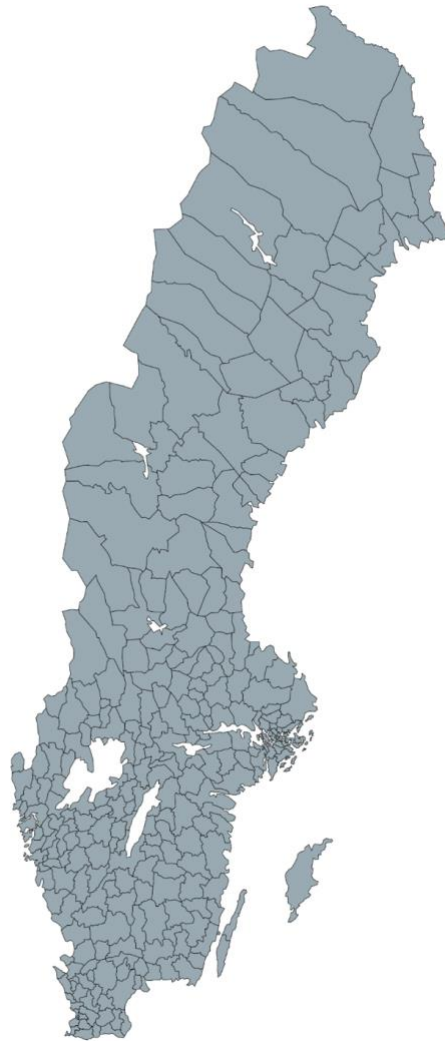




**CHALMERS**  
UNIVERSITY OF TECHNOLOGY



# Key Factors For A Thriving Urban Development In Midsized Municipalities

Master's thesis in Design & Construction Project Management

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Gothenburg, Sweden 2021  
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MASTER'S THESIS ACEX30

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*Master's Thesis in the Master's Programme Design and Construction Project  
Management*

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Göteborg, Sweden 2021



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Cover: Map showing the Sweden's 290 municipalities. Made by the authors.

Göteborg, Sweden, 2021

# KEY FACTORS FOR A THRIVING URBAN DEVELOPMENT IN MIDSIZED MUNICIPALITY

*Master's Thesis in the Master's Programme Design and Construction Project Management*

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## ABSTRACT

The midsize municipalities are predicted to be able to offer a good alternative to the larger cities. Shorter commuting times, better access to nature and more affordable housing are a few of the benefits of downsizing when choosing where to live. However, urban development is complex and not all will thrive.

The aim of this study is to investigate the midsize municipalities challenges and opportunities. More specifically, it investigates which key factors that are essential for midsize municipalities in order to become an attractive place for people and businesses to live and act in. By addressing these key factors, the study aspires to contribute with increased knowledge to the municipal organisation in their urban development.

To accomplish the aim, three midsize municipalities in Sweden (Gävle, Skellefteå and Trollhättan) were investigated. Qualitative interviews were conducted with 10 key persons within the selected municipalities and two interviewees that had a macro perspective.

Similarities and differences in how municipalities work to become thriving and sustainable were found in the empirical data. Together with the theoretical framework, 11 key factors were identified (listed in no particular order of importance); *Identify characteristics, Steal with pride, Accept what is beyond control, Turn smart goals into action, Mentality, Involve the citizens, Share responsibility, Demographic distribution, Attract the right target group, Collaborate, Stay up to date*. These factors can be taken into account by all municipalities, but they must be adapted in accordance to their own prerequisites.

**Key words:** Municipality, Urbanisation, Attractive city, Urban development, Midsize cities.

# Table of content

ABSTRACT	II
TABLE OF CONTENT	III
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS	VI
DEFINITIONS	VII
GLOSSARY	VIII
1 INTRODUCTION	1
1.1 Background	1
1.2 Aim	2
1.3 Research questions	2
1.4 Limitations	2
2 METHODOLOGY	4
2.1 Research approach	4
2.2 Literature review	4
2.3 Choice of municipalities	5
2.4 Interviews	5
2.5 Data Analysis	7
2.6 Ethical aspects	7
2.7 Reliability	7
3 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK	8
3.1 Moving patterns	8
3.1.1 The history of urbanisation	8
3.1.2 Enablers and barriers of urbanisation	9
3.1.3 New moving patterns	9
3.1.4 Future trends	11
3.2 Important qualities for a city	12
3.2.1 What makes a city attractive?	12
3.2.2 The 15-minutes city	14
3.2.3 Preferences of future generations	15
3.2.4 Ecological boundaries	17
3.3 Municipality	18
3.3.1 Municipal organisation	18
3.3.2 Comprehensive plan	19
3.3.3 Demographic challenges	19
3.3.4 Whom should the city attract?	21
3.4 Case study	22
4 COMPILATION OF THE INTERVIEW STUDY	24
4.1 Factors beyond the municipal control	24

4.1.1	Geographical location	24
4.1.2	History	25
4.1.3	Universities	26
4.1.4	Climate	26
4.2	Population growth	27
4.2.1	Why does the municipality want to grow?	27
4.2.2	Who does the municipality want to preserve and attract?	28
4.2.3	What is necessary to attract residents?	29
4.3	A city with capacity for growth	30
4.3.1	Introduction of new residents	30
4.3.2	Housing market	31
4.3.3	Local infrastructure	32
4.3.4	Segregation	33
4.4	The municipality's goals and visions	34
4.4.1	Reverse a negative trend	34
4.4.2	Documentation	34
4.4.3	Communication and participation	36
4.4.4	Time horizon	38
4.5	Municipal management	39
4.5.1	Political climate	39
4.5.2	The right person in the right place	40
4.5.3	Consultant	41
4.6	Comparison and collaboration	42
4.6.1	Comparison	42
4.6.2	Collaboration	43
4.7	Society actors	44
4.7.1	Enthusiasts	44
4.7.2	Business community	45
4.8	Identity and self-image	48
4.8.1	Identity	48
4.8.2	Self-image	50
5	DISCUSSION	52
5.1	Renaissance city	52
5.1.1	Attractiveness in the future city	52
5.1.2	Target group to attract to the municipality	54
5.1.3	To grow or not	55
5.2	Identification	56
5.2.1	Strengths and weaknesses	56
5.2.2	Opportunities and Challenges	57
5.3	Common direction for the city's development	58
5.3.1	Why is a direction needed?	58
5.3.2	Reverse trend or keep up the good work	58
5.3.3	Wide or narrow direction span	59
5.3.4	Goals and visions	59



5.4	Driving forces	61
5.4.1	The influence of the citizens	61
5.4.2	Enthusiasts	63
5.4.3	Business community	64
5.4.4	Learn from each other, help each other	66
5.5	Consequences	67
5.5.1	Goal follow-up and revision	67
5.5.2	When it does not turn out as expected	67
5.5.3	A lot at once	68
5.5.4	Ripple effects	68
6	CONCLUSION	69
6.1	Key factors to consider in order to be a thriving and sustainable mid-sized municipality	69
6.2	Suggestions for further research	73
7	REFERENCES	74
	APPENDIX 1	I
	APPENDIX 2	III
	APPENDIX 3	X
	APPENDIX 4	XI

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Linnéa Arvidsson & Malin Citess, Gothenburg, 2021

# Definitions

There are numerous concepts, different definitions and lack thereof that can generate confusion and misunderstandings to the reader. Following definitions of central concepts in the report can help the reader to better understand the context of the words used. Some words lack a correct translation and will therefore be explained in the most similar way possible.

## **Urban area**

Coherent area of at least 200 residents in a distance between houses less than 200 meters. In Sweden there are more than 2 000 urban areas and 87% of the Swedish population lives in these areas (SCB, 2020).

## **Rural area**

All land areas which are not a part of urban areas.

## **Urbanisation (traditional)**

People moving from rural areas to urban areas.

## **Urbanisation (modern)**

People move from smaller to larger urban areas.

## **Domestic migration flow**

Domestic immigration- domestic emigration/ total population

## **City**

Lack of an official definition, but in this study a city is a major or more significant urban area.

## **Large city**

A municipality with more than 200 000 residents. According to this definition, Sweden has four large cities: Stockholm, Göteborg, Malmö and Uppsala.

## **Midsized city**

A municipality with 50 000 to 199 999 residents. According to this definition, Sweden has 44 municipalities in this category.

## **Small city**

A municipality with less than 50 000 residents.

# Glossary

Business community	Näringsliv
Chamber of Commerce	Handelskammare
Citizen dialogue	Medborgardialog
Citizens consultation	Samråd
Comprehensive plan	Översiktsplan
County	Län
Domestic migration flow	Inrikesflyttnetto
Enthusiast	Eldsjäl
Labour Market	Arbetsmarknad
Heavy industry	Tillverkningsindustrin
High decision-making capacity	Handlingskraft
Inferiority complex	Mindervärdeskomplex
Municipal officials	Kommunala tjänstemän
Neighbouring municipality	Kranskommun
Regional Council	Regionfullmäktige
Returnees	Hemvändare
Rural area	Glesbygd
Swedes	Svenskar
Urban area	Tätort
Term of office	Mandatperiod
Townhouse	Radhus

# 1 Introduction

The first section gives an introduction to the foundation of why this study has taken place. Further, the aim and research questions are presented together with the limitations of the study.

## 1.1 Background

The world population is increasing each year, a trend that is expected to continue (UN, 2017). In Sweden this growing population is unevenly distributed both geographically and demographically (Fjertorp, 2013). Together with the global trend of urbanisation (Bengtsson, 2014), this creates an urban hierarchy amongst municipalities giving them different challenges and opportunities.

Domestic migration flow in Sweden has a big impact on the urban hierarchy. Historically the largest cities have attracted more inhabitants than smaller cities (Tillväxtanalys, 2011). Söderlind (1998) stresses that parts of this population growth in the largest cities is unnecessary and could be prevented if there were more alternatives to the larger cities providing good quality of life.

An increasing population puts pressure on the municipal organisation to develop the urban environment in order to fulfil the needs of the future society (Brorström & Parment, 2016). Growth also creates challenges such as increased segregation, expensive housing and long commuting times (Andersson et al., 2014). New Swedish statistics show how previous citizens to large cities leave the crowded, expensive and busy cities to find better life quality elsewhere (SCB, 2021).

The new longing of life quality outside of the largest cities might result in other municipalities experiencing renaissance. But this is only possible if they can provide an alternative lifestyle that can compete with the larger cities (Söderlind, 1998). Sweden has 290 different municipalities and they are often exposed to being compared and ranked in an attempt to find a winner and a loser (Brorström & Parment, 2016). Paulsson (2020) stresses that not every municipality will succeed with the opportunity to become a “renaissance city”.

