

Sustainable Urban Design,
Master Thesis
Siri Jeppson

RURALIZATION

Moving back to the countryside



Master Thesis Booklet
May 2021

Lund University, Sweden

Faculty of Engineering, Lund Institute of Technology

Department of architecture and the built environment

Sustainable Urban Design Master's program

All artwork and photographs are done by the author unless otherwise stated.



TITLE

Ruralization - moving back to the countryside

AUTHOR

Siri Jeppson

SUPERVISOR

Andreas Olsson, Architect, Lecturer SUDes, LTH

EXAMINER

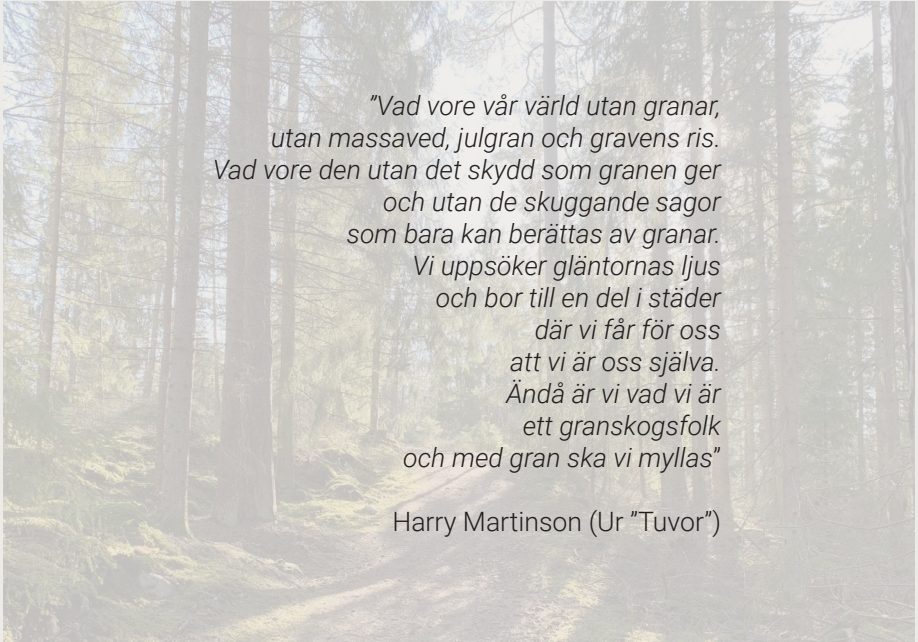
Lars-Henrik Ståhl, PhD, Professor, Director of SUDes, LTH

JURY

Jenny B. Osuldsen, Partner and Senior Landscape Architect, Snøhetta
and Professor in Landscape Architecture at the University of Life
Sciences Ås, Norway

Peter Siöström, Senior lecturer, Department of Architecture and Built Environ-
ment at Lund University

A thesis submitted to Lund University is one of the requirements for the degree
of Master of Science Architecture with a specialization in Sustainable Urban
Design.



*"Vad vore vår värld utan granar,
utan massaved, julgran och gravens ris.
Vad vore den utan det skydd som granen ger
och utan de skuggande sagor
som bara kan berättas av granar.
Vi uppsöker gläntornas ljus
och bor till en del i städer
där vi får för oss
att vi är oss själva.
Ändå är vi vad vi är
ett granskogsfolk
och med gran ska vi myllas"*

Harry Martinson (Ur "Tuvor")



TABLE OF CONTENT

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	8
PROJECT INTRODUCTION	9
BACKGROUND	10
URBANIZATION	12
THE DESIRE OF MOVING (BACK) TO THE COUNTRYSIDE	16
THE DREAM OF A LIFE IN THE COUNTRYSIDE	18
RURAL PROJECTS IN SWEDEN	22
SUSTAINABILITY IN RURAL AREAS	23
SITE	24
WELCOME TO BJÖRKVIK	26
HISTORY	30
THE CORE OF A CENTER	34
BJÖRKVIK TODAY	38
DEMOGRAPHICS	40
MUNICIPAL PLANNING	43
GENERATORS	44
MOVEMENTS	46
CONCEPT DESIGN	48
AIM	50
VISION	51
PROJECT IN RURAL AREAS VS URBAN AREAS	52
STRATEGIES: DEVELOPMENT	54
STRATEGIES: DESIGN	56
LIFESTYLE IN BJÖRKVIK	58
A PLACE TO MEET	66
MULTIFUNCTIONALL	70
SITE DESIGN	72
REFLECTIONS	94
BIBLIOGRAPHICS	96

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This thesis, and the rest of the last five years, would not have been the same without a gold edged group of people.

Thanks to my supervisor Andreas Olsson for peppery and rewarding help.

The loved Bredhäng/Grillkväll/Zoom 2/9 - the gang who have been a part of my life since the first day in Karlskrona five years ago. In moments of happiness, boredom, through thousands of conversations and laughs.

Tons of gratitude to my parents for constant cheers and support through everything, always.

Niklas aka Jenny Andersson.

Finally - Erica och Linnéa, no project without you.

PROJECT INTRODUCTION

RURALIZATION - *moving back to the countryside*

I have been studying spatial planning and urban design for almost five years. During these five years I have faced challenges and issues linked to urban areas, which is natural since most of us live in cities, Me included. Challenges are often about developing areas in cities where thousands of housing need to be built every decade. Building housing is hard in itself but doing it in an ecological, social and economic sustainable way makes it complex. If factors such as rules and laws, design and citizen dialogue are added, urban design turns out to be even more complex. After five years I have learned a lot but I have much more to learn in the future. What, on the other hand, has rubbed off during these years is the focus on cities. I know, that's where most of us live and that's where urban design is needed the most but Sweden is so much more than cities. Research shows that in the last decades urbanization has stagnated - people are not leaving the rural areas for the cities any longer. In many small villages depopulation is still a huge problem but the focus in this thesis will be on how to capture the growing interest in moving to the countryside. The trend of moving to rural areas has been even stronger the last year during the Covid-19-pandemic.

Growing up in the countryside, outside a small village myself, I know what it means. I know what it means as a teenager to take the bus for one hour to school, not to have friends nearby and not being able to walk to a football field. But, I also know how it is to live in a place where you find nature a meter from your door, how the blueberries that you pick on your walk home from a swim a summer morning taste and how it is to know everyone in school - child, teacher or janitor.

For me it is important to develop the countryside because I think that a "levande landsbygd" is sustainability to a very high degree. Therefore I believe it is important that urban designers with all the knowledge we have don't just stay in cities. Life in a city is fantastic for many reasons but that doesn't necessarily mean that people would like to live their whole lives in cities.

What is important for those who live in rural areas? How can urban design contribute to make it easier for people who want to move to the countryside to make the decision to do so? This thesis is a test to convert urban design into rural design.

Siri



BACKGROUND

URBANIZATION

Urbanization has been going on for hundreds of years all over the world. People leave the countryside and move to the city. While discussing urbanization focus is often on what has happened in the last two centuries. In the beginning of the 19th century when urbanization started for real almost 90 percent of people in Sweden lived in the countryside. The reason why people started to move to cities in greater numbers was because of the industrialization. The development was centralized to cities and it was where people have possibilities to get a job. In the following century, the development is progressing at a rapid pace. The demographical breakpoint takes place around 1930 when half of the population lived in the countryside and the other part in cities. The movement of leaving the rural areas for the countryside was at its strongest in the 19th and 20th century but it started much earlier than that. Many researchers mean that urbanization started as early as in the middle ages. While discussing urbanization during the middle ages it has to be taken into consideration that Sweden as a geographical concept has changed significantly during the last 800 years as has the concept of a city. This makes it difficult to compare with today's movement.

In the last decades, the development has reached a status quo. The number of people living in the countryside does no longer decrease and people are no longer moving to the big cities. New research shows that the same development applies to all

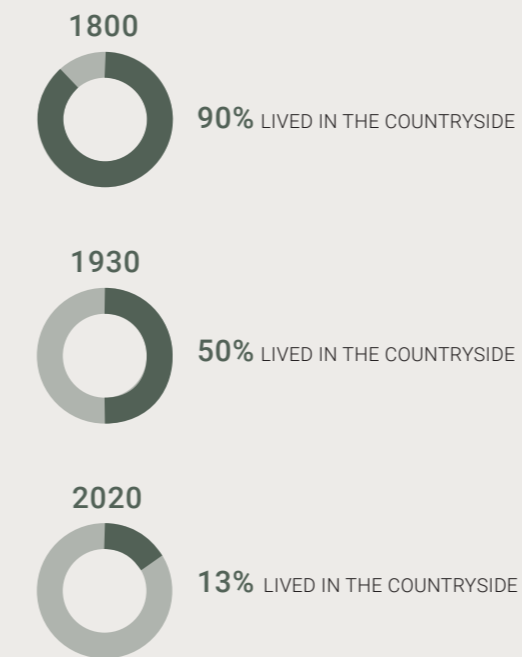
capitals in the Nordic countries. With that said the biggest cities in Sweden; Stockholm, Göteborg och Malmö are still growing. Unlike in the 19th century, the reason is no longer that people move from the rural areas but that refugees come to the cities and that children are born. Even if the general trend is that people are no longer moving to cities it is important to remember all villages in Sweden, and other Nordic countries, that are suffering from relocation. These places will not be a focus in this thesis. Focus will be on increasing opportunities for those who choose to move to the countryside. Even if the trend for urbanization in Sweden has stabilized, urbanization will still go on strongly outside Sweden. Researchers mean that in the year 2050 the urbanization will reach new levels and 75 percent of the inhabitants in the world are predicted to live in cities.

Why do people move to cities?

Even if urbanization is no longer a fact to the same extent as before, some people are still moving to cities. From a historical point of view, the reason why people moved to cities was to increase their quality of life. With better living conditions and a higher possibility to earn money life in the cities was attractive for many individuals. The reason why people leave the rural areas for the cities today vary between different places. For many people the labour market is the strongest reason to move to the cities. Other reasons why people move may be the vicinity to health and social care services.

The social aspects are another reason why people move while factors as culture, sport and low taxes do not seem to be a reason. Why people move to either cities or rural areas is probably a mix of more than one reason.

URBANIZATION: DEVELOPMENT

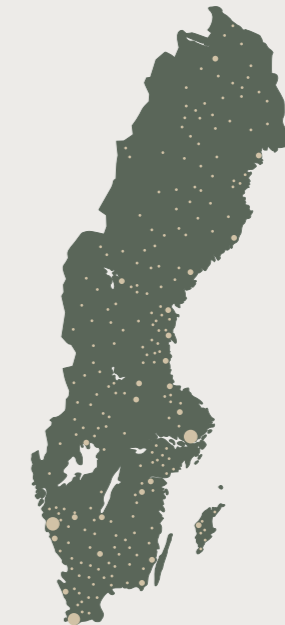


URBANIZATION



As mentioned earlier the biggest cities in Sweden; Stockholm, Göteborg och Malmö are still growing. That is because of refugees and that children are born. People who move from these three cities move most often to smaller cities och villages next to the big city...

... but people do also move here. To the rest of the country. In Sweden, there are dozens of smaller cities and hundreds of villages and between these there are huge amounts of rural areas.



MOVING TO THE COUNTRYSIDE

The desire of moving (back) to the countryside

As urbanization has stabilized the interest to leave the cities for the countryside has grown. The interest to live a sustainable life considering the environmental impact we have as individual has grow. A side effect of that is that people search for possibilities to be self-catering and grow their own food. to be able to do that you need space such as a garden, which is easily in the countryside. The desire of growing our own food is not the only reason for people to move. A lifestyle where you have space for your whole family and where you are able to live close to nature is something that gets more popular every year. Researchers tell that the biggest reason for moving to rural areas is the closeness to nature and closeness to the family. It is clear that most of the people moving to the countryside move back to where they grew up or where their partners grew up. For those with children, letting their children grow up in the countryside is a reason as well.



