; Zetterlund, 2022). Together with the allocation of smaller land plots, this is seen as a way of increasing the diversity of developers and to stimulate competition. Furthermore, allocating land in the later stages of the planning process has also been seen as a way of reducing financial risks for developers and therefore also enables smaller developers to take on projects (Holmqvist, 2016).

Limitations & Risks

There has been recurring criticism that municipal land allocations often lack transparency and predictability (Konkurensverket, 2015; Metzger et al., 2021). This criticism has primarily been aimed at direct allocation, where the lack of transparency entails a risk for arbitrariness and corruption in how municipal land is allocated (Caesar et al., 2013). Therefore, the implementation of land allocation as a tool for addressing social equity objectives also requires a transparent and predictable process. For this, Caesar et al. (2013) argue for easily accessible information concerning who has received land allocations and under what conditions, among other things. Moreover, Konkurensverket (2015) highlights the potential of tender allocations to increase both transparency and competition in land allocations processes.

Furthermore, according to Caesar (2016), the land allocation instrument is based on a mutual dependence between the municipality and the developer, where there is an inherent incentive for the developer to meet the municipality's requirements to gain access to building land. However, there is a risk that unduly restrictive conditions might reduce developers' willingness to participate in land allocations. Conditions should thus be calculated to enhance new projects' social equity impact *without* creating an undue chilling effect on housing development. Such calculations should be revisited over time as market conditions and developer expectations evolve.

Example

As mentioned earlier, in the Frihamnen development project Göteborg municipality used land allocation to set conditions for socially mixed neighborhoods and affordable housing rather than aiming for the highest land price (Finansdepartementet, 2021). In the project, the municipality chose to allocate land at a later stage but had a close collaboration with developers who wanted to work with the municipality and accepted their conditions for social sustainability (Zetterlund, 2016). In summary, the project was based on setting four levels of rent based on the average incomes of different groups (Finansdepartementet, 2021). Furthermore, the premise was that tenants should have a reasonable standard of living. Participating developers were asked to create financial strategies to achieve this goal. Developer strategies included varying rents through location, attractiveness, and apartment standards. It also included maintaining a fixed number of apartments with lower rents based on the tenant's income. Participating developers who had been allocated land did not receive a reduced price but instead were allocated land for building condominiums as a way of balancing the deal. Although this project was praised for its progressive approach in setting requirements for social sustainability and affordable housing in land allocation agreements, it also received criticism for, among other things, departing from Swedish rental norms by setting an income cap on rents (Finansdepartementet, 2021; Norra Älvstranden Utveckling AB, 2018).

Tool: **Accountability Mechanisms for Developers**

Relevance

Besides land allocation requiring transparency and predictability, as mentioned, it is also of great importance that there are effective procedures for following up and securing accountability for developers. Here, too, Caesar's (2016) description of land allocations as a form of distribution of municipal resources highlights the importance of following up and reviewing projects that have been allocated municipal land. Otherwise, the progress achieved through setting conditions in the land allocation process might be lost. Furthermore, because land allocations often involve lengthy processes, there should be clear procedures for when, how, and by whom follow-ups are conducted (SKR, 2021).

Description

Despite its importance, there have been reports about general challenges for municipalities in the follow-up and monitoring of land allocation agreements (Finansdepartementet, 2021). These difficulties have, among other things, been traced to a lack of routines that include development or property departments when processing applications for building permits (Finansdepartementet, 2021). These difficulties may arise because land allocations, as a civil law matter, often are handled in different departments than processing building permits, in accordance with PBL. As a result, it is rarely followed up if requirements in land allocation have been met, and the risk of developers facing sanctions is low.

Implementation

To facilitate the follow-up and monitoring of land allocation agreements, planners and other relevant departments should be included early in the allocation process. Likewise, routines should be established to involve the development department in the processing of building permits. This approach can help the

municipality to ensure compliance with requirements and the application of sanctions if necessary. Sanctions can be included in contracts and agreed upon between the municipality and the developer. Furthermore, the municipality can perform systematic inspections to ensure that developers comply with agreed upon requirements.

Limitations & Risks

With a greater focus on accountability and ensuring that land allocation agreements are followed, there is a risk of increased costs and bureaucratic efforts for the municipality. In addition, intense scrutiny might give developers the impression that the municipality is undeservedly mistrustful, and thus complicate cooperation in future projects. Accountability measures should therefore be carried out with proportionality.

Example

Based on our review, it is difficult to find information about how Swedish municipalities monitor and ensure the implementation of land allocation agreements. On this point, it is relevant to highlight that the current legislation on municipal guidelines for land allocation does not explicitly require municipalities to report their procedures monitoring land allocations (Lag Om Riktlinjer För Kommunala Markanvisningar, 2014).