Municipalities constitute both an organisation and a geographical location which entails complexity (Brorström, 2010). The municipal organisation creates a framework for the long-term development of the physical environment by guiding in decisions relating usage of land and water resources as well as how the built environment is to be used, developed and preserved (PBL, SFS 2010:900).

There are many metaphors to describe urban development (Brorström & Solli, 2012). Rittel and Weber (1973) compare it to a series of “wicked problems”, since there are

no solutions that apply now and forever, it is about prioritising and compromising, something that makes decision-making in cities complex (Jönsson, 1982). Cities are sometimes compared to living organisms due to their equivalent need to adapt and evolve in accordance to the ever changing prerequisites (Johnson, 2018).

Planning, building and reforming urban areas is an ongoing process that never ends (Aronsson, 2007). In order to be sustainable, the municipality must meet the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs (WCDE, 1987). A difficult task in a rapidly changing society. Building sustainable urban environments also requires knowledge of what the underlying change factors are that drive urban development in the “right” direction (IVA, 2017).

What determines whether a city becomes sustainable, competitive and attractive to live in - or not?

## **1.2 Aim**

This research aims to investigate the mid-sized municipalities' challenges and opportunities. More specifically, it investigates which key factors that are essential for mid-sized municipalities in order to become an attractive place for people and businesses to live and act in. By addressing these key factors, the study aspires to contribute with increased knowledge to the municipal organisation in their urban development.

## **1.3 Research questions**

In order to fulfil the aim, this master thesis intends to answer two research questions:

1. What are the most crucial differences and similarities regarding how municipalities work with urban development among mid-sized cities in Sweden?
2. Which key factors may be important to consider in order to be a thriving and sustainable mid-sized municipality in Sweden?

## **1.4 Limitations**

The goal is to fulfil the aim and be able to answer the research questions in a profound way without excluding a holistic perspective. This goes without a claim of giving a complete picture and an exact replica of the reality. The hope is rather that this study will serve as inspiration and a foundation for discussion about the opportunities and challenges municipalities face. Four limitations will set the boundaries of the study and enable the fulfilment of the goal.

Firstly, this study investigates cities from a national perspective, where the focus is within the areas of urban development in Sweden. The paper might still result in insights applicable in an international context but it will not be the focus.

Secondly, the case study is limited to three selected municipalities within Sweden; Gävle, Skellefteå and Trollhättan. An explanation to why these specific cities were selected is presented in section 2.3.

Third, Tourism is excluded even though it can play a big role in city welfare. The focus is on the inhabitants and businesses of each city.

Fourth, the study focuses on urban development from the perspective of the municipal organisation.

## **2 Methodology**

Data has been gathered and analysed in several ways in order to answer the research questions in a way that fulfils the aim of the study. Literature, interviews and statistics form the foundation of the collected data. The study is written by two authors who have contributed equally.

### **2.1 Research approach**

An abductive approach was chosen for this study. The abductive approach is a combination of the deductive and inductive approaches and includes the relationship between theory and research (Bell. et al. 2018). In this study the deductive data came from the literature review, while inductive data was collected through empirical data consisting of interviews. Using an abductive approach can help the researcher pick out the most relevant result of the data (Bell. et al. 2018). The abductive approach allows new theory to be presented during the process as a complement to empirical data (Bell et al., 2018). To follow up with new data during the writing process was seen as necessary in order to present a relevant full picture.

### **2.2 Literature review**

The initial purpose of the literature study was to identify and get a holistic perception of the academic world concerning the thesis topic and if previous work had been done. According to Bell et al. (2018) doing a review of the literature is essential to understand what is already known within the topic. Two search engines were used to find literature, Google Scholar and Chalmers library. From the search engines the materials included books, scientific articles, reports, articles from the sector, and comprehensive information from different webpages. All selected materials clarified the studies aim and became a foundation to answer the research questions.

The investigation of literature was conducted early in order to enable a foundation to the studies topic. Organising the literature was crucial before executing the interviews. However, the literature review was an ongoing process to complement data since new information surfaced during the interviews.

Keywords and phrases emerged through a snowball effect and guided the search for new data. A wide variety of combined words was used to identify literature from different angles. Some commonly used keywords were: “Urbanisation, attractive cities, municipalities, population growth, midsized cities, future cities”, along with their Swedish equivalents. All used material was examined before it was selected to ensure the reliability.



## **2.3 Choice of municipalities**

The case study consists of three selected midsized municipalities in Sweden. A limited number of municipalities was necessary concerning the study's timeframe. It was essential to investigate municipalities with different characteristics and prerequisites in order to be able to answer the aim of this study. Trollhättan is located on the west coast of Sweden and the municipality has had an interesting history where one significant employer got bankrupt. The second municipality, Skellefteå, is located in northern Sweden. The municipality has plenty of investments planned ahead due to a new strategy and new company establishments. The last chosen municipality was Gävle, because of their geographical location in Sweden with short connections to both Stockholm and Uppsala. Gävle currently has a lot of infrastructure investments ongoing in the city, which will improve its national position.

The selected municipalities in the case study acted as a tool to research a connected subject rather than being the main topic itself, therefore an instrumental case study method was chosen (Denzin and Lincoln, 2008).

## **2.4 Interviews**

The primary data collected in the study came from interviews. To gather relevant and essential knowledge, all interviews were semi-structured. A pre-set of questions were used, with flexibility to ask supplementary questions and change the order of the questions in relation to the answers (Bell et al., 2018). Several of the questions were asked to all of the interviewees and some were individual. The questions emerged from a literature review on the chosen cities and are available in Appendix 1-4.

As mentioned before, three municipalities were selected and the interviews were held with key persons connected to each municipality, see Table 2.1-2.3. The intention was to find interviewees with similar roles from each city to enable comparison between the municipalities. Differences between titles among the interviewees both depend on how the municipality itself divides the workload and responsibilities and who was interested in being interviewed. More information on how a municipality organisation is structured is presented in section 3.3.1. The main purpose was to interview one person from the municipal organisation and one person working with questions connected to the business community in each municipality. Besides representatives from each municipality, two experts on relevant topics were interviewed to get a macro perspective.

The intention was to receive a fair and equivalent picture of each city. Therefore some extra interviews were held to fill out gaps where information was missing. Also an interview was held with the Confederation of Swedish Enterprise Gävleborg instead of the Chamber of Commerce connected to Gävle since they did not have time for an interview.

*Table 2.1: List of municipal officials who were interviewed.*

DATE AND TIME	MUNICIPALITY	TITLE
25/3 9:00-10:00	Gävle	Planning Director
29/3 8:30-9:30	Skellefteå	Marketing Manager Community Strategist
7/4 12:00- 13:00	Trollhättan	Community Development Director
9/4 14:30-15:30	Gävle	Business Director
26/4 10:00-11:00	Gävle	Head of Urban Development
27/4 10:00-11:00	Trollhättan	Communicator

*Table 2.2 : List of actors within the business community who were interviewed.*

DATE AND TIME	COMPANY	TITLE
6/4 10:00-11:00	West Sweden Chamber of Commerce	Head of Fyrbodal
7/4 10:00-11:00	Västerbottens Chamber of Commerce	Region Coordinator
7/4 14:00- 15:00	Confederation of Swedish Enterprise Gävleborg	Head of Gävleborg

*Table 2.3: List of actors with a macro perspective who were interviewed.*

DATE AND TIME	COMPANY	TITLE
24/3 8:30-9:00	Jönköping University	Professor of Economics Charlotta Mellander
24/4 9:30-10:00	Placebrander	Place Strategist

A total of 11 interviews were held and as a consequence of the Covid-19 pandemic, all interviews were performed digitally. They were all conducted in Swedish since it is the first language of all interviewees. They were also recorded after permission given by the interviewees. Each interview lasted between half an hour to one hour.

## **2.5 Data Analysis**

All interviews were transcribed from the recorded audio. Content from each interview was later analysed. Systematic grouping of text determined patterns and themes which summarised the result into valuable information (Hsieh and Shannon, 2005). Further, the analysed result from the interviews was compared with the theoretical framework.

## **2.6 Ethical aspects**

Most of the interviewees were affiliated to the municipal organisations. In order to consider their integrity, interviewees are made anonymous in the study.

The interviewees were introduced to the study and its aim before the interviews. They were also told why they were selected to participate. The reason for informing the interviewees about their participation and its purpose was to ensure that they felt comfortable to participate.

During each interview, the interviewees were informed that they could choose not to answer questions that would make them feel uncomfortable. All the interviewees approved their participation and no one was required to review the result, including quotations.

## **2.7 Reliability**

Since the study investigates rather new moving patterns and future development of Swedish municipalities, many older sources become irrelevant. The publishing year of each source has been taken into consideration to find the most relevant sources. Articles written by companies within the industry often lack scientific anchoring, instead they are more often written out of experience and standardisations within the industry.

The initial goal was to visit each municipality to create an interpretation that is as true to reality as possible. Travel and social restrictions due to the pandemic Covid-19 made it impossible to visit each city and interviewee in person. Therefore the interviews were held online, which made it more difficult to create a holistic perspective of each municipality. The amount of interviewees also restricted the data gathered and therefore a disclaimer must be made that this study only presents one side of the reality.

Another difficulty related to the interviews was that most of the interviewees had a personal connection to the place and will therefore be biased which is both a challenge and an advantage.

# 3 Theoretical framework

The following section provides an overview of the historical moving patterns in Sweden and what could be predicted of the future. The section also describes what existing literature considers as necessary factors to become an attractive city, together with young people's demands on future cities. It ends by explaining the municipality's role and demographic challenges.

## 3.1 Moving patterns

There are only two ways that a population can grow (Mellander, 2020). The first option is that more are born than those who die. The other option is that more people move in than out of the place. They often influence the demographic distribution simultaneously. “The demography of an area is the number and characteristics of the people who live in an area, in relation to their age, sex, if they are married or not, etc.” (Feyrer, 2007).

### 3.1.1 The history of urbanisation

Urbanisation has its origin in the nineteenth century and is traditionally defined as a concept where population from rural areas move to urban areas (Krantz, 2000). The starting point of urbanisation correlates to the industrial revolution, which created new job opportunities as well as better communication and means of transportation. These were all important parts in the emergence of cities (Mattsson, 2019). Urbanisation had its biggest spike in the period from 1920 until 1970 (SCB, 2015a), closely connected to the peak of industrialisation in Sweden (Krantz, 2000). After 1970 the urbanisation process slowed down, and at this time 80% of the population lived in urban areas (Mattsson, 2019). Today, Sweden can be considered as a country with a high degree of urbanisation with 87% of the population living in urban areas (SCB, 2020).