THE DREAM OF A LIFE IN THE COUNTRYSIDE

Since the interest for moving out to rural areas has grown for the last decades and especially the last year I turned to the Internet to find out how the discussion is going on right now. On Facebook I find this.



Hej,
Jag ser många skriva här (och i andra grupper) om längtan bort från stan. Jag längtade också, och för 6 månader sedan tog jag, min man och vår son tag i det och bor nu i en liten kommun mitt i Västra Götaland. Det är också kommunen där jag är uppväxt och lovade mig själv att aldrig flytta tillbaka till då jag dagen efter studenten flyttade hemifrån.

De 11 år som sedan gick tog mig till Göteborg, USA och Stockholm. Jag ångrar inte alls att jag flyttade härifrån, men jag älskar att vi flyttat tillbaka.

Till skillnad från Stockholm så är tempot här lägre, boendet billigare, naturen mer tillgänglig och mentaliteten mer familjär. Jag fick dessutom möjligheten att ha kvar mitt jobb och arbeta på distans även efter Corona.

Jag vet att många vill göra en liknande resa och jag vill bara uppmuntra er till att våga. Det finns så många små kommuner där ute som i flera år avbefolkats och de behöver sådana som ni. Folk som brinner och vill leva ett liv med mindre stress. Jag tror på riktigt att vi som land kommer må bättre om urbaniseringen inte fortsätter i samma takt.

Dessutom är min spaning att de flesta arbetsgivare (där arbetet tillåter) kommer behöva tillåta mer och mer distansarbete i framtiden, för vi kommer vara så många brighta och kloka personer som inte vill trängas på tunnelbanor och spårvagnar varje dag.

Så ta chansen och flytta säger jag 😊

Min tvekan att flytta ifrån storstad till mindre stad skulle vara utbudet till skolor och aktiviteter när barnen växer upp. I småbarnsåldern kan jag tänka mig att det skulle vara skönt att inte bo i storstad men när de blir lite äldre (säg efter 13) så är jag väldigt osäker på att det skulle vara rätt för dem. Hur tänker ni om det?

Gilla · Svvara · 2 d



Precis vad jag kommer göra själv!! 🤗 nu i helgen flyttar jag upp i norska fjällen, bland fjäll, älvar, fjordar och vattenfall. Staden o lägenheten mitt i Oslo har blivit mindre i om Corona situation och naturen har åter kallat. 🤗🤗🤗 är så glad att jag tog detta beslut, glad att flera gör det. Trädkram 😊

Gilla · Svvara · 1 d



Har gjort en liknande resa och håller helt med. Storstadslivet har sin charm, men saknar definitivt inte stressen, trängseln, trafiken, de skyhöga boendekostnaderna mm. Men allt har ju sin tid. Ångrar definitivt inte att jag flyttade från min lilla hemstad när jag var ung. Men nu - så skönt med en lugn lunk. Saknar dock all mumsig och varierad takeoutmat!

Gilla · Svvara · 2 d



Tack för att du delar med dig! Låter så härligt, och det är många som funderar i de banorna. Inklusivt jag själv. Jag är uppvuxen i Stockholm och mår inte bra av Stockholmspulsen. För min del ställer jobbet till det, men möjligheterna till ett flexibelt jobb efter corona är nog ganska stora (hoppas!). 🌱❤

Gilla · Svvara · 3 d



Kommer från Göteborg, bor nu på en gård strax utanför Luleå. 20 min till stan, äger ett stort fantastiskt hus och 5 hektar mark - och vi gör det för mindre pengar än en etta i centrala Göteborg. Det innebär en sån jäkla frihet i att skapa det livet vi vill leva, både ekonomiskt men också aktivitetsmässigt. Vi är mer ute - vill vara mer ute - och allting är bara lite enklare. Avstånden kanske är lite längre här uppe, men det tar ändå lika lång tid för mig att ta mig till stan som det tar för min pappa att åka spårvagn från Mölndal till centrala Göteborg.

Gilla · Svvara · 3 d · Redigerad



Heja er! Vi har gjort i stort sett samma sak. Bott inne inne i storstadspuls i 10 år. Sönderstressad själ som resultat. Orkade knappt se människor mer. Så vi köpte hus i barndomsbyn och flyttade för en månad sen. Bästa beslutet! 🤗

Gilla · Svvara · 3 d



Min erfarenhet är motsatt. Flyttade till mindre ställe och det blev fruktansvärt med pendligen, inte alls sådär lugnt som alla pratade om.. För mig blev det bara värre med stress och livspusslet. Träffade knappt barnen eftersom jag var tvungen att åka från hemmet kl 06.30 och var hemma igen vid 19. Längtan till vänner och närhet är stor. Det kan säkert vara härligt om man är gillar småstadslivet men mitt råd är att verkligen kolla upp jobb framför allt.

Gilla · Svvara · 3 d



Hejja dig! Är det en sak pandemin har gjort med oss är att inse hur liten betydelse den fysiska platsen för arbete kommer att ha i många branscher framöver. Bo där hjärta och själ mår bra, allt annat går att lösa. Lycka till! 🤗🙌 #dalkulla

Gilla · Svvara · 3 d



Härligt att höra!
Vi är precis på väg att göra samma resa och flytta hem till byn jag aldrig trodde att jag skulle komma tillbaka till för att lämna storstaden och kunna bo billigare och lugnare.
Jag har också samma spaning som du angående distansarbete (och har haft i många år) 😊

Gilla · Svvara · 3 d



THE DREAM OF A LIFE IN THE COUNTRYSIDE

The Facebook conversation on the previous page is in Swedish. In a short translation, it starts with a woman telling that she and her family just left the city after years of thinking. Six months ago they moved back to where she grew up after having spent a couple of years on different locations around the world and most recently in Stockholm. Because of the pandemic, she is able to work from home and will continue doing that when the pandemic is over. She hopes that her story can help people with the same thoughts. She states that she knows many people who would like to go the same way as she did. She ends her post with - we are so many bright and wise people who do not want to be crowded on subways or trams in the future. (translation by me).

Those who have answered her tell that they have the same dream and want to do the same journey and are planning to do that now when they are able to work from home. Some answers suggest that they want to move from the city but are scared of leaving what they have in the city such as a job or a circle of friends. On the other hand, one answer shares the experience of moving to the countryside and then moving back because that person was missing the city's opportunities. People also tell that they have the same experience of leaving the city for a life in the countryside as the post creator, they feel very happy over it.

FACTORS THAT PREVENT PEOPLE FROM MOVING TO RURAL AREAS

CAREER: The work is placed in a big city. Moving to the countryside means that people need to quit their job

SOCIAL LIFE: The circle of friends are living in cities. Living on the countryside makes it hard to meet friends or go to e.g. restaurants or activities

UNCERTAIN: People who always have been living in cities, sometimes feel that they do not know how to live in the countryside. *What if I don't like it?*

Covid-19

We are now in a very special period of time and further development is extra hard to predict. Definitely the pandemic has influenced how we see our living conditions and what alternatives are at hand. Since this is a change that is happening right now it is hard to find research about it and research that shows how it all will end but we know without doubt that we will not go back to the same way of life as before. The fact that people have become more interested in living in the countryside since they do not have to live where they work is evident among brokerage firms in Sweden. The interest in houses in rural areas has increased significantly the last year and at the same time the interest for small apartments in cities have decreased. The Swedish newspaper Dagens Nyheter has had a series of reports during the spring of 2021 where the reader can follow people who have left the city for a life in the countryside. It is not a coincidence that Dagens Nyheter has this series in the spring of 2021; the report series is about how people have been affected by Covid-19. Some of those who participate in the series tell that they have thought for a long period of time to move but the fact that they are now able to work at home was what made them make the decision.

Work from home

It was clear in the conversation on Facebook that many people have been taking the chance to move to the countryside during the pandemic. One reason is that they are able to work from home and don't need to live where their job is located. There are loads of professions where you are not able to work from home regardless of reasons such as Covid-19. But, the conditions for doing that have changed for many professions during the pandemic and everything indicates that many workplaces will enable more teleworking in the future as well. Working from home does not fit everyone. Many people miss the social life with colleagues, the technical equipment such as fast wifi, a printer, a scanner etc. Some people also miss a proper desk, a place for meetings, a quiet place for digital meetings. Working from home gives many people possibilities to control their time to a greater extent but it does not contribute to small talk at the printer or a relaxed laugh with your colleagues while you are having lunch.

RURAL PROJECTS IN SWEDEN

In more than half of the municipalities in Sweden, the population in rural areas is increasing. As the interest in living in the countryside increases among individuals, the interest in the architecture industry also increases. In Sweden research and interest have resulted in rural projects in the country. Discussing development in rural areas has become important for architecture firms as well as for municipalities and projects are now emerging in villages in many places in Sweden. What many of the projects have in common is the possibility for

people to keep their job. Another recurrent aspect is the share-lifestyle. It can appear as a co-working space, a shop where people living in the village work or a place where different activities can take place and the inhabitants share their knowledge to teach others. It is clear that development in the countryside is run by people with commitment and judging by these articles and with my own experience commitment in small villages is not hard to find.



arkitektur.se

Resan till det nya landet - Tidskriften Arkitektur

Historien om svensk landsbygd skrivs om av aktiva förnyare, konstaterar Angelica Åkerman i boken En annan landsbygd. I ett utdrag...

A new way of living in the countryside. 21-02-15

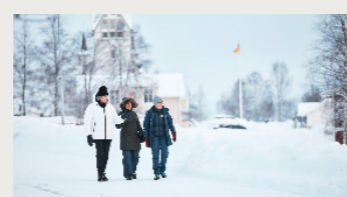


www.landlantbruk.se

Lena Johansson: "Inte längre sant att Sveriges landsbygd avfolkas" | Landlantbruk.se

Längtan till landet uppstod faktiskt innan coronapandemin bröt ut. Fler och fler tröttnar på att köa för bostad, förskoleplats och på väg till jobbet.

The longing for the countryside started before Covid-19

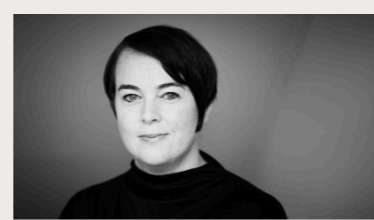


arkitekten.se

Duved blir pilot för framtidens samhällsbyggnad - Arkitekten.se

Duvedmodellen ska visa att en by i Jämtland kan stå modell för en hållbar samhällsutveckling genom att ta utgångspunkt i det lokala.

A project in Duved, Jämtland focus on sustainable rural development with local attractiveness.



arkitektur.se

Malin Zimm: Längtan till landet - Tidskriften Arkitektur

Det är samma visa. Alltså bokstavigt talat samma visa: den vi kallar Vintern rasat, som egentligen heter Längtan till landet...

Arkitektur's editor-in-chief writes about the longing for the countryside. 20

SUSTAINABILITY IN RURAL AREAS

Sustainability is often discussed on the basis of three categories; social, ecological and economic. Often, the categories intertwine but contradictions can easily occur. When something improves it is often required that something else suffers. This means that priorities between the three categories need to be set. When it comes to ecological sustainability it is often a matter of reducing carbon dioxide emissions. A challenge when it comes to development in places where the distances are too long to cycle or walk and public transport is deficient. Whether a car is a must or not in the countryside is a challenge for anyone who will develop rural areas. Researchers raise the issue with cities that develop for car-free inner cities. Something that makes it hard for people who commute to cities by car. Hopefully, the development of public transport also applies to rural areas since all indications show that public transport will be of great importance in the future development of cities. Researches state that individual car ownership will decrease and instead cars will be owned collectively. A development that is possible to bring to rural areas as well.