However, one example is Uppsala municipality's procedures for ensuring construction and monitoring projects for which land has been allocated (Uppsala Kommun, 2018). To ensure compliance with the conditions, the municipality conducts systematic quality and sustainability assurances for every project before transferring the land. Furthermore, before building permits are granted, there is ongoing communication with the developers to determine the timeline for the stages of following up on the conditions. Lastly, certain quality and sustainability aspects are monitored during and after the project is finished.

Recommendations for Järfälla

In this subsection, we discuss how the tools for allocation of municipally owned land can be applied in the context of Järfälla municipality.

Allocation With Conditions

The foremost recommendation for Järfälla municipality is to further develop procedures for using land allocation as an instrument for addressing social equity goals. In this work, the municipality should be bold in setting requirements geared towards social equity, not just sale price. As highlighted by Zetterlund (2016), buildable land is a finite resource that developers are dependent on, meaning that municipalities can set clear requirements for social equity. This is especially relevant for Järfälla's housing provision and efforts to reduce segregation. Here, for example, the municipality can set clear requirements for a certain ratio of rental apartments, or to build housing aimed towards lower-income households, as a way to adress segreation. To facilitate rental tenures, this report has highlighted the potential of allocating land with site leaseholds (tomträtter) as a way of lowering the financial thresholds for developing rental housing.

Furthermore, when setting requirements to build housing with lower costs, lessons can be drawn from the Älvstranden project in Göteborg. Here, the municipality required the construction of affordable housing for various income groups, and it allowed developers themselves to propose solutions and financial strategies for achieving this. While a similar project would have to be adapted to the context of Järfälla, the collaborative approach between the municipality and developers can serve as an example. To incentivize developers to participate in such projects, municipalities can, for example, sell a portion of land for condominium development, or promise future land allocations in attractive areas.

We also propose that Järfälla further specify its guidelines for land allocation concerning what types of requirements can be imposed on developers. This aims to provide developers with increased transparency and predictability. As mentioned under Järfälla Municipality, the municipality's guidelines for land allocation state that they can set social sustainability requirements when allocating land. Such requirements might include, for example, 'socially sustainable business practices,' specific housing tenures, or equal access to various amenities and services (Järfälla kommun, 2023). These potential requirements can be clarified and expanded to provide a more predictable framework for developers concerning the municipality's needs and expectations. Expanded specifications could cover, for example, what types of requirements the municipality can set concerning affordability, mixture of housing tenures, and more.

Järfälla should select developers who are the most suitable and willing to collaborate based on the municipality's goals for social equity. This includes promoting a multitude of active developers in the municipality, to increase competition and influence affordability. Potential strategies for this can be to allocate one plot land per developer, or to actively select smaller or less-established developers in direct allocations.

Further, we propose that the municipality examine and further develop its procedures to allocate land in the later stages of the planning process, for example after a detailed development plan is established. Late allocation is something that Järfälla only currently does in exceptional cases (Järfälla kommun, 2023). However, this can be a way of counteracting land speculation and thereby the risk of increased housing prices, or to ensure the implementation of social equity objectives in development projects. This is primarily relevant when the municipality sells land. Late allocations can also be a way of lowering planning costs for developers. Furthermore, this practice can be complemented with flexible detailed development plans, ensuring that developers carry out projects, even if they haven't participated in the early stages of the planning process.

While we do not recommend specific interventions based on location regarding tenancy or other conditions, we would like to point out that Järfälla has available material to do so themselves. Figure 6 below shows the tenancy splits for districts in Järfälla and illustrates the need to develop more mixed districts. Areas like Viksjö and Västra Jakobsberg have a small share of rentals for example, and the municipality could be more specific in detailing the need for such development.

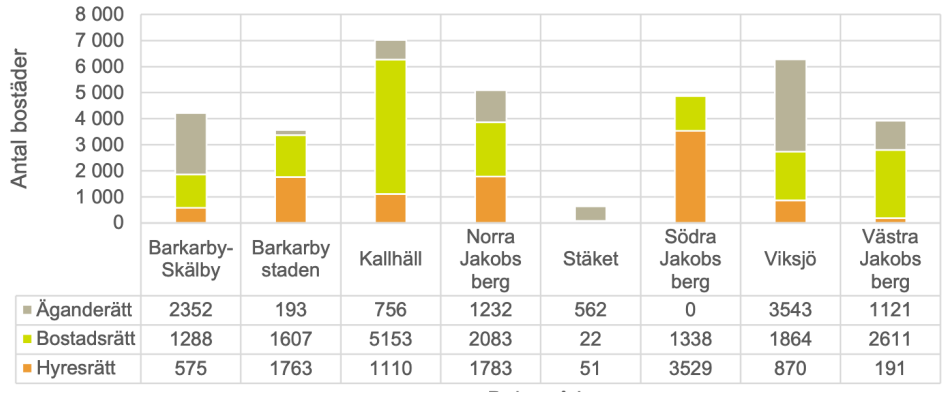

Figure 6: Tenancy splits for municipal districts in Järfälla (Järfälla kommun, 2022).