According to the traditional definition, urbanisation in Sweden is now relatively saturated making the degree of urbanisation unlikely to continue increasing in the future (Boverket, 2019). When urbanisation is being discussed in a modern fashion it is not according to the traditional definition. Swedes do not move from rural areas to urban areas to the same extent as before (Enflo et al., 2016). The pattern of people moving from smaller urban areas to larger urban areas creating an urban hierarchy is often mentioned as urbanisation creating a new definition of the expression (Enflo et al., 2016).

Lachang et al. (2019) argue that the knowledge economy is the foundation of this modern urbanisation. The larger cities attracted highly skilled workers as higher education gained importance in the middle of the 90's (Mattsson, 2019). New job

openings emerged within the service sector and supported the larger cities (Mattsson, 2019). This new way of defining urbanisation focuses on the regional differences created by the growth and innovation at the top of the urban hierarchy (Henning et al., 2016). In the new definition, larger cities will be found with a wide variety of financial environments and a high percentage of higher education and job opportunities (Henning et al., 2016). Mellander (personal communication, 24 March, 2021) implies that modern urbanisation is beneficial for the country but explains that the economic value of the urbanisation is not divided equally to all parts of the nation.

### **3.1.2 Enablers and barriers of urbanisation**

Besides the access to higher education and job opportunities for skilled workers, a developed infrastructure system with better communication has been a major cause for both people and economic activities moving to the larger cities (Forslid, 2008). Densification in city centres appears when service businesses in and around cities require local presence to obtain access to customers (IVA, 2017a). More people in the city centres generates a demand for services within retail, entertainment, culture and restaurants, leading to a wider range appealing to even more people (IVA, 2017a). The major cities have the ability to encourage economic growth and also be a place for development of activities and act as an incubator network for companies and start-ups (Stenkula & Zenou, 2011). Furthermore, the positive effects of larger cities provide a good environment for the placement of headquarters and larger offices generating a higher density of power and influential positions within the larger cities (Nilsson, 2016). Another perk contributing to the larger cities unique selling point (USP) is the international connection and ability to access a more global market (IVA, 2017)

Urbanisation is a fast movement and cities unable to keep up risk suffering from growing pains (Andersson et al., 2014 ). Insufficient infrastructure, social instability, problematic waste management, increasing environmental problems, more serious consequences of natural disasters and increasing risks of rapid disease progression are a few challenges with urbanisation (Bengtsson, 2014). Other issues with many people moving to large cities are bad air quality, noise, segregation, high housing costs, and a lack of recreation spaces, which may lead to new moving patterns and priorities related to housing (Andersson et al., 2014; Berry and Okulicz-Kozaryn, 2011). Studies show that segregation and social problems increase with growth of population, which gives reason to question population growth as a solution to social problems (Orr and West, 2002). Fjertorp (2013) believes that rapid growth is problematic as the capacity is not in line with the need since growth requires plenty of resources.

### **3.1.3 New moving patterns**

Meteorologists can, by analysing the current situation and comparing it with previous patterns, predict future weather with high certainty (SMHI, 2021). Demographic research can, in a similar way as metrology, provide information necessary to launch

forecasts of what can be expected of the future (Malmberg, 2008). This is not equal to saying that the future is a repetition of historical trends.

Statistics gathered by the Swedish statistics authority, SCB, show that since 2015 more Swedes are moving out of the city centre of Stockholm, Gothenburg, and Malmö than there are moving into them (SCB, 2021a). As shown in Figure 3.1, 8495 people moved in net out from Stockholm during 2020, which is the most negative domestic migration flow in its history.

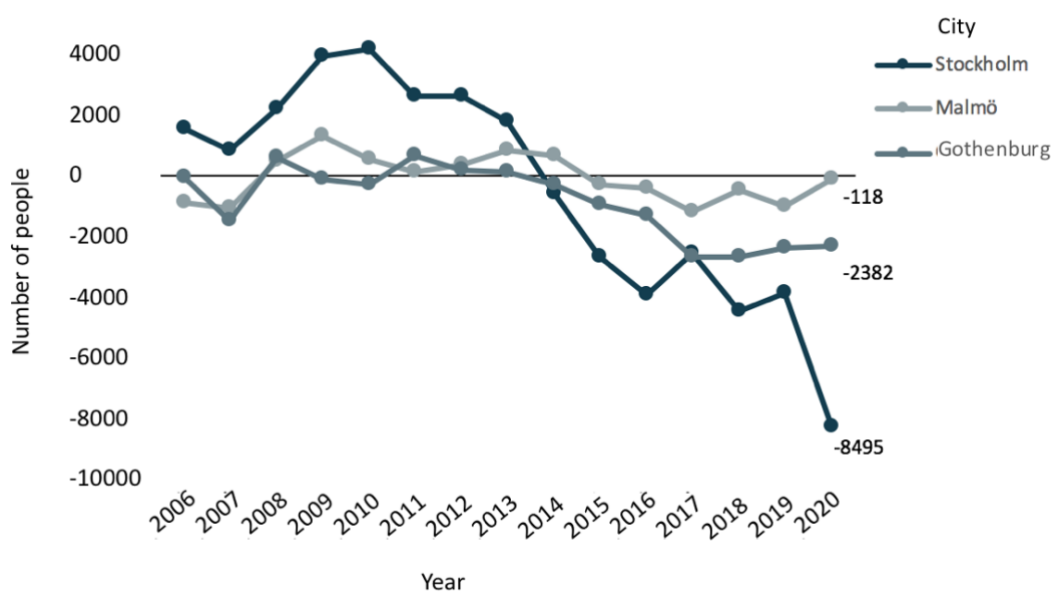


Figure 3.1. Domestic migration flow of the three largest municipalities in Sweden (Based on data from SCB, 2021a).

The statistics are not equivalent to a decreasing population in these larger cities since the size of a population is not only dependent on the domestic migration flow (Mellander, 2021a). The size of the population is also affected by life expectancy, babies being born and immigration and emigration to and from other counties (Mellander, 2021a).

Most people move as they enter a new phase in their life and 19 to 35 year old's are responsible for the majority of all the moves made (Prognoscentret, 2020). Many of those deciding to leave the city move to neighboring areas or municipalities (Prognoscentret, 2020). But signs of a larger portion of people leaving the region for a completely other location in Sweden is commencing to become more prominent (Prognoscentret, 2020). The Stockholm region has had a negative domestic moving net since 2018 meaning that there have been more people moving away from the region to other parts of Sweden than people moving to the region (SCB, 2021a). One third out of all the Swedes that move to a new location is moving away from the previous region (Prognoscentret, 2020). It might be early to say that leaving the larger regions might be

a new trend and if so define how strong the imprint will be but it is starting to look more like a rule rather than an exception (Paulsson, 2020).

### **3.1.4 Future trends**

New thoughts on how to improve urban form and function often emerge in critical times that highlights weaknesses in the society (Matthews, 2020). The pandemic caused by Covid-19, is, according to Mathews (2020), an example of such a critical time that might change our future perceptions and affect the future.

As a result of the pandemic, the importance of vicinity has increased (Nordström & Schlingmann, 2021) and Thulin (2021) explains this phenomenon as a change of gravitation centre due to an increasing emphasis on activities inside or nearby the home. This shift was enabled by the digital transformation that has been sped up by the urgent demand of expanded digital platforms facilitating new communication systems that affect how we work, study, travel and interact (Lindsten, 2020). Data show that in just a few weeks, many companies took a step when it comes to adopting digital technology that otherwise would have taken them years (Placebrander, 2021). The digital transformation is one of the most certain long term effects of the pandemic (Savić, 2020).

If change of playfield initiated by the pandemic will lead to a long term change in the demographic distribution is still hard to predict. Thulin (2021) argues that the future most likely will be determined by several different lines of development based on the experience during the pandemic outbreak. A manager at one of the largest property management companies in Sweden, believes that the society is becoming “glocal”, a wordplay of combining global and local, explaining our ability to network globally but with a local physical presence (Fastighetsägarna, 2020). Whatever happens, Thulin (2021) believes that the different views of where to go from here can act as a stepping stone for new visions and a better climate for innovation. Some might want to return to pre-Covid-19 patterns and some might want to permanently change their lifestyle and create a hybrid environment (Nordström & Schlingmann, 2021). In accordance with Matthews (2020) belief that critical times can have an accelerating effect, the pandemic might result in some reevaluation considering what is important when choosing where and how to live.

Söderlind (1998) argues that parts of modern urbanisation are unnecessary and quantitative. He believes that less people would move to larger cities if other municipalities were able to provide a good alternative. Paulsson (2021) believes that midsized cities in Sweden have the right qualities and potential to be this good alternative to the larger cities. Glaeser (2012) argues that potential is not equal to success and stresses that only those being adept at adapting will succeed and the others will be left behind. Brorström and Solli (2012) agrees that it is important to be able to

quickly adapt to new conditions especially with the rapid changing society and technology that has made it more difficult to predict the future.

## **3.2 Important qualities for a city**

What is required in order to turn potential into success and be able to offer a good alternative to the larger cities? A first step in finding key factors to be a thriving municipality might be to investigate what the future needs might look like. What is seen as important to be perceived as a thriving and sustainable municipality?

### **3.2.1 What makes a city attractive?**

Cities become more homogenous, where the lines between anywhere and everywhere gets blurred by digitalisation and globalisation (Erickson & Roberts, 1997). Cars (2010) claims that people today move more than before and have an increased opportunity to choose where to live. With an escalating consumer choice and accessibility, people's view of attractiveness has changed (Cars, 2010). There is now a higher requirement on cities working to be attractive and find their distinguishing identity and traits to survive in this new climate (Wahlström, 2017). However, providing a clear definition of what an attractive city is can be demanding.

Troedsson (2010) describes attractiveness as the relationship between the attributes in a city and the observer's preferences. Andersson (1998) writes in his book *Attractive cities*, that depending on who the observer is, the answer varies since people have different perspectives and ideas of what an attractive city constitutes. According to Arnstberg and Bergström (2010) peoples' preferences are based on their living or 'home' situation. The preferences look, for instance, different between families with children, young adults with their own housings and elderly, which also have different economic situations (Cars, 2010). To satisfy all needs and values is, according to Andersson (1998), impossible and it is therefore important for municipalities to decide who the city should attract.

Several studies have been conducted regarding the attractiveness of cities (e.g. Andersson, 1998; Glaeser, 2008; Florida et al., 2011; Cars, 2006). Even if studies focus on different aspects, housing, work and infrastructure seems to be the key factors in order to become an attractive city to live in (Andersson et al., 2014; Cars, 2006; Innovation, 2018). Nutek (2006) proposes that the attractiveness of a living environment can be divided into two dimensions: (1) the functional environment and (2) the emotional environment. The functional environment provides infrastructure, private and public services and new jobs. The emotional environment includes "soft" qualities such as culture, nature, identity and democracy.