In 2015 leader agreed to 17 Sustainable Global Goals. One of them *Sustainable cities and communities* are directly connected to urban design. Goal number 11 focuses on cities but can be translated into a rural context as well, especially in Sweden where the country consists of a lot of rural areas. The goal is divided into targets, this is three of them.



Strong national and regional development planning

Social and environmental link between urban areas, pre-urban areas and rural areas by a strong national and regional development planning.



Reduce the environmental impact of cities

Reduce the adverse per capita environmental impact of cities.



Provide access to safe and inclusive green and public spaces

Provide universal access to safe, inclusive and accessible, green and public spaces, in particular for women and children, older persons and persons with disabilities.



SITE



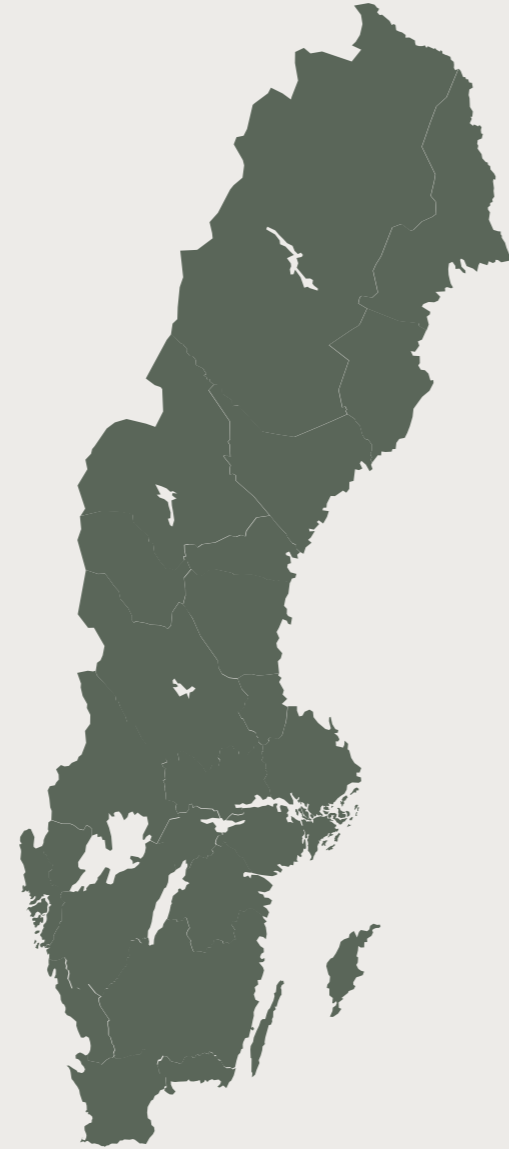
The site for this thesis could be in any of these hundreds of villages in Sweden since my focus is on developing rural areas. I chose the village where I grew up, therefore I know it very well. The village is one of a few I have seen with a child's eyes, a teenager's eyes and a grown-up's eyes. From my childhood in the village, I have learned what is important for life there, the mentality and the people. My expectation is that my findings and lessons from this thesis can be used in villages in the rest of Sweden.

Welcome to Björkvik.

WELCOME TO BJÖRKVIK

In the east of Sweden in Sörmland within commuting distance from three cities; Katrineholm, Nyköping and Norrköping, the small village Björkvik is located. In this sense one could say Björkvik is quite centrally situated. Although rurally located, all the advantages that a city can provide are within reach.

Björkvik is a typical Swedish village with a population of 500 people of varied ages. The center consists of a general store where people buy their food, pick up the delivery from Systembolaget, the pharmacy and deliveries from internet shopping. The general store is the natural meeting point where people of all ages meet each other. It is located where people move the most. People visit the general store when they refuel their car at the gas station or when they go to or from the bus stop, both of which are located nearby. Children pass the store on their way home from school. Except for the general store the school located a few hundred meters from the core of the center is an important generator. The school is for children up to grade 6 and is located next to a pre-school. The school area also consists of a library, two sports halls and associated sports fields for football etc. Except for these generators, the village has medical service, a home for the elderly, hairdresser and many small companies.



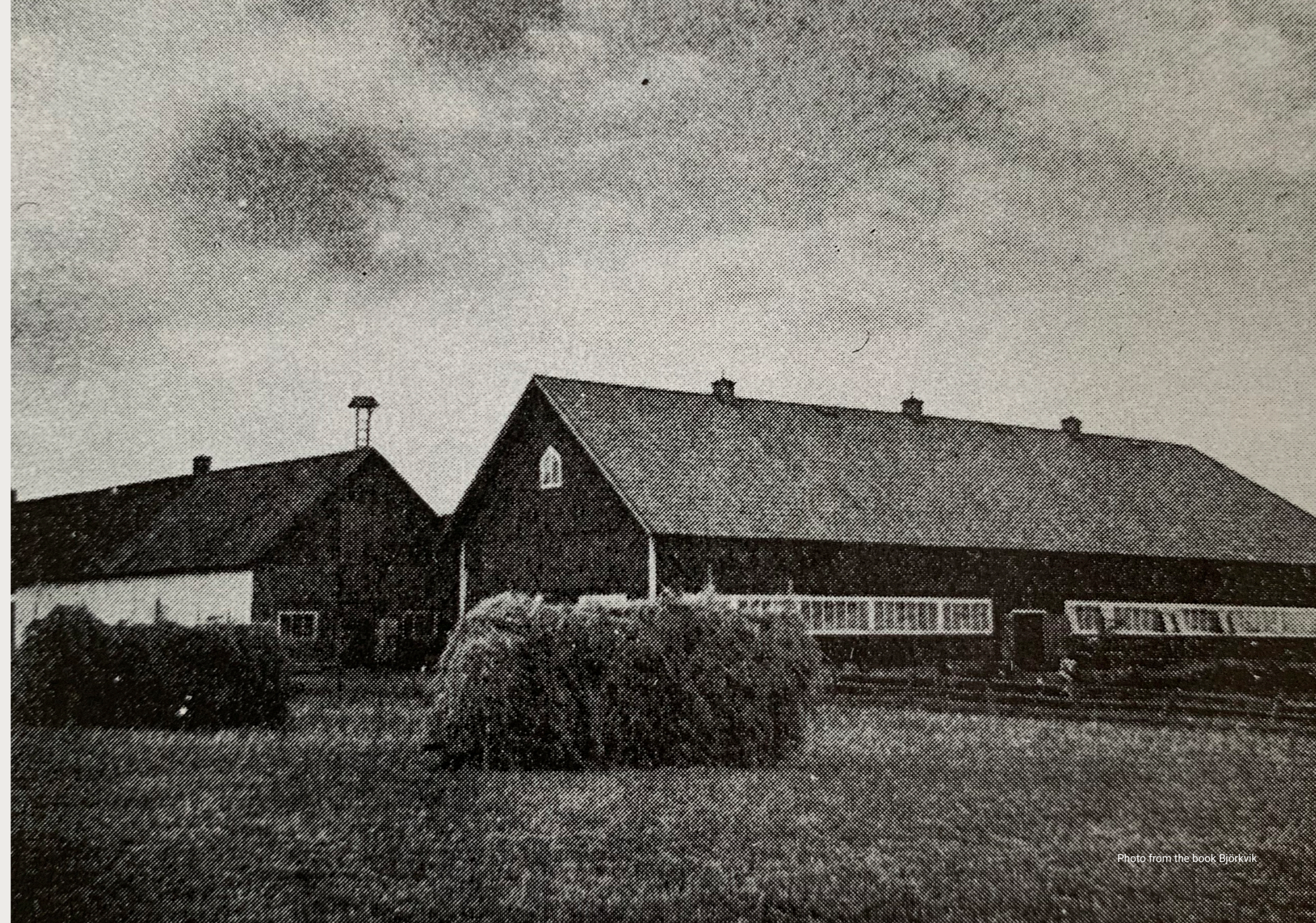
FROM BJÖRKVIK TO...	KATRINEHOLM	NYKÖPING	NORRKÖPING	STOCKHOLM
	37 min	50 min	-	-
	29 min	28 min	40 min	1 h 32 min

HISTORY

The first time the village Björkvik is mentioned in a text is in 1314 when, because of a papal decree, a list was made of the parishes of Södermanland. At that time the village was not much more than a few cottages and a church. In the 14:th century, no cities were located nearby. The surroundings were only forests, lakes, small villages, and agricultural land. As to why Björkvik is where it is, only speculations are at hand. The location seems to have been a place with great possibilities for farming and the surrounding pantry of deep forests and big lakes meant that the area had good opportunities to operate as a place of residence. The village grew and a typical Swedish village emerged. People who lived in the village the following centuries worked on the farms, in factories such as a limestone factory and an iron factory. During the 19th century the population grew and new schools, stores and factories emerged. When the population reached its highest point at the beginning of the 20th century there were no fewer than eight schools in Björkvik. When

industrialization came to Sweden the first step was transforming the agricultural economy into an industrial economy which was a hard strike on farmers and their employees in the countryside. Although time has passed many old houses from 18th and 19th century still are inhabited. Traces from agriculture and cultural landscape are also important elements in the landscape today where they are found next to the farms that are still in use. Because that is how it is, the agricultural land is still in use and an important part of the landscape and for people who do farming for a living.

Since Björkvik reached the top of its population curve with almost 3000 inhabitants at the beginning of the 20th century much has happened. The focus of development in the last century has been on the surrounding cities. But not to forget, even if the population has decreased, the village with 500 inhabitants today has a lot of service and facilities.

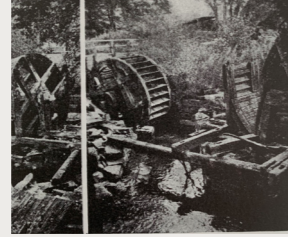


HISTORY

Hundreds of finds from the Stone Age



Virå bruk, an ironwork from 1623



Cottage from 18th century



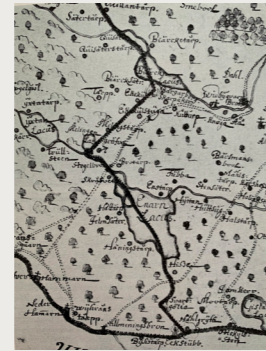
Limestone quarry in 19th century



In year 1869 the church burn down and a The old church is still in use



The church was build 1260-1300 and was one of the finest in Södermanland



Map from 1677



During 18th century loads of manors was built



Pharmacy in 19th century



During 19th century Björkvik had seven schools

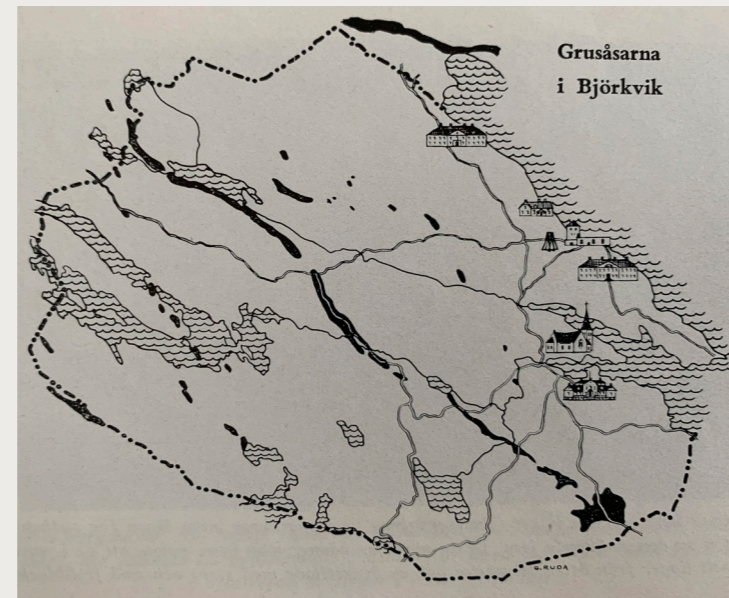


New church was build already year 1875.