Accountability

In interviews with public servants from Järfälla, it was noted that the municipality is not always able to follow up to ensure that allocation demands are honored by developers (Interview with planners from Järfälla municipality, personal communication, November 19, 2024). In one example, the energy performance of a building did not match what was agreed to. In general, it is difficult to extract fees after a building is handed over to a BRF or similar. Nevertheless, the municipality has some leverage, as developers want to maintain good relationships so that they can be awarded new projects from the municipality in the future. Additionally, Järfälla already has someone who is responsible for following up, which they note as uncommon in Swedish municipalities (Interview with planners from Järfälla municipality, personal communication, November 19, 2024).

To further improve accountability, we offer several additional recommendations. First, different departments should interact with each other more openly. If development engineers write allocation agreements with demands and planners follow up, at least one process should include both departments. The timing of following up is also important: as noted above, it is hard to extract fees after a building is handed to new owners. Thus, inspection needs to happen before that step, and it must be carried out in a systematic way. However, it is ideal to structure inspection in a way that does not leave developers feeling unduly burdened by excessive monitoring. Finally, just as the municipality needs to set conditions clearly, it must also set clear sanctions in case those conditions are not fulfilled. For greatest accountability, these sanctions can be described in a binding legal contract.

Amplifiers

Figure 7: Diagram of Amplifiers toolkit section.

In this section, we have included three soft power tools, meaning that they focus on building relationships and bringing the interests of various actors into alignment, rather than hard power tools such as contracts or financial tools. The three tools we have chosen to include here are (see Figure 7):

- Proactivity: Taking leadership in social equity and setting the agenda, rather than deferring to others.
- Awards for outstanding projects: Incentivizing best practices by recognizing and rewarding good examples.
- Persuasive Storytelling: Gaining support and navigating debate with spatial visions and compelling narratives.

These three tools are most effective in supporting and amplifying the tools from the other two sections.

Tool: **Proactivity**

Relevance

This tool is of interest for municipalities that feel they are not sufficiently in control of the urban development process in housing projects. It is specifically relevant in situations where developers are not delivering proposals for large projects that are creative enough or sufficiently goals oriented. This tool can be applied both when the municipality does and does not own the land that will be developed.

Description

This tool focuses on the municipality's role in urban development projects. The recommendation is that municipalities that an active, guiding or even initiating role rather than waiting for developers to initiate projects and order detailed development plans.

When developers take the first step and approach the municipality with a proposal, the municipality is in a weaker negotiation position as they are reacting to and trying to alter the developer's proposal. By being proactive and setting clear expectations from the start, the municipality is in a stronger position and is thus better able to shape the (housing) development project, which can lead to better outcomes for social equity.

What is important here is a shift in mindset: From planners as service providers for developers to the municipality as the planning authority that controls the urban development of the city by setting clear goals and guidelines.

Implementation

The first step is to create an urban development strategy with short-, medium-, and long-term goals. In many municipalities, the comprehensive plan fulfills this function. It is important here to identify needs and challenges and determine areas suitable for urban (re)development in line with municipal goals for social equity. After areas of interest are determined, money should be allocated in the municipal budget for the creation of a detailed development plan, ordered by the municipality itself and not a developer, if the municipality is not already doing so. An example of such a proactive strategy is the mentioned Örebro municipality's practice to utilize pre-established flexible detail development plans for municipal land suitable for development (Örebro kommun, 2023). This is also an example of how a municipal strategic land reserve can be complemented by a proactive planning reserve.

However, if potential developers have already been identified, they can also be involved in the development of the detailed development plan. Otherwise, developers can be involved later based on their interest in housing developments according to specifications of the detailed development plan. For larger projects, like the development of a new city district, an urban planning competition can be used to generate ideas for innovative approaches and visions.

Taking initiative is an important step before land allocation. When the municipality approaches the land allocation process with a clear vision and goals that developers are aware of from the start, developers might self-select based on their willingness to comply with municipal guidelines and the municipality is better able to guide the allocation process and better able to make progress towards its goals.

Limitations & Risks

Since this strategy presents a significant shift in the municipal approach to urban development in many cases, planners might have to develop new skills and a bolder attitude. Here, municipalities should support their staff in their professional development as needed. Knowledge exchange between municipalities could also be helpful.