As established previously, literature has different focuses when describing an attractive city. To get a holistic view from the literature three different aspects of attractiveness in a city will be described below.

### **Jane Jacobs**

It's been 60 years since Jacobs wrote the book *The Death and Life of Great American Cities* (Jacobs, 1961). The literature was such a breakthrough for Jacobs and she became a critic within urban development describing cities' challenges as well as opportunities to become a successful place. In the book Jacobs describes four conditions for city diversity. All four conditions must be fulfilled to achieve a thriving, attractive and diverse neighbourhood.

1. Mixed use neighbourhoods with different buildings and purposes, with people who go outdoors on different schedules.
2. Small blocks, it decreases travel distance.
3. A combination of new and old buildings to create places for people with different economic conditions.
4. Sufficient density of people in the district.

### **Roland Andersson**

Another writer trying to describe what makes a city attractive is the economist Roland Andersson. He describes the combination of urban development and city attractiveness with economics and local resources (Andersson, 1998; Andersson et al. 2014). Seven forms of capital which represent an attractive city are presented in one of his written books (Andersson, 1998):

1. Physical capital, like ocean and forest, beautiful horizons as well as pedestrianised
2. Real capital in the form of infrastructure, electricity and heat.
3. Human capital, competent inhabitants with different knowledge and good schools and the opportunity for education.
4. Healthy/social capital, good health care and care for the elderly and children.
5. Culture capital, the city should have art, culture, theatre, opera house, museum, etc.
6. Safe capital, security for citizens both day and night time.
7. Relation capital, good relation between people within the city and other cities. (Andersson, 1998).

Even if Andersson looked at attractiveness from an economic perspective, several of the quality criteria he presented could be implemented in the physical environment (Andersson, 1998).

## **Jan Gehl**

Gehl (2010) is an architect and professor within urban design. He works with city development and focuses on pedestrians and cyclists. He does not describe in-depth what qualities contribute to attractiveness in a city (Gehl, 2010). Instead he thinks the human experience of city planning makes cities lively and attractive. Gehl describes the importance of human dimension in urban development. By designing good pedestrian and cycling communities it is possible to create and develop cities that are lively, safe, sustainable and healthy. In the latest dedicated urban planning, public environment, social places and pedestrians have had low priority while the use of cars has been higher priority. Gehl means that cities must change their priorities and planning documents to create cityscapes on human scale. With the following four objectives, he means that it is possible to make changes in the urban development:

1. Lively city is achieved when people are offered to walk, cycle and stay at streets, squares and parks of the city.
2. Safe city, when people use and move in and around the city it contributes to more activity and feeling of safety in and around places in the city.
3. Sustainable city, increase when the infrastructure provides green mobility, walk, cycle or public transport.
4. Healthy city grows when walking or cycling become a natural part of a daily activity.

### **3.2.2 The 15-minutes city**

The hectic life within large cities creates an unbalanced picture of time spent on commuting and providing our daily needs. Moreno et al. (2021) has questioned our way of living in cities today. He has proposed a concept of cities taking an opposite stand point to modern urbanism in an effort to achieve human-centre cities. The concept is called “The 15-minutes city” with the purpose that cities should be designed or redesigned so residents can reach activities and needs within a 15-minute walk or cycle from home (See Figure 3.2). The essential social features a citizen should be able to access within this distance is work, housing, caring, food, education, culture, and leisure (Moreno et al., 2021). A crucial feature in differentiating between other approaches is that a 15-minute city carries activities to neighbourhoods and not citizens to activities (Pozoukidou & Chatziyiannaki, 2021).

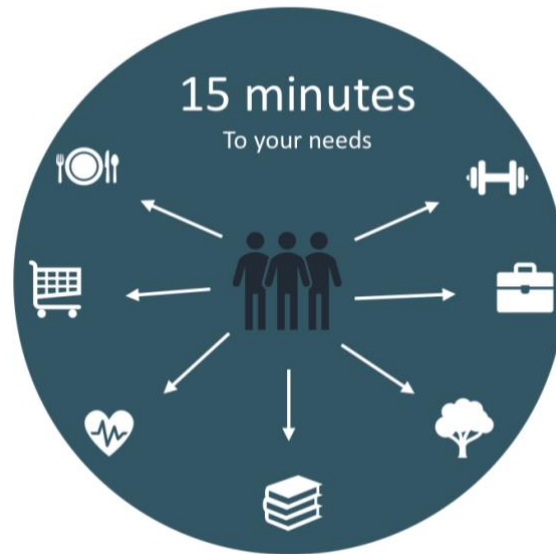


Figure 3.2. "The 15-minute city", illustration is made by the authors.

Moreno et al. (2021) imply that today's cities are dysfunctional and need to be changed. Therefore a 15-minute city is necessary for equity, residents' well-being as well as the climate. When creating a 15-minute city, the focus must move from city planning to urban life planning. It is essential to understand the space in cities, how it is used, and by whom. For instance, available services in surrounding areas must be considered instead of only focusing on the city centre. The concept put focus on localising an extensive collection of facilities along with the workplace. Localising the workplace is equally important as other urban spaces since transport from home to work is part of everyday life. The Reason to become a 15-minute city is to make urban life more enjoyable, nimble, robust and flexible. To achieve that, everyone in the city needs to have close access to key services (Moreno et al., 2021).

### 3.2.3 Preferences of future generations

Swedish people between the ages of 19 to 34 are most likely to move as shown in Figure 3.3 and out of all the people who change their address in 2019 this generation has had a higher tendency to leave to a new region in Sweden (Prognoscentret, 2020). To know what the young generation requests of their future can therefore act as a guideline of what the future demands might look like (Mellander, 2021a). However, reservation must be made that even though young people represent a future generation, their current preferences do not have to reflect their future priorities as it often changes with age and life situation (Liberg, 1994).

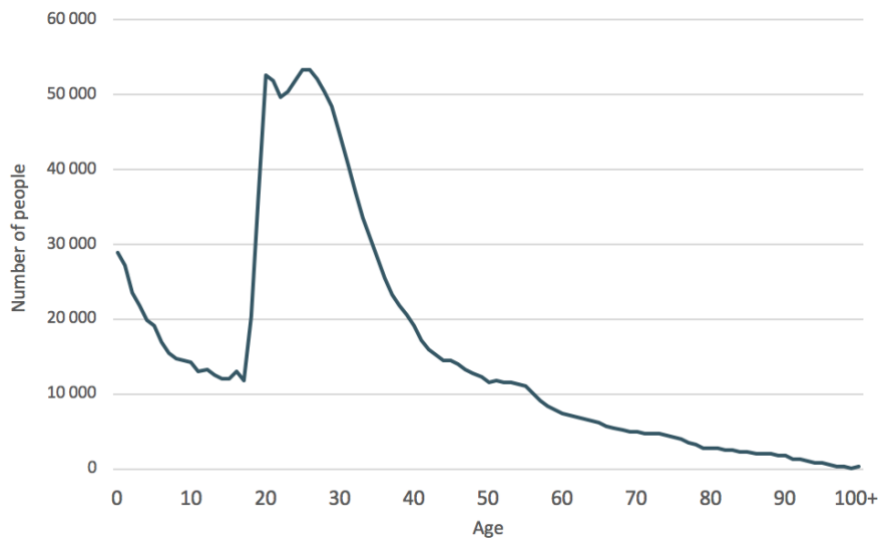


Figure 3.3. Number of Swedish people moving to a new city during 2020 (SCB, 2021b).

A survey performed by AFRY 2019, asked 5624 young adults (age 18 to 35) from six European countries about their preferences of the city they want to live in (AFRY, 2020). The purpose of the survey was to understand what young people between 18 and 35 years old are asking for, to be able to build cities that fulfil their needs. One question in the survey asked what type of city in terms of size they want to live in. It showed that over 50% of the respondents want to live in a city with a maximum of 100 000 inhabitants. Another question in the survey asked what aspects the respondents consider to be the most important when choosing where to live. As shown in Figure 3.4 Family and friends is considered to be the most important aspect in future housing. Second most important was work followed by access to nature.

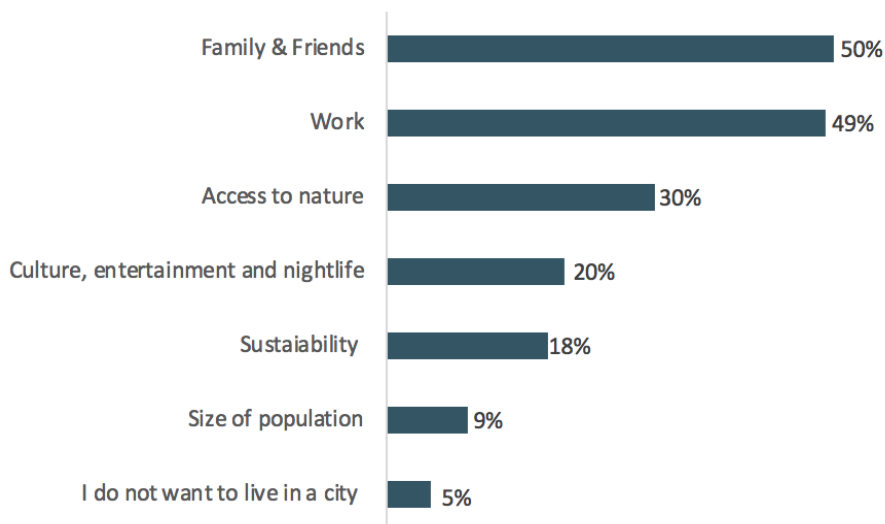


Figure 3.4 View what aspects the respondents found most important when choosing where to live. Each respondent could choose two aspects (AFRY, 2020).

The same survey showed that 62% of the respondents found sustainability as crucial when making decisions about their future city. Green areas and access to nature is the most important aspect of a sustainable city according to the survey. Besides public transport running on renewable energy and efficient recycling, affordable and accessible housing is seen as important from a sustainable perspective. 75% of the respondents did not think that their city or national government takes sufficient measures to make housing affordable. The Swedish respondents were by far the most dissatisfied with the opportunities to find affordable housing. On the other hand, the single biggest challenge for future cities according to the survey is overpopulation, circular waste management and mobility/logistics. According to the Swedish result overpopulation and segregation are the single biggest challenges.

### **3.2.4 Ecological boundaries**

It is not enough to understand people's request of urban quality in order to be a thriving and sustainable city. It is just as vital to have an understanding of the change factors affecting and creating demands on cities' development (IVA, 2017).