THE CORE OF A CENTER

How we live and how we use our surroundings have changed over time. Hundreds of years back life was something totally different from today. The infrastructure consisted of horses and carriages and roads were small gravel roads which meandered through a landscape of forests and agricultural land. The center in many villages was undefined. Almost every village consisted of a church, small houses and farms. During the 18th and 19th century many mansions were built which functioned as cores of the village. At the end of the 19th century, the core as it is today began to take shape. As the population decreased the number of schools and stores also decreased and the best way was to place it all in the same place. The result of that - a distinct center - emerged. Even if the development means that most of the population these days live in the center of Björkvik the outskirts are still important.

Unlike in a city, generators located in the outskirts such as places for swimming, riding schools etc. of the village are important. With that said the focus in this thesis will be on the core of the center. Since there is where most people move and for the identity of Björkvik a distinct center is important.



Mansions in Björkvik 18th century



A horse and carriage outside Danbyholm in the beginning of 20th century.

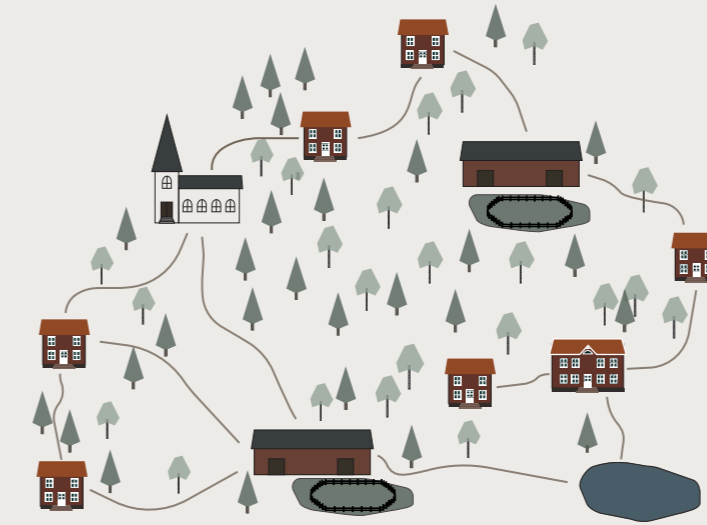
THE CORE OF A CENTER



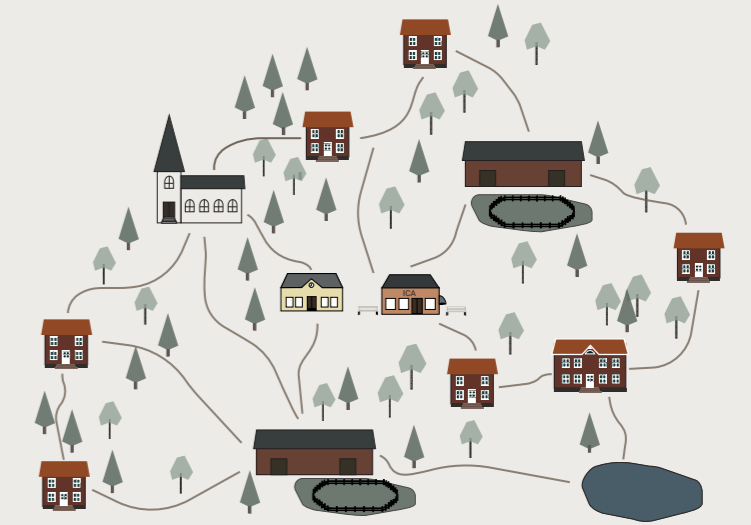
As late as on the 1960s the center core had not fully emerged



Map from today



A village without a clear center



A center begins to emerge

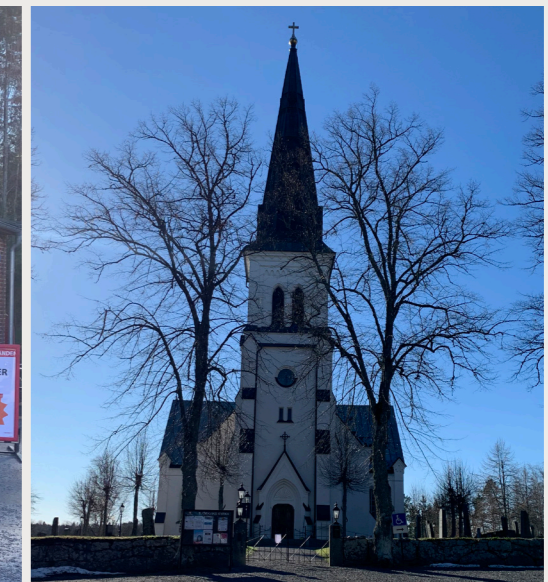
BJÖRKVIK TODAY

Björkvik consists of a center where a general store is located. The store is an important generator in the core of the center. People go there to do food shopping but also to pick up deliveries from Systembolaget, the pharmacy etc. And above all, to meet people. Except for the general store the core consists of a gas station, a bus stop and an empty bus garage. The F-6 school is located a few hundred meters from the core of the center where we also find the preschool, library and two sport halls. Except for these generators Björkvik also has a home for the elderly, a doctor, a hairdresser and many smaller companies located in both the core and in the outskirt of the village. The church, a stately church built 1875 when the old church burned down, is placed on a hill and is a meeting place for people engaged in the church but also for those who go there for weddings, graduations and funerals.



Much exists but what is missing?

For being a village with 500 inhabitants the offer of services is high. The core of the center is a well-attended place but also a place with a lot of empty spaces that could be better utilized together facilities to one place in another way. A few years ago the community house burned down. The community house where a place where people gathered, had parties, funerals and where associations had meetings. The community house has been temporarily replaced of another brick building in the center but the village is in need of a new community house.



DEMOGRAPHICS

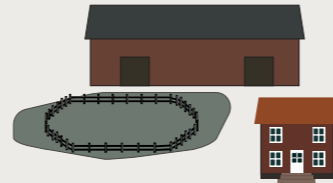
500 INHABITANTS

The last decades the population has stagnated. Today live around 500 people i Björkvik.



89% LIVES IN SINGLE FAMILY HOUSES

The rest of the people live in rowhouses and a few in apartments. To some of the single family houses a farm is connected.



100% HAVE GREEN AREAS < 200 M

Everyone that lives in Björkvik have less than 200 m to a green area or a lake.



89 CHILDREN IN SCHOOL

The school is a F-6- school where 89 children study



DEMOGRAPHICS

Why do people live in Björkvik?

Reasers mention several reasons why people live in rural areas when talking to people in Björkvik the reasons is very much the same. A major motivator driving more people to live in rural areas is proximity to nature. Nature is something that all groups af ages seem to value as one of the most important elements of their life in Björkvik. Having their family in Björkvik is for many a reason as well. People also mention the distance to nearby cities so they easily can commute to their job or go shopping. For those who grew up in Björkvik and after years living somewhere else they often return with their children since they want to give a similar childhood to them which they had.



"I live here because of nature"

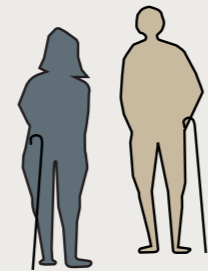
"I wanted to run my own salon so I could control my own time. In Björkvik I can have the job I always dreamt about and still be close to my kids. I have a lot of customers here so actually I don't miss anything from working in a city"



Who will move here?

The focus groups for the development in this project will be:

- People who already live here.
- People who grew up here and then moved somewhere else and now want to move back
- People who have never lived in the countryside but would like to move there.



I have everything I need here. I use the nature, go to the shop a few times every week - I use to order wine and pick it up there and sometimes I work in the church."

MUNICIPAL PLANNING

Rural planning in Katrineholm

Björkvik is located in the municipality of Katrineholm. As an appendix to the comprehensive plan 2030 from the municipality of Katrineholm there is *The comprehensive plan - countryside 2030*. In this plan the municipality discusses how development will take place in the villages within the municipality. For Björkvik the municipality tells that well-developed public transport to Katrineholm is one of the key factors in future development. It is also mentioned that new housing is needed and according to the municipality Björkvik has the possibility to grow with 170 new houses. A development that would increase the population enormously. However, there is no clear implementation plan for how this development shall be done. The municipality is also not clear with if the development should be done gradually with small interventions or if all these 170 houses will be built at the same time.



GENERATORS



A lot of the generators in Björkvik are connected to sport. As in many other small villages in Sweden have teams in football, indoor bandy, horse riding, trampoline and bmx. They are spread out all over the village and in their way tie the village together. Generators in rural areas are not working in the same ways as in urban areas. In a small village a riding school or a football court outside the center of the village is important for people in the village. The football court for eg are not only of importance for people playing football. There are people in the village who would not miss a single match and every weekend go there to meet neighbors and old friends. In the outskirts of Björkvik a self-picking strawberry land is located. Even if it is only possible to pick strawberries there few weeks every year it is a big generator in the village. People come from the surroundings to pick their own strawberries. For teenagers in the village it is an important generator as well since that is where they have their first job.



Many of the generators are located next to the road which goes to the old church

MOVEMENTS

The main road (yellow line) through the village is a wide road with speed limits of 40 km/h. This is also where the bus goes. Along the road there is a walkway. Since bikelines do not exist in the village the bikers share space with either cars or pedestrians. People also move in west-east, from the housing area, passing the core of the center on their way to the school. In the housing area, people go around by car, bike or walking.



MAIN ROAD TODAY





CONCEPT DESIGN

AIM: *Make urban design to rural design and to take care of rural areas in the same ways as urban areas. That can simplifies the decision to move to the countryside*

VISION 2060:

- 600 inhabitants
- A natural place to meet
- Bring your career to Björkvik
- A variation of living conditions

PROJECT IN RURAL AREAS VS URBAN AREAS

City development projects often imply thousands of new housing, a new center, new services and new parks since that is what is needed. That demand does not exist in rural areas. In a village where 500 people live, adding two houses is a change, something that in a city would have passed unnoticed. What I also have noticed is that respect for nature is even more important in rural areas than in cities. A lot of people know the place very well, have lived at the same place for generations, have memories of places and know, or even are, the landowner. Since a motivation driving many of the recent inhabitants live in more rural location is its proximity to nature, care must be taken to preserve the natural environment when developing land in such a location. A careful balance must be struck between exploitation and conservation.

Small changes - big difference.

How can small changes lead to big differences? By adding something that does not exist there today new possibilities will be the result. In my design of Björkvik it will be a place where people can meet. People who are in need of a proper desk when they are working from home, people who want to leave their homes during the day and meet others or people who just want fast wifi. What if this place can be combined with a place where people already meet - the shop. More facilities can be added such as a lunch restaurant and rooms for meetings. Another small change with a big difference and a prerequisite for the new design in Björkvik is to

move the existing bus stop from the middle of the center to a place next to the road that goes through the center. That change releases valuable space in the core of the center. In the outskirts of the village some single family houses and terraced houses will be added, not a big change in itself but a development needed to be able to add services in the core of the center and for further development.

Developing places needs to be done in two dimensions. The design shall enable people to move to the site and at the same time show consideration for those who already live on the site and enable improvement of their living conditions. The focus of this thesis will be on the group of people who don't live in the parish of Björkvik but could be found e.g. in the Facebook group and have a dream of moving to more rural areas. What can make them make the decision to leave town in favor of the countryside? The other focus group will be those who already live in Björkvik.

"The municipalities must not only grow or manage a declining population base. they must also create a good, lasting and attractive environment for municipal citizens from a social, economic and ecological perspective"

(Broström & Parment 2017).

My own translation



STRATEGIES: DEVELOPMENT

Strategies to facilitate the development of Björkvik. The strategies for the development will work as a central thread throughout the project.



BRING YOUR CAREER TO THE COUNTRYSIDE

Developing places where people can work so people who live on the countryside do not have to give up their careers when they move to rural areas. Enable working conditions so the geographic place where people live won't be a problem for their career.