A potential risk could also be that municipalities might not be able to judge the economic feasibility of a project in the way that developers plan. Therefore, it is possible that the municipality might make a plan or propose a project that developers are not interested in. A situation like this should not be seen as a failure and be discouraging but rather be seen as a learning opportunity. Based on developer feedback, plans can be altered later.

Examples

One example of a municipality proactively leading urban development is the case of Järfälla's Barkarby. The municipality purchased the old airfield with the intention of redeveloping it into a new city district (Presentation by Järfälla municipality, personal communication, September 10, 2024). To guide the

development, they created a detailed development plan before negotiating the land allocation with developers. Especially for bigger, comprehensive projects like the development of a new district, it is crucial to have an overarching vision rather than a collection of individual projects led by developers.

Another interesting example is Stockholm, which has drastically changed its approach to urban development over the decades. From the 1930s to the 1980s, the municipality focused on purchasing and retaining land and initiating housing projects (Zakhour & Metzger, 2018b). Municipal planners were the main actors who shaped the outcome of projects. The result was quick and cheap housing construction on a large scale. As a reaction to a recession in the 90s, Stockholm drastically changed its approach. The goal of urban development was now frequently to make a profit for the municipality through the sale of land. Therefore, the municipality no longer initiated housing developers but waited for developers to propose projects that they deemed profitable. Social equity goals were no longer a primary consideration. Zakhour & Metzger (2018b) have referred to this as a shift from a "planning-led regime" to a "development-led regime" (p. 46). However, recently, Stockholm has started to shift back to a planning-led regime in some ways. For example, this year for the first time in 20 years, Stockholm's city council budgeted 40 million SEK for detailed development plans ordered by the municipality's internal departments for strategic reasons (S. Zakhour, personal communication, October 30, 2024). While this sum is not necessarily significant and can only pay for a small number of plans, it does mark a shift in the municipality's approach to the urban development process.

Another example of how a municipality can proactively lead the urban development while also involving and collaborating with private developers can be found in Uppsala municipality. In connection to land allocations and to promote a greater diversity of rental housing and reach broader target groups, Uppsala municipality utilizes so-called declarations of intent with developers who are new to the municipalities housing market (Uppsala Kommun, 2018). In these declarations, developers agree on addressing housing challenges in the local housing market. They primarily focus on achieving social sustainability in new urban developments and it can, for example, involve building cooperative rental apartments or housing with lower rents. In this way, Uppsala provides an example where a municipality provides guidelines for addressing social equity, while also providing an opportunity for new developers to enhance their reputation and to establish a closer partnership with the municipality.

Tool: **Awards for Outstanding Projects**

Relevance

This tool is relevant for municipalities that have multiple new housing projects every year within their boundaries where they want to achieve high standards for social equity or environmental sustainability. Unlike previous tools that focus on contracts and hard requirements for developers, this tool takes a softer approach by incentivizing housing developers through the recognition of outstanding projects through awards.

Description

The municipality gives out an award for exceptional housing projects within the municipality that promote municipal goals. The idea is that this might inspire developers to have higher standards or implement innovative strategies in their housing projects. This way, an award can showcase the commitment to social

equity and/or environmental sustainability for both developers and the municipality. A public awards ceremony can highlight the efforts by the municipality and the housing developers to the general public.

Implementation

The first step is to define clear goals and standards in line with municipal goals according to which projects are judged. The criteria here can be very specific, for example encouraging mixed tenure or certain rent standards, or name broad goals to which the projects should contribute, such as social equity or reducing segregation. The first option has the benefit that it encourages specific designs that are approved by the municipality; the second leaves developers more freedom to award new, creative ideas and gives the municipality more flexibility in the selection process.

Then, the selection process and award specifications have to be carefully designed. Elements to consider here are:

- The frequency that the award is given out (annually, bi-annually, etc.)
- Eligibility conditions
- Nomination process
- Is it always awarded to the best submission or only the best submission that also meets some minimum standards
- Selection process: who votes (municipal government officials, independent experts, popular vote), how is the winner selected (point system, majority voting, etc.)
- Does the award include prize money?

As a last step, the municipality can consider collaborating with a sponsor, who could either or both draw attention to the award, in the case of a well-known public figure, or provide funding for a cash prize or the award ceremony.

Limitations & Risks

A clearly defined and transparent selection process is important for all participants, but especially those who did not win, to feel like the process was fair. A possible complication here could be the nomination of projects from the municipal housing companies. If an award is given to a municipal housing company, some could speculate that the selection process was biased. Therefore, it could be beneficial to only include housing developers who are not associated with the municipality.