The International Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) expresses in their report *Global Warming of 1.5 °C* how human activities both locally and globally are currently creating irreversible damage to the ecosystem (Hoegh-Guldberg, 2018). Urban activities, such as transport and buildings, are liable for 75% of the global anthropogenic carbon dioxide emissions (UNep, 2021). The turnout of climate change globally is driven by what happens in the cities (While & Whitehead, 2013) and previous focal points in urban evolution have been social and economic factors rather than ecological elements (Bithas & Christofakis, 2006). Urban planning today is in a conflicted position of satisfying the needs of the current society by working on attractiveness and/or cherishing future generations ability to fulfil their needs (Cars & Engström, 2008). Cars and Engström (2008) argue that a change of priorities related to urban design is both fundamental and crucial for a sustainable future. Onwards, cities without substantial emphasis in climate-proofing infrastructure will struggle to remain economically and socially durable (Bicknell et al., 2007).

Future climatic patterns, technological innovation and international and national priorities in climate governance is uncertain (While & Whitehead, 2013) and it is therefore important to inherent interdisciplinary approaches to work through future climate implications (Bulkeley et al., 2010; Jasonoff, 2010). The climatic ramifications call for new distinctive theories and approaches (While & Whitehead, 2013).

Viable cities is an initiative to create a good life for all within the planetary boundaries (Viable cities, 2021). The innovation program focuses on climate neutral and sustainable cities. In line with agenda 2030 and the Paris agreement the program acts as a catalyst for new forms of collaborations between municipalities, business community, science and civil society. Viable cities is an initiative made by Vinnova,

The Swedish energy agency, Formas and The Swedish Royal institute of technology. They have created a climate contract where cities who sign the contract, with the help from Swedish authorities and viable cities, will aim at becoming climate neutral until 2030. Nine cities signed the contract in 2020. 30 different cities have shown interest to become one of the following 11 cities to sign the contract in 2021 (Viable cities, 2021).

Agenda 2030 initiates a change towards a sustainable society. Sweden should according to its government be a leader in the implementation of the agenda. A successive change is needed in order to enable a modern and sustainable welfare country both nationally and as a part of the global system (Regeringen, 2021).

### **3.3 Municipality**

The Swedish municipal organisations have a very strong position regarding physical planning. Roughly speaking, the municipal organisation decides when and what may be built in the city. They also have a strong influence on how the buildings are to be developed in different areas and how the buildings are to be designed (Boverket, 2020).

#### **3.3.1 Municipal organisation**

Sweden is divided into different geographical areas. For example 21 counties, 290 municipalities and 25 provinces (SCB, 2019). Counties and municipalities are connected to politics, while the provinces have non-political significance (SCB, 2019). Each county is also a region with the same border. A county is governed by the Regional Council, elected by the citizens and they are responsible for the region's most important questions like healthcare (SKR, 2021). Each county consists of several municipalities.

A Municipality is both a geographical area and an organisation (Brorström, 2010). The municipality organisations, shown in Figure 3.5, are governed by politicians elected by the citizens every four years (SKR, 2021a). The municipal council executive committee is divided into different committees that are responsible for their own specific area (SKR, 2021a). One of the committees is the building committee with the task of planning and executing politically decided tasks according to the Plan and Building Act (Boverket, 2016). The Municipal officials are the politicians' experts and carry out the municipality's activities (Boverket, 2018).



Figure 3.5 Organisation of a municipality (SKR, 2021a).

### 3.3.2 Comprehensive plan

Most municipalities today have different types of strategies to help create attractive urban environments. The municipalities in Sweden have a planning monopoly giving them an important role related to urban development (Sandström, 2011). The planning process within the Swedish municipality takes place through several different planning documents and processes. The comprehensive plan is mandatory and it covers the entire municipality and can sometimes be divided into complementary documents clarifying specific areas in depth (Nyström & Tonell, 2012). The comprehensive plan is not legally binding as the detailed plan (PBL, SFS 2010:900). It should rather be seen as a politically anchored program for the municipality's physical planning and as a document that formulates a vision of the future describing the intended direction for the future of the municipality (Nyström & Tonell, 2012). The Municipality Council decides, among other things, on issues concerning the adoption and amendment of the comprehensive plan.

### 3.3.3 Demographic challenges

The Swedish population is growing but the growth is not evenly distributed due to the urban hierarchy (SCB, 2020a). Almost 50% of the Swedish municipalities have a shrinking population (Syssner, 2014). There is a norm in many municipalities that young adults are expected to leave the city in order to receive new perspectives and a higher education (Svensson, 2006; Bergström, 2017). Svensson (2006) describes young people who do not follow the norm as failures. Bergström (2017) highlighted that when a municipality does not show the importance of young people and expect them to move to another city, it is equal to failure. She means that it will be hard getting people back to the city if they believe that they have to leave to be successful.

Syssner (2014) experienced that those who represent the municipalities that are not growing, in a demographic sense, seem to see the lack of growth as a failure, despite the fact that lack of growth can often be explained by changes at national and international level. According to her, the demographic composition and development is one of the factors that affects municipal planning the most. When investigating municipal strategies for adapting to the shrinking population Syssner finds that most municipal representatives lack the habit of talking about the municipality's future from a shrinking perspective. Representatives express that they are afraid that talking about the demographic challenges will make the municipality appear to be less attractive, resulting in that the population decline will continue or even increase.

Syssner (2014) writes that the norm in local and regional development policy is growth, which can make it difficult for individual politicians, municipality employees or organisations to talk about the municipality's future as characterised by a population decline. This is especially a problem in municipalities that have population growth as a political goal, at the same time as they are planning for a population reduction.

The distance between politicians and citizens is often so small in these municipalities that it can be difficult to make uncomfortable decisions (Syssner, 2014). Those who suffer from a rationalization or from what is perceived as a deterioration, due to municipal adaptation to shrinking, can live in the same area, have children at the same school, or shop in the same grocery store as the municipality employee who participates in the decision.

The employees in the municipal organisation are estimated to face higher demands on competence in the future which will be problematic as the municipalities are facing extensive retirements at the same time as the recruitment base in their own municipality is shrinking (Syssner, 2014). It is also difficult for a small municipality to recruit, finance and retain employees with specialist skills.

In order to fulfil the need for competence in these smaller municipalities they try to collaborate with each other. By allowing employees to specialize in a specific issue in more than one municipality, they strengthen their expertise. If the collaboration had not taken place, more employees would instead have been forced to become more of a multi-tasker (Syssner, 2014).

Urbanisation is, according to Mellander (2020), an overall positive trend but it is not the same as saying that positive values accrue to everyone in the country equally. Changes in the demographic distribution and population size has several negative consequences. One being that resources are unevenly distributed and that both an increasing and a decreasing population are resource-intensive (Fjertorp, 2013). One example he mentioned is that infrastructure is not utilised to its full potential in shrinking regions while growing regions lack adequate infrastructure.



### 3.3.4 Whom should the city attract?

Most municipalities are not only seen as an administrative unit whose primary task is to provide public services to the municipal residents. The municipalities are also their own brand in need of location marketing. This means that the municipality is in a competitive situation with other municipalities' brands (Brorström and Parment, 2016). Making attractive cities is difficult. As Andersson (1998) said, cities cannot be attractive for everyone. The question is therefore, who should the city attract?

According to Florida (2006), creativity and innovation drive economic and development forward. He claims, in today's society, that people live and work more mobile, free and require space for ideas. People search for places that educate creativity and encourage new ideas with existing knowledge. The successful city has the ability to attract creative residents, but also support the population to start becoming more creative (Florida, 2006). He described a new way of an economic class. One characteristic of the creative class is that they have to work with the purpose to create something meaningful. The creative class consists of academics, professors, engineers, authors, entrepreneurs, artists, architects, etc.

The fundamental purpose with Florida's theory is "*[...] that regional growth is driven by creative people who consciously choose to live in places that are multifaceted, tolerant and open to new ideas.*" (Author's translation) (Florida 2006, s. 296). Florida (2006) argues that a city must consist of "the three T:s" to attract the creative class. Technology (A well working technological infrastructure), Talent (Population with high education or skills) and Tolerance (City with diversity). He claims that each of the factors are essential but insufficient alone.

Several researchers have been criticising Florida's theory about the creative class (Markusen, 2006; Kalsø 2008). Markusen (2006) means that a person who has talent, creativity and skill is not equal with higher education. Creativity as a definition is, according to her, unclear and she claims that Florida does not seem to know which labour markets are included in the creative class.

Besides Florida's theory of the creative class there are other beliefs of who to attract. Many municipalities hope that individuals who have once moved from the municipality will return and statistics show that approximately every fourth move is a relocation (Lundholm, 2012). Moretti and Thulin (2012) believes that a population with higher education is preferable since they contribute to the creation of jobs for others. Statistics show that a person with higher education contributes to the creation of three more jobs compared to a person without a university degree who contributes between 0.4 to 0.8 new jobs (Moretti & Thulin, 2012). Younger couples with kids are also seen as desirable since they create economic activity and jobs through house purchases, house

renovations, relatives and friends who visit, as well as public services (preschool, school and primary care) (Brorström & Parment, 2016).