DIVERSE LIVING POSSIBILITIES

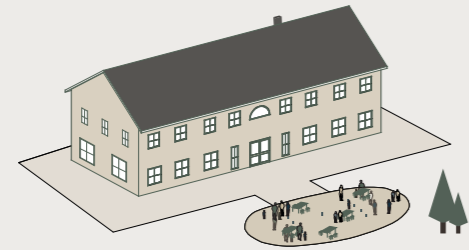
Designing for different house typologies to respond to the demand. It should be possible to live in the countryside even if you do not want to live in a big villa with a big garden.



CONNECT THE CITY AND THE COUNTRYSIDE

By connecting the countryside to the city the gap between the geographical places reduces. Connecting the city and the countryside can be done with public transport but can also be done by digitized connections such as well functioned delivering services etc.

STRATEGIES: DESIGN



MULTIFUNCTIONALITY

A supply of multifunctionality gives the opportunity for several activities at the same place. When developing in a small village. It is not possible to build a new building for every activity.



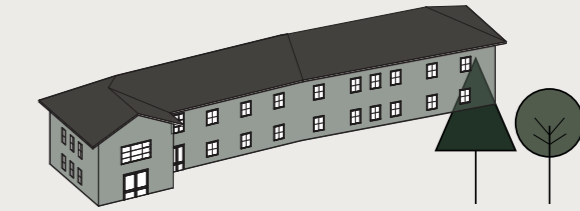
RESPECT THE NATURE

A major motivator driving more people to live in rural areas is proximity to nature. Developing rural areas must be done with respect and care to nature.



LET IT TAKE SPACE

It is not about adding as much as possible. When developing in Björkvik every change is a big difference for those who live here. Every new building is worth a lot of space.



MEETING POINT

Since the community house burned down a few years ago the village stands without a natural place where people can meet.

LIFESTYLE IN BJÖRKVIK

Living in Björkvik can be done in many different ways. To offer diverse living possibilities is important for the development of Björkvik. By offering a different type of housing more can feel it attractive to move to Björkvik.

Moving from a city to Björkvik can be a big step. For some, the closeness to nature is the biggest reason they want to live in the countryside. Changing an apartment to a villa with a big garden is a big step. For these people apartments will be added. Then they can live close to nature but they still not need to take care of a big garden etc.

For some people, one of the biggest reasons why they live in the countryside is because of the

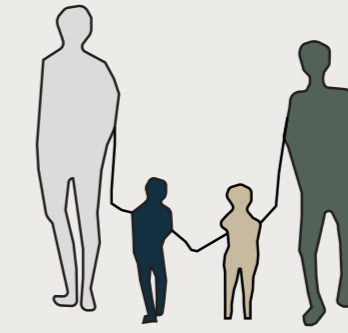
possibility to afford a big house with a big garden where they can do farming and grow their own plants. For them single family houses with a garden will be added.

Some people want something between. When a villa feels too big and an apartment too small a row house can be perfect. It can be the first step for people moving to the countryside. Rowhouses are also an alternative for the elderly that have lived in Björkvik for their whole lives and do not want to move since their family live in Björkvik. Coming to an age when the house feels too big and the garden takes too much time a rowhouse can be the perfect solution.

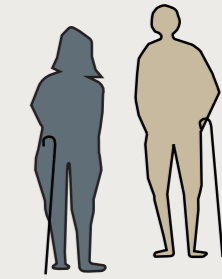
Lets meet some fiction people who possilbe could live in Björkvik!



30-year old Jenny



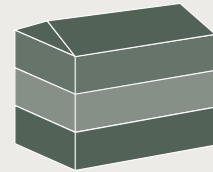
The Lundgren family



Senior citizens; family Lindroth



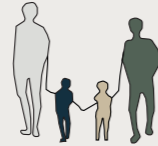
30-year old Jenny lived in Nyköping before but since Covid-19 she is teleworking. It made her make the decision she always dreamed of. Living closer to nature. Now she is working at the jobcenter in Björkvik



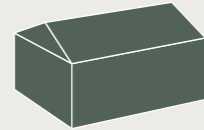
She left her apartment in Nyköping because she wanted to live close to nature but still in an apartment.



She lives in an apartment but still have nature as her neighbour.



The Lundgren family live in Björkvik because of family connection to the village. It is also important for them to let their children grow up outside a city.



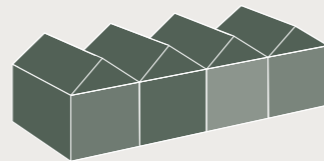
One of the reasons why they moved was the opportunity to live in a large house.



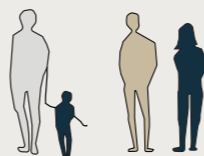
Since they love gardening a big garden was important for them.



The old couple Lindroth have always been living in Björkvik.



A few years ago they moved from their big villa to a rowhouse since the house and the garden was too big for them.



They chose to stay in Björkvik since their children with families live in the village.

The apartment building is placed in the core of the center next to the only existing apartment building.



The single family houses are located a bit more in the outskirts of Björkvik. The single family houses are nevertheless equally important for the development of the village.



The row houses are located both in the core of the center but also a few hundred meters away from the core.

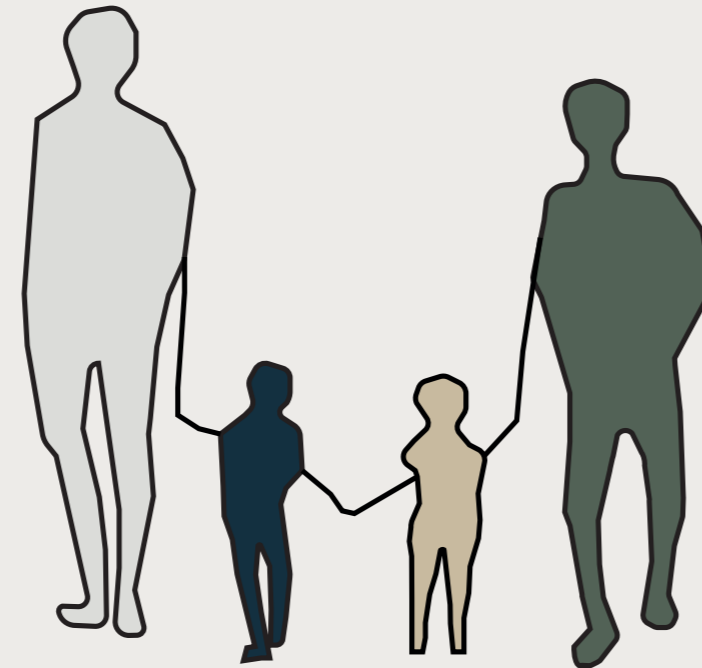


LIFESTYLE IN BJÖRKVIK

Living in Björkvik can mean several different lifestyles. To get a closer look at how life in the village can look like we will meet the fictional Lundgren family.

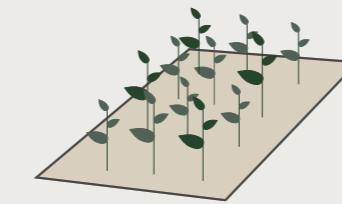
MEET THE LUNDGREN FAMILY

The Lundgren family consists of Lars, a doctor working in Katrineholm. Lars grew up in Björkvik and after fifteen years of studies and travel, he returned together with his husband José. José grew up in Stockholm and has never lived in the countryside before but because he enjoys working in the garden this life fits him perfectly. Lars and José have two children - Mira and Noah. Mira and Noah go to school in Björkvik and in their spare time they play football in the Björkvik team, do bmx cycling and play with friends. When Lars and José have a lot to do on their jobs Mira and Noah's grandparents can pick them up from school.



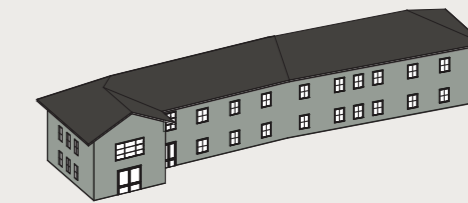
José who has never lived in the countryside before feels at ease in this environment. "If I miss my family they can visit us here, they will be here in an hour and a half. Our house is big enough for almost all our relatives"

The Lundgren family likes interior design and houseworking. A big house where every member in the family have space for their interest.



To the house belongs a large garden where the family have a gardenland. They plant vegetables and potatoes to eat and flowers to nice bouquets.

Lars works at the hospital in Katrinholm, he takes the bus every morning and returns with the bus in the afternoon.



José is self employed and rent a desk at the jobcenter in the center of Björkvik. He use to bike there so he easily can pick up the children from school in the afternoons.

A PLACE TO MEET

The conditions for working from home have changed for many professions during the pandemic and everything indicates that many workplaces will enable more teleworking in the future as well. In addition to that, Björkvik is a village with a lot of entrepreneurs with small companies. For the future, that means that there will be a high demand of a workplace for people working from home. As mentioned before teleworking is a good way of working for parts of the population. Having said that, many people miss social interactions. To promote life in rural areas research clearly shows that a prerequisite for leaving the city is to keep the same job. If the solution is to work from an unspecified physical location, teleworking will probably continue in one way or another after the pandemic. A development many companies are already promoting. Social interaction is not the only thing that is lost when working from home. Many people are in need of technical equipment such as a printer, a scanner and reliable and fast wifi. Working from home can also be problematic if meetings are to be held. Space and silence can be hard to find at home if you live together with others.

In the new design of the center core in Björkvik, a place for teleworkers will be added. A place where above mentioned facilities will be included. The new working place will be a building that includes an office landscape, meeting rooms for physical

meetings but also for digital meetings and the technical equipment that can be needed during the working day. The principal is that you rent a place at the jobcenter. In future development, that can be done in different levels, some will use it every day and some need to have two meetings every week etc. Since some of the people who do teleworking need to visit their company sometimes, a carpool can be connected to the working place. In the further development of the renting process, a higher rent level can include access to a car as well. Since a challenge for sustainable development in the countryside is solutions for car usage like a carpool can reduce the use of the car.

The jobcenter is a place for people who work for a big company, are self-employed or just want to rent a desk. Beyond work this building will also be a place to meet for the rest of the village. The existing shop will move here and more space will be allocated. Connected to the shop a lunch restaurant will be added. Research shows that people who work from home miss having lunch with colleagues or other friends. By adding lunch possibilities in the core of the center, not only people who work at the working center can have lunch there even pensioners or other inhabitants in the village can go there for lunch. This will be a social place where everybody can meet.

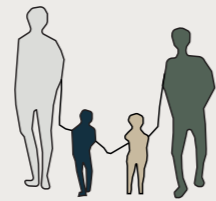


A PLACE TO MEET

People with different agendas can come together and meet each other even if its jusyt for a quick "hi" when they buy milk on their way home.