Since this is a soft power tool, the precise impact of the tool is hard to estimate. It is possible that an award does not sufficiently motivate developers to improve their projects. Instead, it might reward them for what they were already planning on doing. The design of the award process might have an impact here. An award that includes a sizable cash prize that is presented by a well-known public figure is presumably more of an incentive than a simple plaque. However, a simpler award can be significantly less cost and time intensive. Here, the cost and the possible reward need to be balanced according to the specific conditions of the municipality.

Finally, if awards are not implemented as part of a balanced strategy, there is some risk that buzz surrounding them can obscure remaining social equity needs. Awards and prizes attract publicity easily, which can be valuable, but can also create a false sense of progress and draw attention away from unsolved problems and their complexity. It is important that awards are not implemented in a manner which allows politicians, planners, or others to point to them as sole indicators of serious progress towards social equity goals. Further, awards may best be avoided under conditions where decision-makers could use them as justification to forego the more powerful tools described in earlier sections of this toolkit.

Examples

Example 1: The European Responsible Housing Awards

The European Responsible Housing Awards provides examples for selection criteria for social equity in housing projects. The awards are given out every three years by a jury composed of primarily of tenant union presidents and EU officials (European Responsible Housing Initiative, n.d.-c). It is based on the European Responsible Housing Initiative's Code of Conduct that includes economic, local social, and environmental sustainability as well as good governance and responsible human resources management. Overall, there is a heavy focus on the process of housing development, e.g. stakeholder involvement, replicability transparency and accountability (European Responsible Housing Initiative, n.d.-a). The initiative awards a number of prizes, including the following (European Responsible Housing Initiative, n.d.-b):

- Management excellence for housing affordability
- "More than a roof" – supporting communities of equal opportunities
- Building strategic alliances, fostering community participation
- Going the extra mile for safe and sound living

Example 2: Växjö Kommuns Byggnadspris

Växjö Kommun's Building Awards is an example of how the award process can be designed in a Swedish municipality (Växjö kommun, 2024b). The award is presented annually to the developer of a building with exceptional architecture and good adaptation to the location. In case there is no qualified entry, the prize may not be awarded that year. Projects are nominated by the city architects and representatives from the municipal administration. The winner is selected by municipal council members that form the Environment and Building Committee. The award consists of a diploma and a commemorative plaque which are presented at an official ceremony (Växjö kommun, 2024a).

Tool: **Persuasive Storytelling**

Definition

Persuasive storytelling has a range of meanings in urban planning practice and theory. We use it here to refer to the practice of constructing a thoughtful narrative around a plan or urban intervention in order to better articulate the associated vision, to encourage stakeholder support, or to help structure the public input process.

Relevance

Persuasive storytelling fulfills a dual purpose in this toolkit: first, it is *a tool in its own right* to pursue social equity, and second, it is *an enabler of the other tools* discussed above. In its own right, persuasive storytelling is relevant when a municipality has the opportunity to compete for finite outside resources, such as research or innovation grants. It is also relevant as a tool if a municipality pursues its social equity goals through informal conversation or negotiation with developers or other decision-makers. And as an enabler for other tools, persuasive storytelling is relevant if some stakeholders do not initially lend their support to the proposed tools' implementation, and the municipality then engages in a consensus-building process.

Description

The role of persuasive storytelling in planning has been studied since the 1990s (Throgmorton, 1996). The idea grows from a view that products of the planning process consist partly of narrative (even if not intentionally or explicitly articulated), and that their meanings are constructed in part through how audiences interpret them (Sandercock, 2004; Throgmorton, 2003). It follows that planning does not traffic only in objective facts, but also in stories and beliefs. Adopting this view, a municipal planning office may feel saddled with the unwelcome burden of constructing stories. Or, as we encourage, it may embrace the opportunity to exert greater agency by employing persuasive storytelling strategically. If implemented thoughtfully, persuasive storytelling can open pathways to progress on social equity goals. Although persuasive storytelling relies on soft power and this result cannot be guaranteed, this tool is nearly always available to planners, even when other tools are not.

Implementation

To implement persuasive storytelling, municipalities can adopt rhetorical techniques often associated with fiction writing, such as metaphor, plot arc, and character development (Pojani & Stead, 2015). These can apply to written planning documents, but sometimes also to procedural items like consultations and community meetings (Ameel, 2021). The key task here is to practice thinking not only about material plans, but about the spatial visions that surround them (Olesen, 2017). Further, it is to be thoughtful about the purpose and audience of each document, consultation, or meeting, and to embrace that each audience member's interpretation is colored by their own beliefs, needs, and emotions.

In one type of application, persuasive storytelling can help a municipality secure outside resources to help advance social equity goals, such as state funding or regional grants (Rydin, 1998). In this case, the tools of persuasive storytelling can help argue that decision-makers should award funding to the target project or cause. This is an opportunity to construct a colorful spatial vision where the project becomes a partnership which advances both the municipality's goals and the funding authority's goals. The techniques of fiction writing, plus a focus on purpose and audience, can help articulate such a vision.