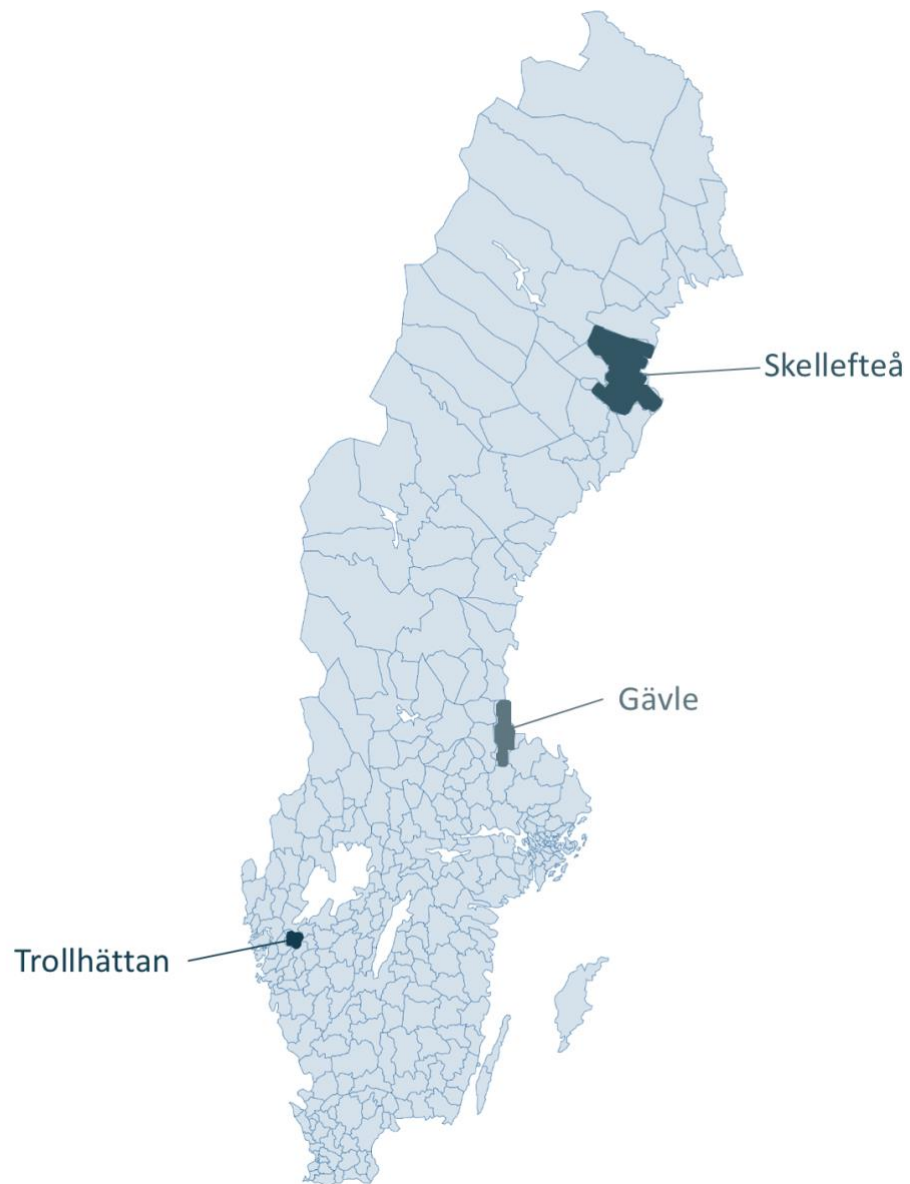
It is seldom that a place can attract all groups, but instead the municipality should, from a place marketing perspective, concentrate on the segments where the probability of success is greatest (Brorström & Parment, 2016).

### 3.4 Case study

As mentioned in section 2.3 three municipalities have been selected to investigate. To understand how the municipalities differ from each other, crucial numbers are presented below in Table 3.1.

*Table 3.1 Crucial numbers for the selected municipalities (Based on data from SCB).*

	<b>Gävle</b>	<b>Skellefteå</b>	<b>Trollhättan</b>	<b>Sweden</b>
<b>Inhabitants (2020)</b>	102 904	72 840	59 249	10 379 295
<b>Growth target 2030</b>	120 000	80 000	70 000	11 094 873
<b>Population growth 2020–2030</b>	16,57 %	9,83 %	18,15 %	6,89 %
<b>Population growth 2010-2020</b>	8,26 %	1,67 %	7,25 %	10,24 %
<b>County</b>	Gävleborg	Västerbotten	Västra götaland (Fyrbodal)	
<b>Unemployment (2020)</b>	9%	10 %	5 %	7%
<b>Education</b>	Högskolan I Gävle 16 000 students	Umeå and Luleå university has campus at Skellefteå	Högskolan I Väst 12 700 students	



*Figure 3.6: Map of Sweden divided into municipalities, illustration is made by the authors.*

## **4 Compilation of the interview study**

In the following section, data from interviews will be presented based on common themes and topics that have been identified.

### **4.1 Factors beyond the municipal control**

During the interviews, several of the factors that were mentioned as crucial for the development of the individual city were factors that the municipality could not influence.

Mellander describes that all midsized cities that work with similar prerequisites and challenges can expect the same type of development. National structures are more robust than what an individual municipality can influence. An example she highlights is that people tend to talk as small shrinking municipalities do something wrong when they do not reverse the negative trend of shrinking. However, she claims that they can do almost anything and continue to shrink because they have such strong forces against them.

#### **4.1.1 Geographical location**

The distance between Skellefteå and its surrounding cities is highlighted as a problem by both the Head of Västerbottens Chamber of Commerce in Skellefteå and the representatives from Skellefteå Municipality. However, it is not the distance measured in length that is pointed out but rather the travel time due to a flawed infrastructure system. The Community Strategist in Skellefteå claims that cities in the north feel like self-propelled islands since there is a lack of exchange between the cities. The Norrbottnia line, a planned extension of the railway that stretches up to Umeå, can open up the isolation of the northern cities. However, the Norrbottnia line is said to have been on the agenda for more than 80 years.

The interviews show that neither Gävle nor Trollhättan struggles with a similar feeling of isolation. The Planning Director at Gävle thinks that Gävle is lucky to be located where different types of Infrastructure meet advantageously. The existing infrastructure connects the city with both the local region and nationally. The city is now facing new significant infrastructure investments that strengthen the city's ability to be a logistics hub. However, the Planning Director does not only highlight the benefits of the favourable placement and future investments, he also sees that it can both promote and hamper the city development. He envisioned great potential in developing the city to take advantage of the investments made at a national level and highlighted the obligations that national investments impose. Gävle will, for example, build 6 000 new homes due to the infrastructure investments that are taking place.

Compared to the other cities in Fyrbodal county, Trollhättan has a good connection to Gothenburg, a 35-minute train ride away. On the other hand, the city's connection to the east coast, especially Stockholm, is impaired. In conversations with representatives from the city, the importance of connections to the metropolitan regions is emphasised, but it is also something that the city itself cannot influence. The Head West Sweden Chamber of Commerce in Fyrbodal: *“You are located where you are located, there is nothing you can do about it”* (Author's translation).

The geographical location is unique for each city, and according to Mellander, the location has a substantial impact on the development of the place. Mellander highlights an example of how Sweden's long narrow shape creates challenges for cities in the northern regions. She says that all cities in the north will have more significant challenges than similar cities in the south.

### **4.1.2 History**

Just as the geographical placement, the cities cannot change what has happened in their history either. In the interviews it emerged that historical events had played an essential role in the city's development. The city representatives often describe their city's modern development as a consequence of its historical background.

According to the Head of the West Sweden Chamber of Commerce in Fyrbodal, Trollhättan has a long tradition of developing new mobility. A journey that started with the manufacturing of trains and locomotives has today developed into an engineer-concentrated labour market that, among other things, creates self-driving vehicles. The transition from heavy industries to a knowledge-based industry is a challenge many cities face. In Gävle, people are still struggling to find a white-collar structure after having a dominating heavy industry. The Planning Director suspects that the city's relatively low level of education and high unemployment is a result of the late transition from heavy industries to a knowledge-based industry. Large industries have also characterized Skellefteå, and in addition to the challenge of supplying the right skills, they also see gender segregation in the labour market as problematic. Skellefteå's Community Strategist sees a predominance of men working connected to the manufacturing industry simultaneously as the manufacturing industry will drive the city's growth. She is concerned about ensuring a growth that is evenly distributed between the genders, and the Head of Västerbotten's Chamber of Commerce in the city points out the importance of gender neutralizing the historically gender-coded industries that are important for the city's future development.

Mellander describes that it is important for cities to change and not get too caught up in the old manufacturing industry, which is now declining. The manufacturing industry we see today is not the same as before, resulting in new skills needed where labour concentrated jobs are replaced by jobs where highly educated skills are required.

### **4.1.3 Universities**

Gävle and Trollhättan have universities that the representatives described as crucial for the city's development. In Trollhättan, they are now actively working on getting students to stay in the city, and the municipality collaborates with the university to connect the campus to the city centre. The Community Development Director in Trollhättan hopes that more students will stay if they get better opportunities to discover the city. Today many students commute into the city and only transports themselves between the station and the campus.

Skellefteå is located between the two large university cities Luleå and Umeå, and does not have its own university. Instead, they have a campus consisting of both Luleå and Umeå university. The likelihood that a college or university will open up in Skellefteå is low, according to the Head of Västerbottens Chamber of Commerce in Skellefteå. The representatives from Skellefteå municipality mentioned many inhabitants seeking higher education and leaving the city being a challenge. Skellefteå must therefore work actively to attract both returnees and new highly educated people to the city.

Mellander mentioned that colleges and universities had had a significant impact on the city's ability to adapt to the shift in the labour market that has taken place.

### **4.1.4 Climate**

The Planning Director said that all cities stand in front of a climate challenge. He explained that Gävle municipality has the climate question high on the agenda and strives to become climate neutral until 2035. Recently Gävle municipality updated its environmental strategy and they have applied to be a part of Viable Cities.

The Community Development Director in Trollhättan highlighted the importance of bravery when it comes to working with climate questions. He meant that the municipality needs to change their way of working with these questions, which is hard and something not all understand. The Planning Director in Gävle believes that the municipality got stuck in the discussion according to the prices of sustainable solutions. He expressed that some investments are necessary today, even if they are expensive. He described a district in Gävle built on an old dump, that in the future faces challenges with an upcoming sea-level rise. A rise of the sea level in this area could mean that rubbish and pollution spread out in the ground. Therefore, different investments are necessary to predict future environmental challenges. If not, investments are remedied in the present and the costs will become much higher in the end. He also explained that every project that promotes a sustainable city is not equal to high costs. It is essential for municipalities to also find simple solutions if possible.

## 4.2 Population growth

Population growth was high on the agenda in all municipalities. During the interviews, discussions were held regarding how much the city should grow, why and which target group the municipality wants to attract.

### 4.2.1 Why does the municipality want to grow?

The Community Strategist in Skellefteå pointed out that the growth in itself is not the important thing. The need for an evenly distributed age among the population and better skills matching in the labour market are why the city now needs to grow. When she started working at Skellefteå municipality about ten years ago, the city faced a demographic challenge regarding tax financing and an aging population as young people left the city. Setting a goal of becoming 80 000 citizens in Skellefteå by 2030 is seen as an advantage and a challenge. According to The Community Strategist, the growth goal sets a direction for the city's development, but there is a risk that the goal will be misinterpreted and take a lot of focus away from the actual issues.