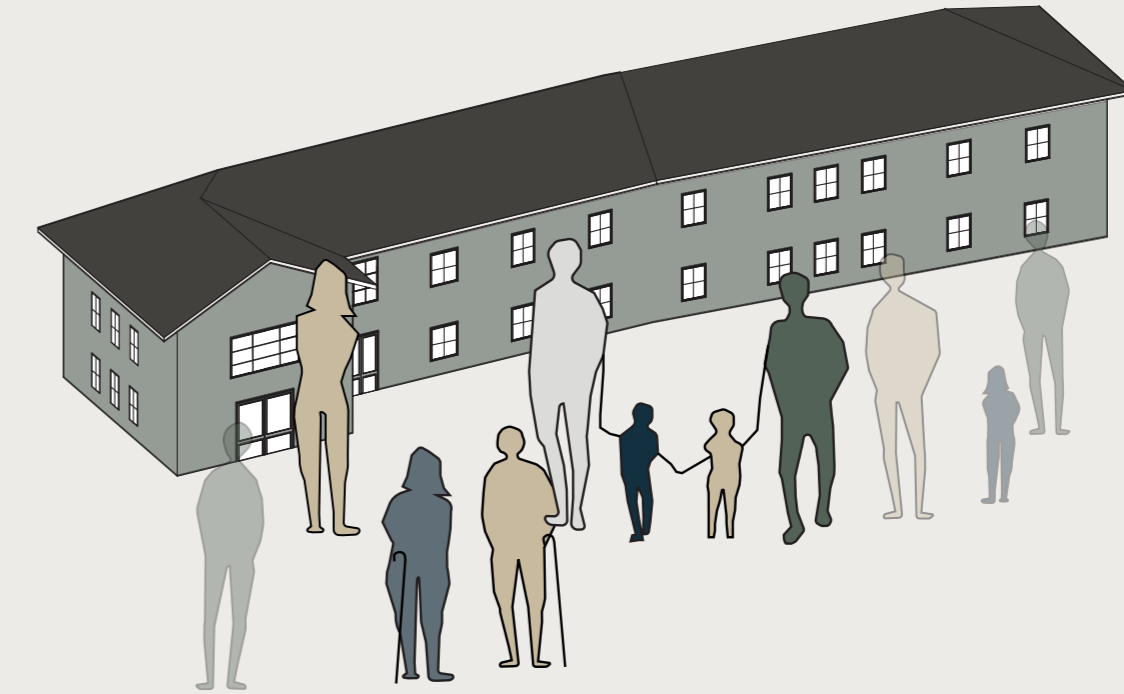
I SPEND EVERYDAY ON THE OFFICE IN THE CENTER



WE NEED TO BUY MILK FOR THE PANNCAKES

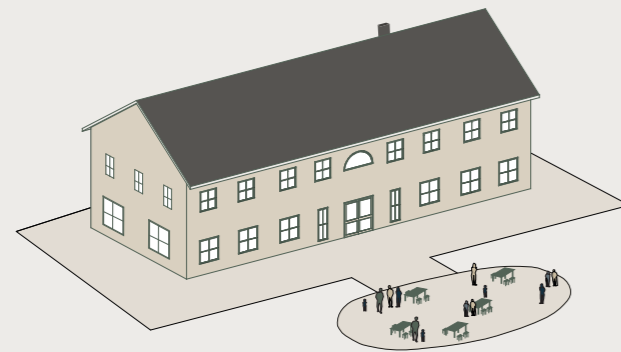


LET'S HAVE LUNCH TOGETHER WITH GERT AND BERIT



MULTIFUNCTIONALITY

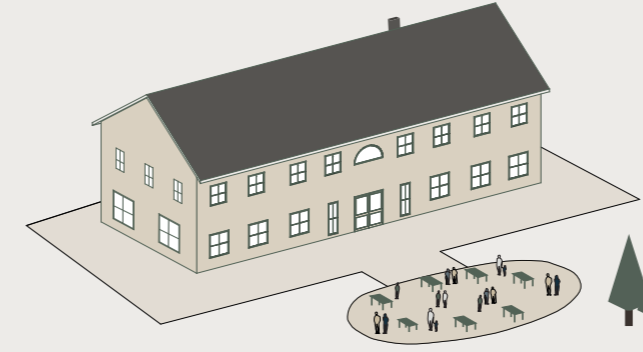
Since the number of people living in Björkvik is limited and thus also the supply of a multifunctionality of activities gives the opportunity for several activities at the same place. One example of that is outside the new community center. Sometimes the area is needed for parties or funerals but there will also be many days when it is not needed for that. By using it multifunctionally people can enjoy the place also when nothing is arranged there.



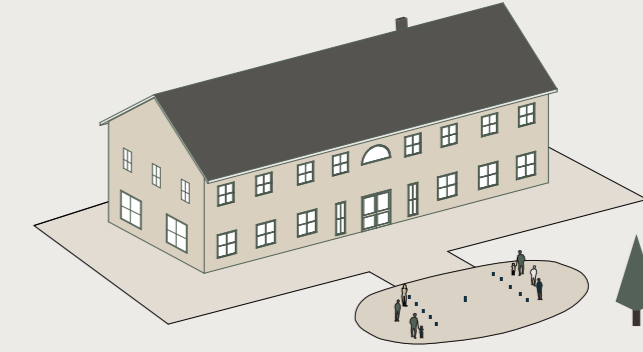
FIKA



ICE SKATING



MARKET



KUBB

SITE DESIGN



CENTRUM DESIGN

The outskirts of Björkvik are of high importance when developing the village. That is where most people live and will live even in the future. Development in the outskirts is a prerequisite for a wellbeing community and for further development in the core of the center. If the vision of 600 inhabitants in 2060 will be a reality more housing is needed. For people to want to live in Björkvik more than housing is needed. In the core of the center services will be located.



1. TEMPORARY COMMUNITY CENTER
2. GAS STATION
3. EMPTY BUS GARAGE
4. GENEREL STORE

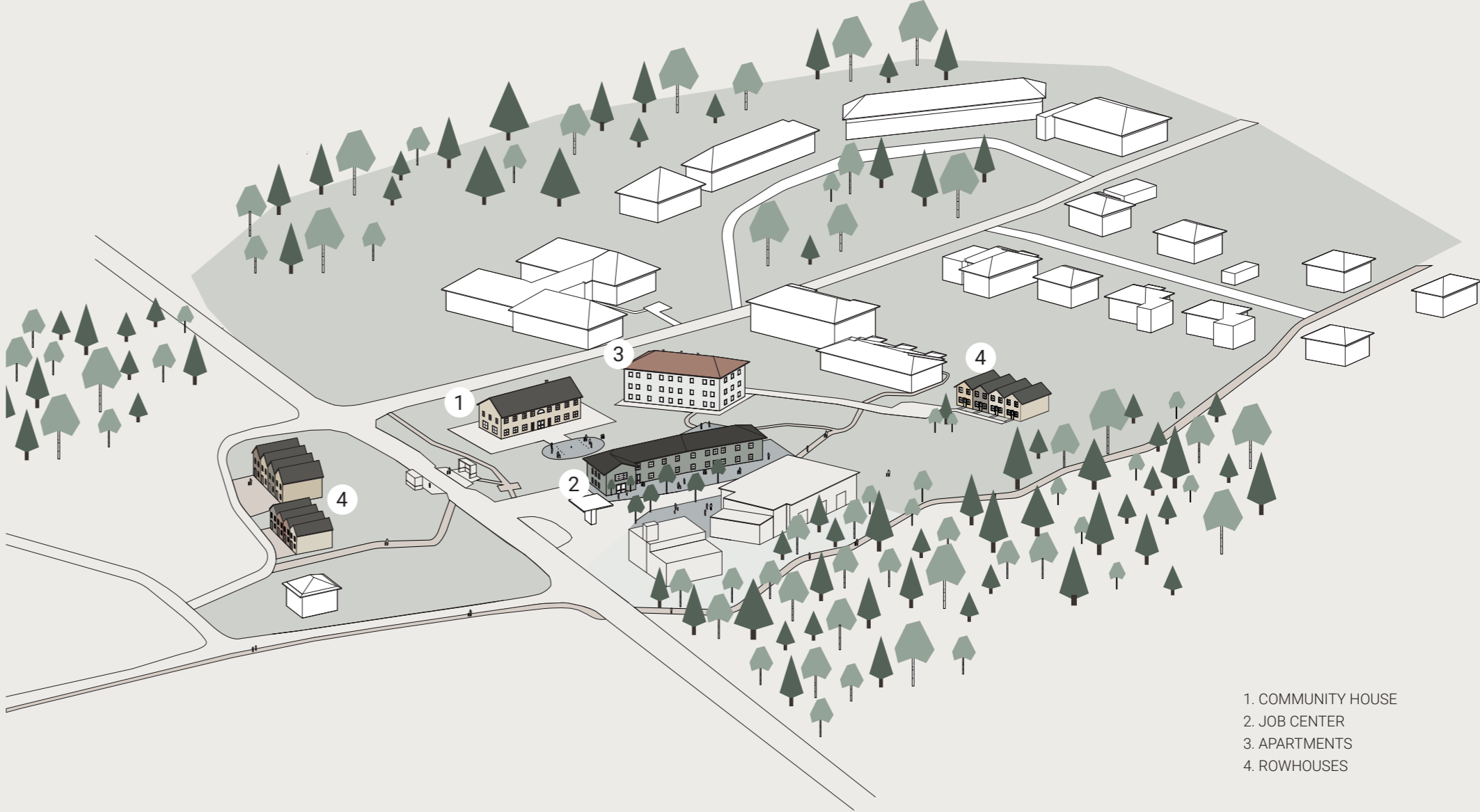
The center as it is today consists of a gas station, an empty bus garage and the general store. On the big asphalt area outside the store the bus turns around before it stops at the bus stop at the northern part of the area. Outside the dotted line the temporary community center is located.



By looking at the center in a larger context the design has possibilities to tie together the core in the centrum.

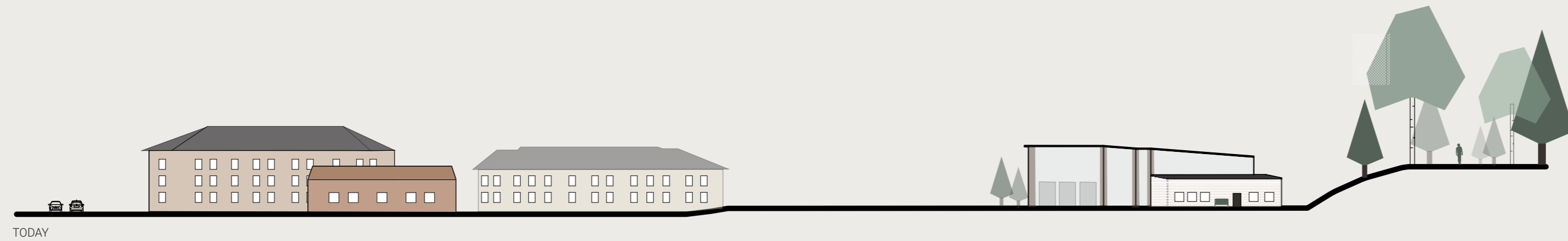


Since a security distance must be maintained to the gas station the housing is placed in the outskirts of the centrum.