In another type of application, a municipality can strengthen its position when negotiating informally. Given developers' strong position in the planning process, municipalities may engage in informal negotiations designed to guide developer-led projects closer to municipal goals (Zakhour & Metzger, 2018b). A similar approach might be taken with other powerful stakeholders, such as politicians or interest groups. Here, persuasive storytelling can strengthen the municipality's negotiating position. Much as when

seeking outside resources, the task is to embed one's desired outcomes in a clear spatial vision that fulfills both negotiating parties' goals and self-images. As always, the storytelling techniques mentioned above can help express such a vision effectively. Applied consistently over time, persuasive storytelling can also create enduring change in attitudes, expectations, and even planning processes (Davoudi et al., 2020). On this scale, a municipality might succeed in shifting developers' own goals and self-images, reducing the need for negotiation in the first place.

In the final type of application, persuasive storytelling can help enable a municipality to implement the other tools discussed in this toolkit. Many tools entail difficult tradeoffs which may need to be navigated with input from other stakeholders. Persuasive storytelling, executed as described above, can help build favor for the municipality's proposal among those who might not immediately support it. Further, the framework of narrative, purpose, and audience can help structure the process by which the municipality listens to dissenting voices and incorporates their feedback into a revised proposal. For example, outcomes can be better when the original storyteller grants their audience agency and manages to revise their original narrative in resonant ways, perhaps by rethinking how the audience's 'characters' are represented in the narrative (Throgmorton, 1996). The aim of this process is simultaneously (a) to build support for the municipality's original vision, and (b) to help the municipality revise their proposal intelligently.

Limitations & Risks

Persuasive storytelling represents an organized method by which a municipality has the potential to increase its agency, opening pathways towards social equity progress. However, unlike most tools in this toolkit, persuasive storytelling is not legally binding, and it is difficult to gauge how effective it will be in a given situation. Further, to implement persuasive storytelling, municipal planners may find themselves in need of new skills, many of which come from seemingly remote disciplines such as fiction writing.

In addition, it is possible for municipal actors to misuse persuasive storytelling such that they suppress healthy opposition to their work. History teaches that planners can make mistakes, and dissenting input is a crucial check against this. Were a municipality to deploy persuasive storytelling with the intent of quashing opposition, this would run counter to the ideals of social equity. Especially because planners occupy positions of greater power than many of the people their work effects, municipalities employing persuasive storytelling have a duty to do so responsibly (Ortiz, 2023; Carp, 2004).

Examples

Although Swedish planners have certainly found occasions to employ persuasive storytelling, formal discussion of storytelling as a tool is limited. However, the value of narrative in planning has been acknowledged. For instance, in 2021, Uppsala Kommun issued a directive that their comprehensive plan should be revised to "strengthen the narrative about where Uppsala is striving" (Carlén et al., 2021, p. 6, authors' translation). They went on to call for the plan to adopt several good persuasive storytelling practices, including articulating a clear spatial vision, representing a range of characters (such as residents, workers, and visitors), and grounding the narrative in concrete physical plans.

More detailed case studies in persuasive storytelling can be found outside of Sweden. For example, Olesen (2017) follows a 2010s light rail project from the Copenhagen area. Initially, the region had received little development interest, and local proposals for better transit connectivity had failed to gain traction. Local actors harnessed persuasive storytelling to legitimize the project and mobilize support. The used two key techniques: coupling plans to a specific moment of opportunity, and 'naming and framing' spatial visions. Under the former, the light rail project was linked to politicians' sudden need to display hopeful visions and decisive action following the 2008 financial crisis. Under the latter, the project was reframed in two ways, first as an essential investment in regional competitiveness, and second as a missing link in a larger spatial vision called 'Loop City.' This approach yielded a "breakthrough" in lobbying for the project, which was able to move forward (p. 988).

Recommendations for Järfälla

In this subsection, we discuss how the three Amplifier tools could be applied in Järfälla.

Proactivity

Järfälla is currently in the process of updating their comprehensive plan (Järfälla kommun, n.d.-c). This presents an opportunity to create a long-term land use and housing development strategy. It is important that not only are general areas identified that could be developed (as is the case currently), but that specific areas are identified that should be developed next and what kind of development should happen.

For the new comprehensive plan, more detailed maps could be helpful. When comparing the maps showing development areas from Järfälla's old comprehensive plan with ones from Stockholm's plan, we can see that Stockholm's maps are more detailed, distinguishing between different types of development. While Järfälla's plan (see Figure 8) only shows "development areas" (here shaded in red), Stockholm's map (see Figure 9) shows different types of intended development, namely addition, transformation and possible future development based on need, shown here in different shades of pink.