In Skellefteå, a lot of time has been devoted to communicating the purpose of the growth goal to the residents within the city. The municipality's Marketing Manager believed that it is unique that a city takes the time to explain why the city should grow. She stated that many municipalities might set goals without explaining the motive behind them to the residents. Then the municipality ends up in an endless debate with the citizens about the goal's purpose. The Planning Director in Gävle claimed that the target of becoming 120 000 inhabitants by 2030 has caused discussions in the city. According to him, it is not entirely clear if the municipality actively works to achieve the goal or if it is a way to take height for expected organic growth. He believed that the organic growth the city has today and in the future could result in 110 000 inhabitants by 2030, given that he does not identify any active investments in driving the city's growth today. The Head of Urban Development in Gävle sees the growth target as a forecasting tool rather than a target. According to her, the goal to grow should be used as a planning tool to build a city that fulfils the needs of the inhabitants. Politically, views differ on whether the city needs to grow or not. Some believe that the best thing for Gävle is not growing to ensure a sustainable city without increased traffic, air pollution, and natural resources. The second perspective is that the city should grow and that they, therefore, need to be on its toes to meet the business community, in a good way and create good infrastructure. The Head of Urban Development in Gävle believed that the city wants to meet the business community and have a high decision-making capacity.

Trollhättan's Communicator pointed out that she and the rest of the municipality have a clear vision of why the city should grow. She described that a growing city is a healthy city, tax revenues increase, and the city's welfare is positively affected. If the city lacks the ambition to grow, she believes that people might choose to leave. However, she



believed that the municipality in Trollhättan lacks communication with the citizens about why the city must grow. She claimed that they need to improve the communication about why and how Trollhättan should grow.

According to Mellander, there are two ways for a municipality to grow, either more people move into the city than move out, or more people must be born than die. Of those who move to a new city, 90% are aged 18 to 35, and the municipality should attract this young target group. If the city fails to attract young people, the city faces significant challenges.

#### **4.2.2 Who does the municipality want to preserve and attract?**

During the interviews, the target group that the municipalities want to attract to the city proved to be different. Skellefteå works actively with returnees and has seen that the tax money that the municipality invests in attracting new residents has the greatest effect on those who once left the city to study elsewhere. According to the city's Community Strategist, Skellefteå has a predominant population of younger men and that the majority leaving the city are women. She also mentioned that 86% of those who move to Skellefteå come from the local region, which is a problem since the local region needs inhabitants too. *“We [the northern cities] implode if we take inhabitants from each other”* (Author's translation). She continued to explain that in addition to preserving the existing population, Skellefteå needs to attract people from outside, both domestically and internationally. An important issue for Skellefteå's future growth is the debate over whether Sweden should welcome people from other countries. The Marketing Manager in Skellefteå expressed that it is super important that you do not make it more difficult to move to Sweden for work. Head of Västerbotten's Chamber of Commerce in Skellefteå: *“Of course we have to accept refugees, but above all we have to make sure that we do not end up in a situation that makes expansions impossible because we do not have enough people who can work.”* (Author's translation). She also emphasised the importance of growth that improves the skills matching of the business community and that it is important to get people who settle in the city and not just fly in and out. The hope is that by attracting one new citizen, their partner and family might also move to the city as a package deal.

The Planning Director in Gävle did not believe the municipality is actively working towards attracting a specific target group. He believed that the municipality, like all other municipalities, faces a demographic challenge. He also claimed that if the municipality designs and builds a good city where people can create a good life, they also attract residents who in the long run, will contribute to a positive direction for Gävle. The Head of Confederation of Swedish Enterprise Gävleborg meant that it is very unclear in Gävle which target group the municipality should attract to become 120 000 inhabitants by 2030. The Head of Urban Development mentioned that the municipality works to attract former Gävle residents. She mentioned that Gävle municipality has had various events directed towards returnees. One example is that



they let families who have moved away from Gävle visit the Junibacken (a Swedish exhibition based on Astrid Lindgren's children's books) to have a dialogue about if they can imagine themselves moving back to Gävle. Getting more people to start companies or companies choosing to establish themselves in the city is something that both the Head of Urban Development and the Head of Confederation of Swedish Enterprise Gävleborg highlighted as important. However, sufficient focus and prioritisation has not been directed at the business community, according to the representative of the Confederation of Swedish Enterprise Gävleborg.

The Communicator in Trollhättan had thought and ambition about who they want to attract and preserve in the city, but said that they have been bad at communicating it out to the public as a municipality. She sees that a lot is being done in the city relating to making students stay after finishing their studies, getting more young people to work or studying in Trollhättan, but no stated and prioritized strategy around it.

The Head of the West Sweden Chamber of Commerce in Fyrbodalen brought up several examples of how engineers and officers have handled unwanted changes in their working life better than those without higher education. He believed in the survival force of this target group and that they, in turmoil, chose fight over flight. One example he gave was that after the Saab bankruptcy, Trollhättan had lower unemployment than during the time Saab existed. He also said that *“The advantage of having engineers is that they can work in any industry.”* (Author’s translation). The representative of the Confederation of Swedish Enterprise Gävleborg emphasised that the recruitment of academics is good for a city. An academic is often married to another academic who then becomes a co-migrant who might need a new job. She thinks that it would be great if the city could recruit entire families, including children, because a population increase is needed over several generations.

The Place Strategist has experience of attracting residents from other countries. According to her, this target group is more career-oriented and would like several options of future employees to choose from. She also experienced a higher demand on education and the possibility of kids getting high-quality international education.

Mellander, who researches urban development, highlighted the creative class as important for municipalities to attract as it can in various ways contribute to strengthening a place. The creative class is an important workforce for knowledge companies and contributes even more to the municipality's tax revenue through a higher salary than the average.

### **4.2.3 What is necessary to attract residents?**

Mellander meant that a municipality must have an efficient labour market and a fun lifestyle package to become a successful city. As previously mentioned, she emphasized that it is the 18 to 35-year-olds who move the most. Therefore, it is incredibly important

that the city show interest in this target group. This is not equivalent to excluding families with children and the elderly, but if those between 18 and 35 do not think the city is a fun place to live, the municipality will not continue to grow because they will choose to move elsewhere. According to the Head of Västerbotten Chamber of Commerce in Skellefteå, it is crucial to start promoting the city to young people early when they are students. It is important to display the city and what job opportunities there are for students, especially students from other cities.

Mellander believed that today's young people understand the world from a larger perspective and know what is outside and can be chosen. Young people today are from a generation that sets entirely new demands on their future home. She claimed that a good job and salary are not enough for young people to choose to move to a city.

The Place Strategist highlighted the challenge of attracting a population that stays and contributes to the city in the long term. For example, she mentioned how it was difficult in Oskarshamn to attract engineers and that there is no point in attracting those who strive to end up in the big city. *“It is usually expensive to hire people that want to live in a larger city, they come to the smaller town to live, work and learn in a few years before leaving the city for the next step in their career”* (Author’s translation). Oskarshamn, therefore, needs to attract the right kind of people who are in line with what the place has to offer.

## **4.3 A city with capacity for growth**

Beyond attracting and preserving inhabitants to cities, several challenges with a growing population have been discussed during the interviews.

### **4.3.1 Introduction of new residents**

In Skellefteå, the city's dense network and association life are described as a great strength. With the planned population growth, the municipality sees that this advantage also can be a challenge. Therefore, Skellefteå works actively to welcome the newcomers who move to the city. According to the Marketing Manager, the municipality started a moving-in service in 2012. Those who move to the city can get help with questions relating to housing, family life, leisure, and more. Skellefteå municipality also gives a moving-in gift box and sends out invitations to various events. The municipality organises everything from large moving-in events for several thousands to smaller gatherings such as Christmas cafes. According to the Market Manager, the smaller events have been most appreciated and is something they want to invest in more. During the Covid-19 pandemic, digital events have been used as a replacement of the usual physical events. There are also events aimed at all citizens, such as the food tour, a bus tour that visits the local farmers, and their shops on open houses. The Head of Västerbotten Chamber of Commerce in Skellefteå moved to the city in her adulthood and recalled that she was invited to meetings for all newcomers

when she was new to the city. During this period, she got to know others and see more of what the city could offer. Today she is positive about her own experience and described that the municipality has developed the concept further to attract people and introduce them to their new home in a good way. The Marketing Manager mentioned a large Facebook group where inhabitants can network and apparently they work actively to arrange their own events and meetings. She thought that the city creates many opportunities for the newcomers but knows they must work even more.

The Community Development Director in Trollhättan is self-critical and said that they are not good enough at arranging meetings and events for the newcomers. However, he hopes, and in discussion with residents he hears, that most new residents feel welcome and enter society in a good way. He thought it might have something to do with the fact that Trollhättan is “working class” with a simple and stripped-down attitude.

In Gävle, they have a welcome package, similar to Skellefteå, where they welcome new Gävle residents to the city. The Head of Urban Development mentioned that Gävle municipality, combined with the national day, organises a form of a ceremony where all new residents are officially welcomed. She does not work with these issues, but knows that the municipality went around in buses to show the city before the pandemic.

According to Place Strategies, one must not be careless in the work of meeting new residents. You have to work with a soft landing, the welcome, and the establishment of the new place. According to her, it is more than getting a job and housing. It is about creating networks, and for some, it is also about getting to know a new culture. It is not enough to only promote a job, the city must also support life quality, create enjoyment and safety.

### **4.3.2 Housing market**

Rising housing prices can be a problem, according to the Planning Director in Gävle. He believed that finding and affording a home is a fundamental and pressing issue today. According to the representative of Confederation of Swedish Enterprise Gävleborg, Gävle’s residents have to a greater extent become interested in living in Sandviken, a neighbouring municipality to Gävle with good commuting possibilities. In Sandviken, the prices are lower while inhabitants also get better outdoor life and association life than in Gävle, which she believed attracts families searching for houses.

In Trollhättan, a problem has been identified with the city having a shortage of houses and townhouses. The municipality does not have much land to exploit, and they have focused more on densifying the urban area with apartments. In addition to the argument of densification linked to better mobility, the city's Communicator described that apartments have been more economically defensible to build. According to the city's brokers, which the Community Development Director communicates with, many of those who search for houses in Trollhättan come from Gothenburg are looking for a

residential area within commuting distance. The Communicator now sees a challenge for Trollhättan to free up land for houses and townhouses in an economically, socially, and ecologically defensible way.

In Skellefteå, there is no shortage of land. The municipality is large, which creates space to grow. According to the Marketing Manager, they have also succeeded in creating a good mix of different types of housing. However, the strong population growth requires expansion of the existing housing stock to accommodate all new inhabitants. In addition to the city's goal to grow, they aim to produce 100 single-family houses per year and 300 apartments per year, every year until 2030. According to the follow-up of the goals the city is far away from the set goal and will need a significant increase in the production rate linked to apartment buildings.

According to Mellander, changing housing prices can be a good indicator of how things are going for a city. She believed that rising prices show strength in the location and that it is developing in a positive direction since people are willing to pay more for what the place has to offer.