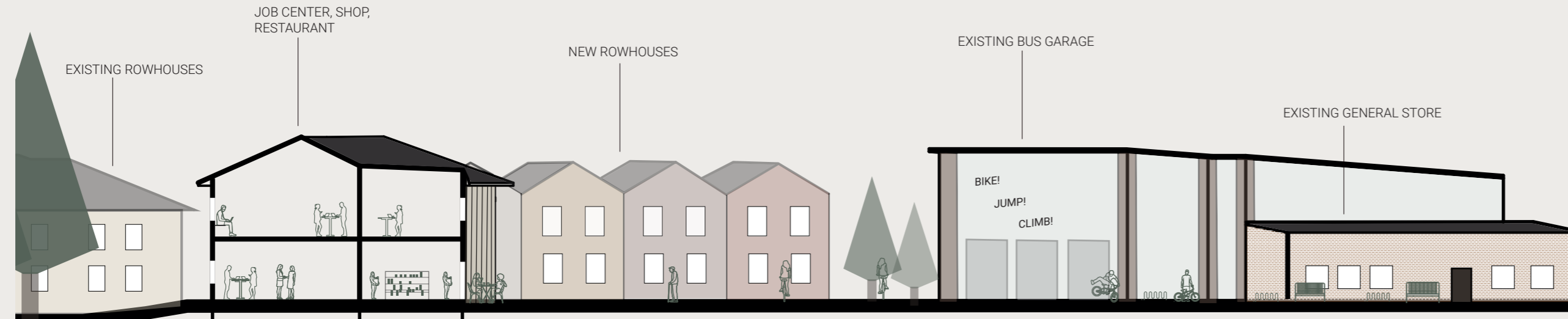


- 1. COMMUNITY HOUSE
- 2. JOB CENTER
- 3. APARTMENTS
- 4. ROWHOUSES

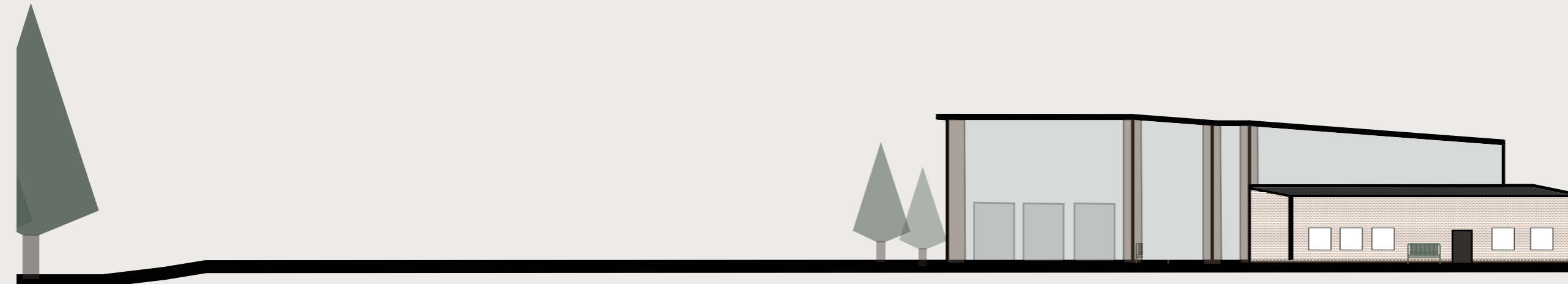
SECTION



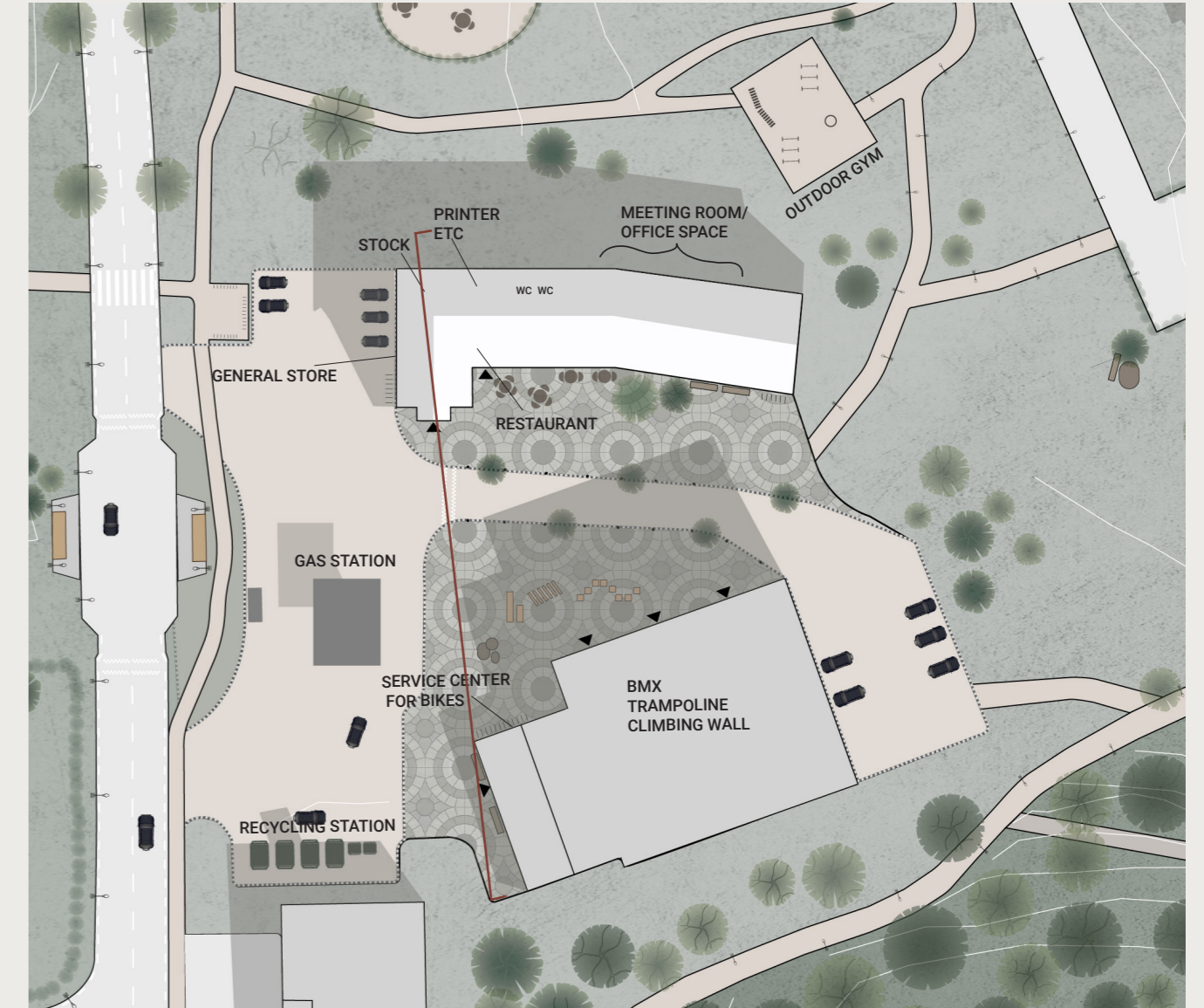
SECTION



PROPOSAL



TODAY



REFLECTIONS: CENTRUM DESIGN

Area outside the new community house. A multifunctional area that can be changed as needed.

The rowhouses have a small garden and a corporate area for gardening.

By moving the bus stop from **a** to **b** the center gets other opportunities. **a** do not longer need to be a huge empty area of asphalt.



Turning the intersection into a roundabout adds the sence of arrival and tells the driver that "you are in Björkvik now".

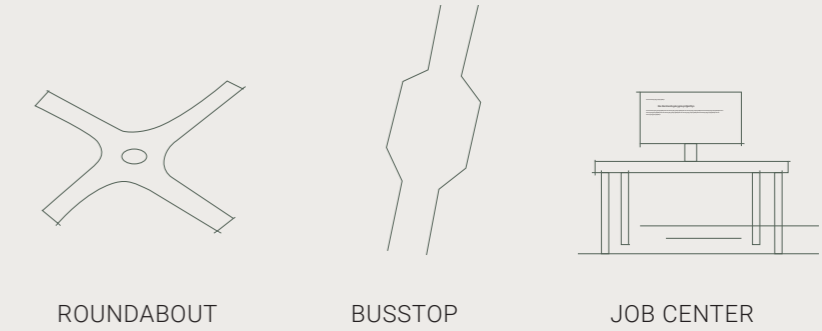
Area for seating outside the job center and the restaurant.

Area outside the old busgarage where people can do bmx.

Next to the old bus garage a new trck for mountainbike is added.

Small changes - big difference

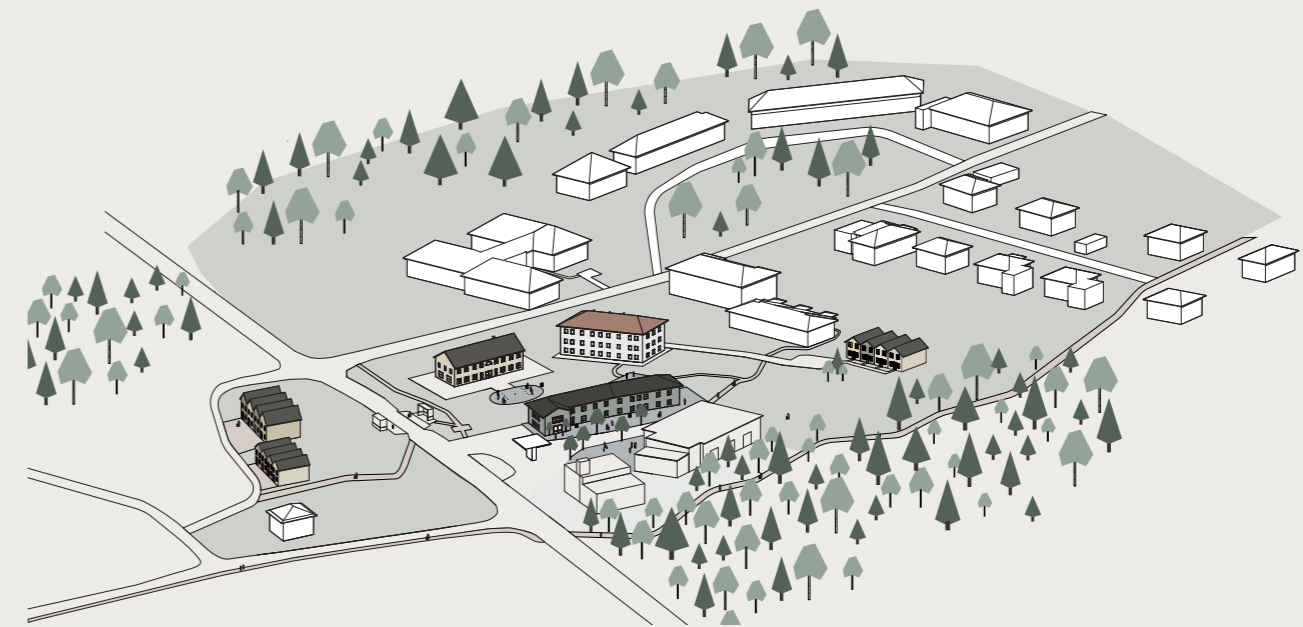
As mentioned before development in rural areas differ from development in urban areas. Small changes can result in big difference. In this design some example of small changes which makes a big difference is; a new roundabout, a new bus stop and a new multifunctional job center.