After priority areas for urban development have been identified, especially ones where development should start soon, money should be allocated in the municipal budget to create a detailed development plan without a request from a developer. This plan can then be used as the basis for negotiations with developers. Järfälla has taken the initiative in this way before during the development of Barkarbystaden has thus been able to gather experience and learn from past projects. When new housing developers enter the scene in Järfälla, the municipality can ask them to sign a declaration of intent, as a way familiarize them with local issues like segregation and show their commitment towards addressing these issues.

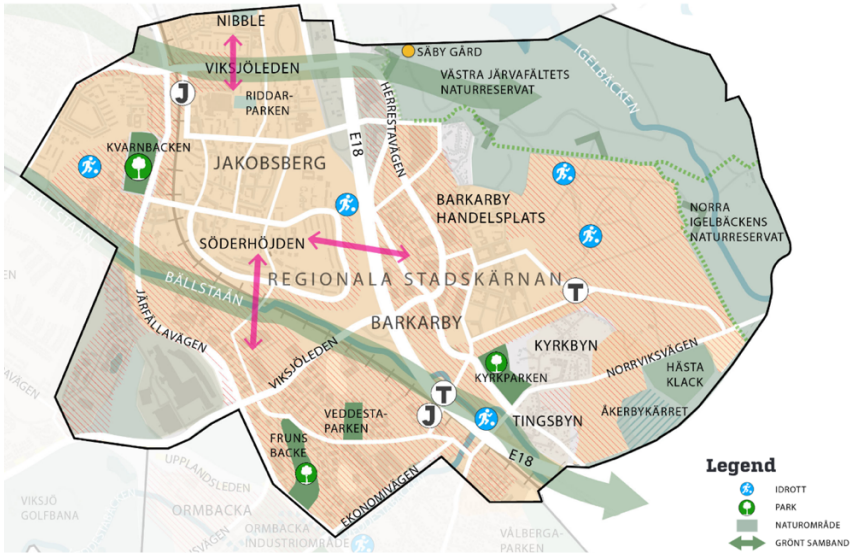

Figure 8: Map over the "regional city core" from Järfälla's preliminary comprehensive plan (Järfälla kommun, 2024d).

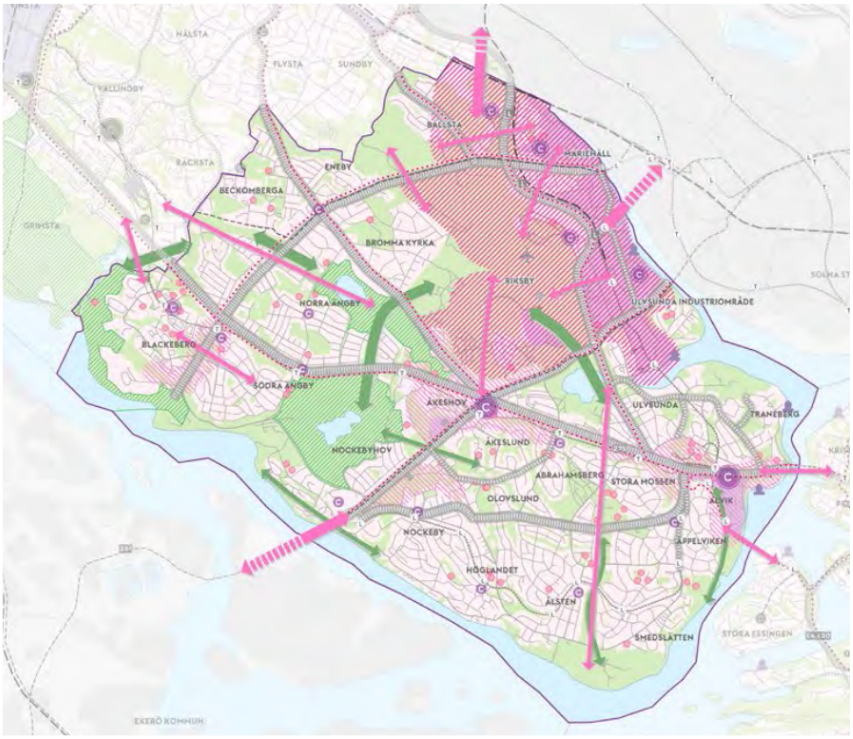

Figure 9: Map over the Bromma city district from Stockholm's comprehensive plan (Stockholms Stad, 2018).

