

## **1. Densification in Nordic cities – the contextual challenges**

**Leaders: Harpa Stefánsdóttir, LBHÍ (Reykjavík) and Gertrud Jørgensen, UCPH (Copenhagen)**

The advantages of higher density include improvement of the operational basis for various local services and public transport to reduce private car traffic that usually requires relatively much space. The released land can further be densified or serve as public green spaces for various outdoor activities, thus improve public health and satisfaction with quality of life.

Despite the potential benefits of compact cities, various problems and challenges may occur when implementing urban densification. The impact of densification on daily life and peoples' behaviour depends on contexts, among which those related to the northern location is under-researched. Nordic contextual challenges of densification include lower solar altitude and thus longer shadows caused by buildings compared to southerly areas, as well as challenging weather conditions. Attitude and preferences towards living environments and lifestyles in general may also vary among cultures and thus be different in the Nordic countries from for example Southern Europe. These may cause denser housing areas to fail in attracting a broad variety of households. High demand for access by private cars may result in failure to achieve the desired density. Developer driven new, dense housing projects in attractive central areas tend to result in high real estate prices and thus contribute to segregation. In this track we ask what challenges are most important to solve in the planning processes, how dense we should aim for without reducing peoples' quality of life and what strategies are important to succeed in creating dense and liveable urban areas. We invite abstracts that approach and discuss contextual characteristics of importance for Nordic cities and what would matter to make densification accepted by people.

## **2. Reusing historic areas in Nordic towns**

**Leaders: Astrid Lelarge, LBHÍ (Reykjavík) and Even Smith Wergeland, AHO (Oslo)**

In just a few decades, a new approach on urban heritage – historic landscape preservation – has emerged. With the aim of meeting the heritage challenges of growing urbanisation, economic development and climate change, this approach was adopted by UNESCO in 2011. This notion extends beyond conventional ideas of “historic centres” or “ensembles” to include the broader urban context: The site, its built environment, its land use patterns and spatial organisations, perceptions and visual relationships, including social values, cultural practices, economic processes and the intangible dimensions of heritage.

These recommendations call for a fusion of urban heritage and the planning discipline. While this idea is not entirely new, it has not yet had a deep impact in practice. Given the rising awareness of reusing as an environmental strategy, however, this might change in the years to come.

This track explores how urban heritage is addressed in planning research and practice in the Nordic countries. More specifically, it looks into how this issue is being considered in relation to other pressing

matters like densification, the integrity of the urban fabric, the identity of communities, economic investment, building laws and regulations, and citizen engagement.

### **3. New planning spaces for regional and local development**

**Leaders: Knut Bjørn Stokke, NMBU (Aas) and Carsten Jahn Hansen, AAU (Aalborg)**

During the last couple of decades, a range of new planning spaces have emerged in regional and local development contexts, and both in rural and urban areas. Compared to traditional formal or mandatory planning, with its land-use regulation and managerial approaches, the new planning spaces are often non-mandatory and more community-oriented and situation-specific. In this track we encourage contributions dealing with the emergence of various kinds of new planning spaces. Why do they emerge and how? Are they experiments only, or are they developing into new planning formats? How do non-mandatory planning spaces relate to and coordinate with mandatory planning spaces, and what are the challenges and opportunities in doing so? Do combined planning spaces also occur, thereby overcoming cross-boundary challenges?

There are numerous examples of such new planning spaces in the Nordic countries. For example, regional parks are established in voluntary way in rural identity regions to make a platform for cooperation for local and regional development. Another example is the concept of visitor management as a new planning field as a response to the increased number of visitors in nature areas and in rural communities. A third example, in urban development planning many types of non-mandatory strategies have emerged in urban neighborhoods, smaller towns, villages, etc. They are often holistic and participatory in orientation and try to make use of local engagement, resources and potentials. For development in coastal areas outside the larger cities, examples of both new regional and local planning spaces are trying to help 'turn the tides'.

### **4. Planning theory and practice in the Nordic context**

**Leaders: Raine Mäntysalo, AU (Helsinki) and Martin Westin, SLU (Uppsala)**

Nordic planning has traditionally had a strong institutional foundation, with a clearcut hierarchy of planning levels, a high level of planning authority afforded to local governments and legislation setting standards for participatory processes. However, there are various change phenomena underway that complicate and challenge this institutional framework. Firstly, contractual and negotiation-based planning policies, often associated with neoliberalism and network governance, have emerged, challenging pre-existing authority relations with new public-private and public-public partnerships and bringing in new 'soft' spatialities and planning scales alongside the territorialities of traditional governance. Secondly, political activism has taken on more radical and populist forms, which has challenged traditional procedures and forums of participatory planning with more audacious influencing through media campaigns, protests and direct connections to political decision-makers. Thirdly, technological development has enabled new digital tools of political engagement and participation, which has

encouraged broadening the means of planning participation by different means of e-participation. How have these and other change phenomena affected Nordic planning practices and systems, what resources can be drawn upon in the Nordic context to accommodate or counteract these, and what concepts and tools does planning theory have to offer to better understand and cope with these processes?

## **5. Digitalisation of planning – processes, tools and data**

**Leaders: Christian Fertner, UCPH (Copenhagen); Lars Bodum AAU (Aalborg) and Emmanuel Pagneux, LBHÍ (Reykjavík).**

Digitalisation of the public administration has been ongoing for a while in the Nordics and spatial planning is no exception. This includes both the availability of more and better data about our physical world, new and improved digital tools for plan-making or planning support as well as the digitalisation of planning processes. Digitalisation has led to a further integration of planning with other policy fields through open data, standardisation, and digital governance initiatives. Furthermore, citizens and all types of stakeholders are increasing the demands and use of digital solutions within planning.

Against this background, the track welcomes contributions from various perspectives, including but not limited to: 1) Sensing the city – Planning with data from environmental sensors, drones, wearables, and other digital tools, 2) Technologies, people and planning – Smart city planning, participation, digitalization, information modeling, and 3) Digital planning – Most plans are converting to new media types and how is this implemented in legislation, administration, and practical tools and how does this change planning practice.

## **6. Planning in the Arctic**

**Leaders: Sigridur Kristjánsdóttir, LBHÍ (Reykjavík) and Kristina L. Nilsson, LTU (Luleå)**

The European Arctic has become ‘hot’ in the last decades due to increased worldwide demand for natural resources in close proximity to fascinating and unscathed natural environments. The Arctic regions are sparsely populated with few cities and settlements with long travel distances inbetween. These cities present many advantages in terms of their heritage structure and buildings. Such communities also experience well-defined seasonal variation with long snowy winters and short chilly summers. The challenges are faster climate changes, aging populations and how to achieve a sustainable development.

Local authorities in the Arctic make considerable effort to develop built environments that are both attractive to new inhabitants and existing residents. They strive to increase the permanent population to be able to support companies with a stable work force and maintain enough inhabitants to secure good societal and commercial services. One experience in these

communities is that young people have difficulties finding interesting jobs and many resort to 'fly in, fly out' positions.

Making Arctic cities attractive requires suitable job opportunities, good societal and commercial services, and importantly, attractive built environments. Harsh climates call for a special effort in how the urban fabric is designed to create a good microclimate.