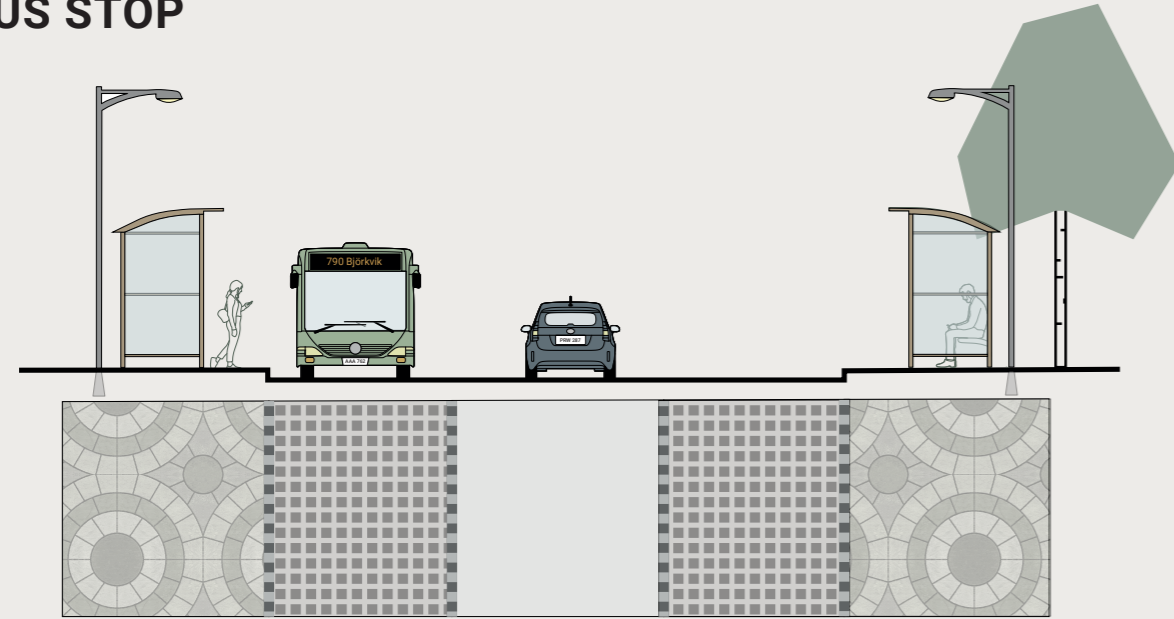
ROUNDAABOUT

BUSSTOP

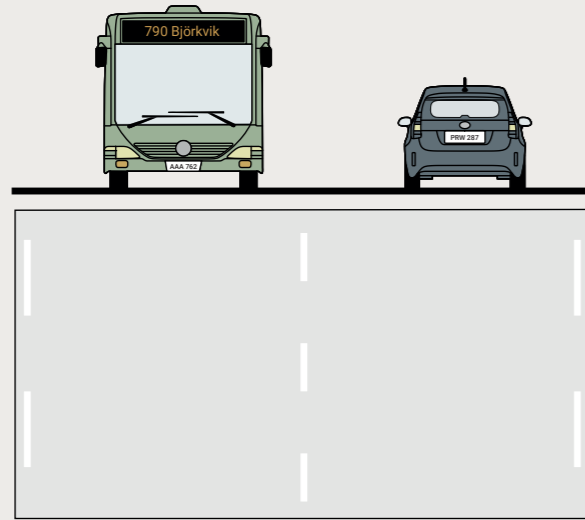
JOB CENTER



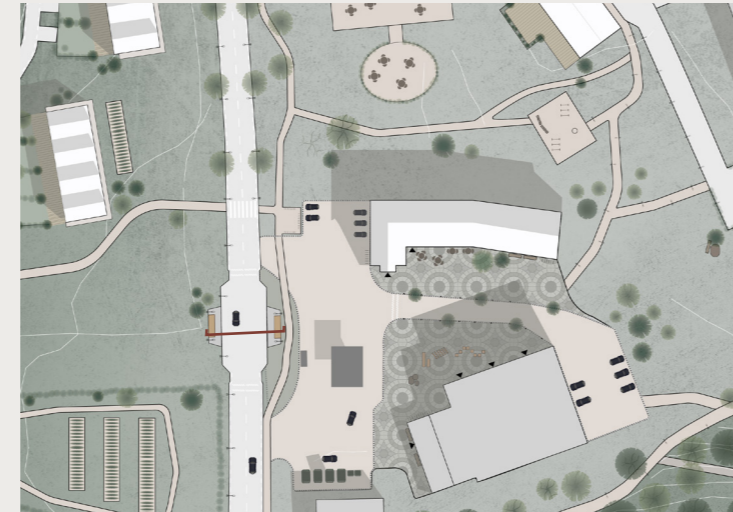
BUS STOP



PROPOSAL



TODAY



JOB CENTER

When entering the core of the center from the south you pass the old general store that now is used as a bike center where people can serve their bikes and then take a tour on the mtb-track in the forest on the other side of the old bus garage. If you are not a big fan of mtb you can bring your bmx. In Björkvik one finds one of the biggest bmx/trial clubs in Sweden. Now they are located in the old bus garage and spread out on the paving in front of the old bus garage. The green house right in front of you is the job center.



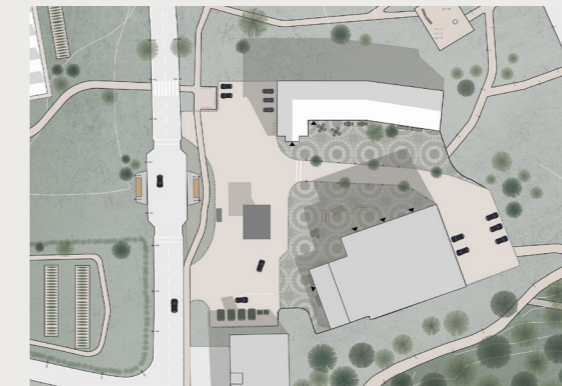
TODAY





OLD BUS GARAGE

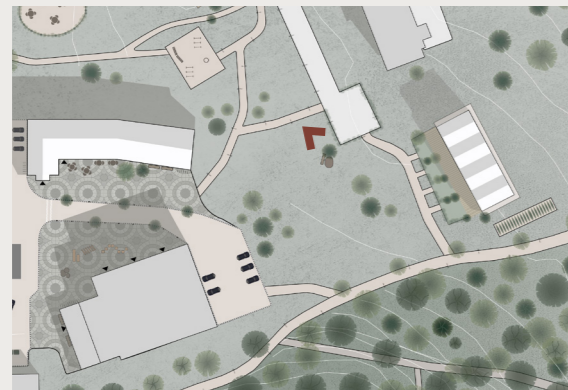
Standing outside the job center which also includes the general store and a lunch restaurant you have full supervision of what is going on in the core of Björkvik. In summertime, people usually sit around the tables and have their lunch. In this period of the year they sit inside instead. Outside the old bus garage some bmx bikers defy the season and practice new tricks. Inside the bus garage the trampoline training is in full swing. The climbing club has now also taken place in the old bus garage which fits them since they need heights when practicing.



TODAY

ROW HOUSES

The rowhouses in Björkvik are a place to settle in for those who would like to live close to nature but feel that a villa requires too much but still want a garden. These rowhouses are located in the east part of the center. Living here gives the possibility to have a house and a small garden where you can hang out together and, if you want, grow some plants. Together with the neighbors, there are possibilities to farm in the bigger garden land next to the houses.



TODAY



REFLECTIONS

The initial intention of this thesis was to investigate how to do urban design in rural areas. I wanted to shift focus from urban areas to rural areas. Partly due to my own connection to the countryside but also since the interest in living in the countryside has grown.

My wish was not to do something extraordinary. To invent something new or to design spectacular houses in a village where you live in a certain way. I do not believe that is what most of the move to the countryside is about. After doing research and after living my life in Sweden 2021, sometimes the best type of research - just living, I think the main reasons for people to move to the countryside are; living close to nature, affordable housing, owning a garden, seeing their children growing up somewhere else than in a city and, the sound of silence. Nothing extra just simple fundamental elements that build a life they want. It sounds easy. Despite that, many of the rural areas have been violated since the focus has been on the urban areas.

The project has investigated the possibilities for villages in Sweden and in particular, Björkvik. After this project, I can determine that there is a difference in doing urban and rural design. When working with small villages small changes can result in a big result in another way than urban projects do. Moving a bus stop from one place to another leads to a big difference. A privilege when

doing projects in small villages is that almost everyone will be affected by the development. In this project I added a new community building. It is a place where clubs and organizations can have their meetings, where people can celebrate birthdays, eat dinner after a wedding or a funeral or the school can have their disco there. In that way almost everyone will be affected by changes in Björkvik. I have also learned that it takes time. Doing a rural project can look easy and adding a few buildings can be done much faster than designing a new district in a city. And maybe it is not until now I know for sure that rural project takes time.

In another time when we do not live in the middle of a pandemic, I would have investigated and discussed my ideas more with people living in the area but also with people who are curious about moving to the countryside and with more research from people maybe I would have done something different, it is hard to say.

We are all facing an interesting future and I think that urban designers with all our knowledge need to work for the countryside and not only cities. It is important to mention that life in the countryside is not for all. It is easy to romanticize life in the countryside and, for me, especially Björkvik since that is where I grew up. I chose it because it was important for me to work with a place I am attached to and I really wanted to take the chance to work with a subject which we have not been near

during my five years of studying. After finishing the thesis I have learned much about rural design but I know that I have so much more to learn. I strongly believe that we as urban designers can work with rural areas as well.

We have a lot to learn for the future. New research will be done, development will move forward and digitalization will move forward. But we also need to use knowledge from the past, because people have been living in the countryside since forever.

Thank you for reading this booklet.

Siri Jeppson

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Andersosn. M & Jansson. A (2012) *Landsbygdens globalisering - medier, identitet och social förändring i nätverkssamhällets marginaler*, Göteborg: Daidalos

Andersson, H. (2017). *Medeltida urbanisering: Uppsatser 1972-2015*. (Lund studies in historical archaeology; Vol. 19). Institutionen för arkeologi och antikens historia, Lunds universitet.

Arkitektur - intervju. *Resan till det nya landet*. 2020-07-02

Boverket (2019-05-03) boverket.se/sv/samhallsplanering/bostadsmarknad/bostadsforsorjning/flyttningar/urbanisering/

Broström. S & Parment. A (2017) *Attraktiva platser bortom urbanisering och tillväxt : en studie av hållbar utveckling*. Studentlitteratur.

Dagens Nyheter "Coronaflyttare" lockas med trädgårds- och villastäder. Dagens Nyheter. 2021-02-28.

Dagens Nyheter Flykten från storstäderna under pandemin. Dagens Nyheter. 2021-04-27.

Dagens Nyheter Familjens flyttdröm blev verklighet under pandemin. Dagens Nyheter. 2021-05-10.

Facebook. Posts from the closed group: *Heja Livet!*. Retrieved: 2021-02-16

Gunne. L. *Duved blir pilot för framtidens samhällsbyggnad*. Arkitekten. 2021-02-15

Johansson.L *Vi längtade till landsbygden redan innan oronviruset bröt ut*. Land Lantbruk. 20-04-22

Katrineholms kommun, (2014) *Översiktsplan Katrineholm*. Katrineholm.

Katrineholms kommun, (2014) *Översiktsplan del Landsbygd*. Katrineholm.

Lantmäteriet. <https://minkarta.lantmateriet.se/>. Retrived: 2021-04-02

Lundholm. E (2012) *Returning home? Migration to birthplace among migrants after age 55*. *Kulturgeografiska institutionen, Umeå universitet*.

Mörner. R. (1933) *Björkvik*. J.A. Lindblads bokförlag. Uppsala.

Pearson et al (2014) *Resilient Sustainable Cities: A Future*, Routledge, New York. SCB (2015-03-03) <https://www.scb.se/hitta-statistik/artiklar/2015/Urbanisering--fran-land-till-stad/>

Regeringskansliet. *Analys av coronakrisens påverkan på digitaliseringen*. Published: 2020-06-04.

SCB. *Urbanisering - frpn land till stad*. <https://www.scb.se/hitta-statistik/artiklar/2015/Urbanisering--fran-land-till-stad/>. Piblished: 2015-03-03

Schnell. I. (1963) *Björkviks socken*. Gust. Österbergs Tryckeri AB, Nyköping.

Svenska Dagbladet. <https://www.svd.se/stockholmsflykten-tilltar--tusentals-flyttar-ut>, updated: 2021-01-16

SVT. *Trenden håller i sig: Fler flyttar från Stockholm än till*. SVT Nyheter. Stockholm. Updated: 2020-02-09

Södermanlands museum *En stor dag*, retrieved: 2021-03-11

The global goals, <https://www.globalgoals.org/11-sustainable-cities-and-communities>, retrieved: 2021-05-11

Zimm. M. *Längtan till landet*. Arkitektur. 2020-06-04

*I en leednde bygd av vårt födelseland
där som björkarna susar på Yngarens strand
och där Kolmårdens skogar i söder står vakt...*

Master Thesis Booklet
May 2021

Lund University, Sweden

Faculty of Engineering, Lund Institute of Technology

Department of architecture and the built environment

Sustainable Urban Design Master's program



SUDes
Sustainable Urban Design

RURALIZATION
Moving back to the countryside

AUTHOR

Siri Jeppson

SUPERVISOR

Andreas Olsson, Architect, Lecturer SUDes, LTH

EXAMINER

Lars-Henrik Ståhl, PhD, Professor, Director of SUDes, LTH

JURY

Jenny B. Osuldsen, Partner and Senior Landscape Architect, Snøhetta
and Professor in Landscape Architecture at the University of Life
Sciences Ås, Norway

Peter Sjöström, Senior lecturer, Department of Architecture and Built Environ-
ment at Lund University