Awards

To incentivize and draw attention to social equity progress, we propose that Järfälla creates a new award, presented yearly to a housing developer who has made significant contributions towards social equity through housing development. This award could be added under the umbrella of Järfälla's existing awards for social and ecological sustainability (Järfälla kommun, n.d.-b). The criteria for the award should be based on Järfälla's social equity goals and include clear recommendations for housing projects, such as lower rents or a mix of tenure types and apartments of various sizes. For the selection process, the nomination could be done by the planning department and the selection by the Environment and Building Permit Board (Miljö- och bygglovsnämnden) of the municipal council.

Persuasive Storytelling

Järfälla can use persuasive storytelling for two main purposes: to gradually shift outside attitudes to be more favorable towards social equity progress and the associated costs, and to strengthen their position during informal negotiations with developers and other stakeholders. Other applications of this tool, such competitions for state aid or regional grants, seem to be less relevant in Järfälla's current situation, as far as we could tell, but it could certainly be helpful here if opportunity arises, for example for future expansion of the regional transport network.

For both purposes, the first step would be to create more vivid stories as part of the comprehensive plan, which is currently being updated. Here, techniques from fiction writing such as metaphor, plot arcs and character development can be used to articulate the vision and make it both easier to understand and more emotionally appealing to the readers. For example, when working with plans for redevelopment in a neighborhood, go beyond just stating the goal to build inclusive housing but instead tell a story of life in the neighborhood. This can include an arc starting from where the neighborhood is now to what it will become, and how the plan achieves that. Telling the story from the perspective of a specific character can illustrate to certain groups how they will benefit. Continuing with the example, if established residents are worried about new developments of a different tenure type, in line with Järfälla's goal for diverse tenure types, a part of the story could be told from their perspective. It is important here to consider the audience and purpose here. Who is expected to read the document and how will they interpret it? Ideally, the narrative would reflect both the municipality's goals and agenda and those of the audience. This strategy of connective audience and purpose can also be used for smaller documents like surveys or invitations to community consultations.

When key narratives have been established, they can also be used in negotiations with developers and other key stakeholders. Narrative storytelling can be particularly helpful in navigating the consensus-building process when the use of other tools from this toolkit is contested. One example of this could be in the case of resistance to the establishment of a land fund or a focus on leasing. However, rather than just presenting a narrative to developers, it can be productive to include the stakeholders in the development of the narrative. A starting narrative could be used to structure public consultation and discussions with developers. After the narrative is presented, including the relevant stakeholders as characters, the municipality can solicit feedback within the framework of the narrative. This feedback can then be included in the revised narrative, especially to better reflect their needs, goals and self-images, and be used in the planning process. This strategy can simultaneously help build support for the original vision and help stakeholder input proceed in a constructive way.

Conclusion

This project has aimed to help Swedish municipalities locate new ways to make progress towards their social equity goals through housing development. We have provided a structured catalog of relevant land policy tools, plus guidance on when each might be suitable and how it might be implemented. We have referred to relevant examples and given recommendations for Järfälla municipality. We hope that this project can offer Järfälla and other municipalities an infusion of energy surrounding social equity progress, paired with novel but concrete pathways forward.

Here, we wish to echo several caveats given previously. First, although our recommendations for Järfälla are thoroughly grounded in our research, they will benefit from input from local planners, citizens, and other experts. More generally, as we have not provided one-size-fits-all recommendations, when this toolkit is applied in new contexts, it must meet with professional and lived expertise from the community. Further, while providing a toolkit concerned with municipal agency, we retain the conviction that municipalities should plot a course for social equity which balances the needs of diverse and often conflicting interests. In short, to honor the ethos of social equity, this toolkit must be paired with an embrace of diverse local needs and open debate.

In aligning this toolkit with local needs, municipalities may also encounter questions of radicalness, or put differently, ambition and risk tolerance. In any given context, some tools in this toolkit will be more or less disruptive to status quo notions of how a municipality 'normally' operates. For instance, in a municipality that has never leased land to developers, selling with conditions is likely to appear less radical than leasing with conditions. Further, within a given tool, some implementations can be more ambitious than others. For example, leasing with conditions could involve heavy land subsidies in exchange for strict social sustainability requirements, or it could involve a relatively simple swap from market-rate selling to market-rate leasing, with no change in conditions. Variance here lies both in conceptual novelty (willingness to do things in a new way), and in resource investment (willingness to spend money and time on implementation). Thoughtful adoption of this toolkit may require navigating difficult tradeoffs between costs and benefits (radicalness versus social equity gains), plus debate between stakeholders on the subject.

Finally, as discussed at the outset, this project focuses on social sustainability and housing development. It does not directly treat ecological or economic sustainability nor non-housing policy areas. We as authors have selected this focus as an area of significant need but limited research in Sweden. However, sustainable urban planning cannot be approached from any one direction. We hope that this project can invigorate conversations around sustainability not in isolation, but through thoughtful integration with other subject areas and ways of thinking.

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