### **4.3.3 Local infrastructure**

In Skellefteå, the expected population growth generates challenges for the existing infrastructure. The Community Strategist said that they have an internal infrastructure that is dimensioned for today's city, which becomes insufficient as the city grows. The Marketing Manager also emphasised that the technical solutions of the future, such as self-driving cars, put demands on the road network. The municipality is looking at the possibility of having electrified transports between the Harbour and Skellefteå urban areas. The Head of Västerbotten Chamber of Commerce in Skellefteå also thought that the city's cycle paths needed to expand. According to her, they are almost non-existent. According to the Marketing Manager, another problem with the existing infrastructure in the city is that Skellefteå is one of the few cities that does not have a railway that goes into the city centre. This means that they struggle to create an intermodal infrastructure where you can easily switch between modes of transport.

Gävle is now facing many major infrastructure investments and sees it as an excellent opportunity for the city's future development. However, the Planning Director in Gävle mentioned that the next few years will consist of a lot of construction in the city. He explained that there is a challenge in making the people in Gävle still feel at home in the city and locate themselves in the city.

Trollhättan invests heavily in future mobility. The Community Development Director mentioned that 90% of the city's inhabitants live in the city centre and that the dense municipality means that most things are within a 3 kilometres radius. He claimed that the city has good access to both nature and services. The city's river could be seen as a barrier, but the Community Development Director said that the river is an asset that

connects the city and meets people. One barrier he mentioned is the road E: 45, which divides certain areas from the city centre and makes the area seem more distant to the city centre than it actually is.

#### **4.3.4 Segregation**

Kronogården is one of the areas beyond the barrier that road E:45 creates in Trollhättan. This is an area where most of the inhabitants have a foreign background. The area is described as vulnerable and constitutes one of the city's most segregated areas. However, the Community Development Director emphasized that there are even more segregated areas where almost none of the residents have a foreign background. He also highlights that segregation is not only linked to the number of immigrants in a place, but rather an uneven distribution of people throughout Trollhättan. He claimed that Trollhättan needs to integrate people more. The students are also described as separated from the city and the municipality is now working to connect the campus and the city in a better way.

The Head of Confederation of Swedish Enterprise in Gävleborg mentioned the importance of the municipality and the local business community working together at involving those who are unemployed, poorly educated, or lack language skills into the labour market. She believes that it is important that this group is included with the rest of the society to, for example, learn the language or feel a social affiliation and not only meet people with the same background as oneself. The Planning Director in Gävle also mentions that different groups must be allowed to meet across districts and ethnicities in order to prevent unrest in the city. *“Gävle has so far managed to stay out of the police's list of particularly vulnerable areas. But that does not mean that it is problem-free in the city.”* (Author's translation).

The Community Development Director in Trollhättan believed that it is possible to work better with urbane design as a tool to reduce segregation. He said that priorities of investments within the city sends signals to the population. Segregation is a difficult problem to handle, but he wants the projects in Trollhättan to signal that the municipality sees and cares for all citizens and values their opinion.

In Skellefteå, the municipality expects a challenge in shifting from a community that previously had no major growth to becoming a rapidly growing population. According to the city's Community Strategist, Skellefteå has a very close network where: *“everyone basically knows everyone”*. To maintain the safe society that Skellefteå is currently perceived to be, will according to her, be a challenge considering the rapid population growth that awaits the city.

## **4.4 The municipality's goals and visions**

Just like setting goals for population growth, the municipality can use goals and visions to set a direction for the city's future development. Among the interviewed municipalities, there were different approaches and divided opinions about working with documentation, goals, action, and urban development.

### **4.4.1 Reverse a negative trend**

When the Marketing Manager and the Community Strategist in Skellefteå started working at the municipality about ten years ago, the city faced demographic challenges that needed to be addressed. However, there was no clear plan for how to break the downward spiral of young citizens leaving the city.

In Skellefteå, the municipality identified that they cannot be alone in facing demographic challenges and therefore began to look at how other municipalities work and research the issue. The Marketing Manager claimed that Skellefteå is not or has not planned to become a student city, they are not a regional capital and do not have a specific profile to build growth around. They needed to identify the city's strengths and development potential. According to the Community strategist, they have a strong municipality, strong networks, and a labour market with great potential. Skellefteå's Marketing Manager mentioned that the city previously had difficulties attracting companies because there was a lack of an overall strategy from the municipality. She believed that the lack of a comprehensive strategy meant that the municipality did not move forward in various selection processes and did not get the opportunity to talk about the city's future development.

According to Mellander, many municipalities face the same challenge where the city is shrinking but do not know how to reverse it. Mellander believed that politics decides what goals to have, and according to her, there is a problem with politicians who set goals to grow even though the municipality has been shrinking for 30 years. The task of carrying out the population growth turns into something that the municipal officials need to handle. Politicians want to prove themselves strong with a high decision-making capacity and do not dare to talk about how the municipality should shrink in a good way to survive in the future.

### **4.4.2 Documentation**

After Skellefteå municipality decided why and how they wanted to develop the city, the question remaining was how it would be summed up and communicated publicly. The city's last updated comprehensive plan is from 1991. It is still relevant since there have not been many changes to the land and water due to the lack of growth in the city. Therefore, the alternative of creating a new comprehensive plan to convey the city's goals and visions was not chosen. In-depth comprehensive plans exist for specific areas

in Skellefteå municipality. However, these plans did not create a holistic perspective or communicate the city's goals and visions. Therefore, Skellefteå created a strategy document.

In Gävle, the comprehensive plan for the municipality is described as a puzzle consisting of the latest updated document for each geography. There is not just one updated in-depth comprehensive plan as the constant updating it would require is an all too extensive and time-consuming process. According to both the Planning Director and the Head of Urban Development in Gävle, there is a lot to develop regarding comprehensive plan general planning. The Planning Director believed that they will find smarter ways to work digitally with a rolling comprehensive plan that gets updated more frequently in the future. However, he believed that the city will have a hard time getting to it in the near future due to their relatively updated comprehensive plan not forcing them to address this issue again in a while.

The representative from the Confederation of Swedish Enterprise Gävleborg believed that politicians are good at producing various documents and policies. The problem with all documentation is that it consists of many general phrases that do not clearly communicate what the municipality stands for. She mentioned, for example, that Gävle must think about what sustainability means for the city and that an overall explanation is not enough. Another problem she saw with a lot of documentation is that they rarely turn into action, instead they just pile up on some desk.

At the question of whether there are too many documents to consider, the Head of Urban Development in Gävle mentioned that the municipality, despite extensive comprehensive plans, lacks a planning strategy on how Gävle should grow more concretely and in what order. The Head of Urban Development emphasised that a municipality has many perspectives to consider, making urban planning complex. *“It's not just complicated, complicated is something that can be solved. Math numbers can be complicated, but you can solve them. Complexity means that you have to priorities and decide what should win over the other in a conflict of interests.”* (Author's translations).

The Community Development Director in Trollhättan said that the municipality has an incredible amount of documentation but thinks that the documents are often redundant and rarely used. Instead, the city has recently focused on having high decision-making capacity and putting words to action with less focus on creating more documents and developing hypothetical visions. He emphasised the importance of daring to test new things and give space to innovations and other ways of solving things than through documents. By that, he did not mean that Trollhättan excludes documentation entirely or that the decision-making processes are not democratic. He described that he has great respect for the tax money that is used and it requires sensibility to know within what framework you can act and dare to test new solutions and collaborations.

The Community Development Director in Trollhättan was asked if there may be disadvantages with the city's brave approach. He answered that they primarily see advantages but may have been slightly poor at describing the city's goals and what the city wants. Today, they work actively to find out both what the city wants but also what help the municipality needs from others to solve the urban challenges. He has recently encountered that the business community has begun to ask questions about what urban challenges they can help the city solve. *“I did not have an answer to that, and of course, I should know. I'm more like, wow innovation is awesome, let's go!”* (Author's translations).

#### **4.4.3 Communication and participation**

When Skellefteå developed its strategy, it was not only based on research and comparison with other cities it was also crucial to have a dialogue with the residents. According to the Community Strategist, it was important that they talked, informed and reached out to as many people as possible and tried to find solutions that they could create together. The municipality wanted to find people outside the municipal organisation who wanted to be involved and drive the development forward. The Marketing Manager in Skellefteå wanted to convey that the developed strategy was a collaboration between the municipality and the citizens.

The Planning Director in Gävle thinks the municipality may lack an open conversation with the inhabitants about what they want with Gävle and that they lack a common vision of the city. He believes better communication with the citizens could make the city a better place. The Head of Urban Development in Gävle describes two ways of communicating with the inhabitants, citizen consultation and citizen dialogue. She differentiates these by saying that citizen consultation is a mandatory part of the detailed planning process, while the citizen dialogue is a part where elected representatives and municipal officials voluntarily invite citizens to talk. She explained that the municipality has the ambition to increase the citizen consultations onward. There are several opportunities for residents to express their opinions and make their voices heard, but she means that many residents do not know how to do this. She mentioned that children and young people are the most difficult to reach when collecting wishes and thoughts from the public.

The Community Development Director in Trollhättan believes that the dialogue with the residents will become increasingly important in the future. He thinks it is very important that the residents know that the municipality is for the citizens. Although, *“It is difficult to build the whole Trollhättan together with everyone in Trollhättan. It is a challenge where cities that are good at it will succeed.”* (Author's translation). The Communicator in the city emphasized that they must become better at communicating long-term plans. On the other hand, it can be difficult for citizens to understand the history and background for the city development plans. *“Everyone's an expert, but*



*there is a reason why people have different jobs. Sometimes everyone thinks they know everything about urban planning but they do not understand the complexity.*” (Author’s translation). She also sees that many people in the city have opinions once a project is up and running instead of earlier when changes can still be done.

The Community Development Director in Trollhättan mentioned a similar experience when they recently rebuilt parts of the city centre in Trollhättan. The rebuilding created a lot of debate in the media during the process, but few complained about the project once it was finished. He highlighted the difficult balance between being responsive, talking about urban planning with the citizens and explaining why projects are implemented. How much space and time should be devoted to the debate? The municipality in Trollhättan is used to being a part of social media, and the Community Development Director believes that the media has an important role, even though it sometimes is challenging to respond to all opinions.

In Skellefteå, their new strategy created a debate, which the municipality also expected. The municipality spent a lot of time and effort participating in the discussion to make sure that the citizens understood the purpose of the strategy. The Marketing Manager described that there was a lot of pedagogy involved during the strategy process. *“It was like teaching an entire population basic knowledge about urban planning.”* (Author’s translation). From the municipal organisation's side, the attitude was positive to residents who questioned the goal of population growth and the strategy. It opened up the possibility for the municipality to explain the purpose again and this constant dialogue with the citizens contributed to an understanding and learning. The Marketing Manager in Skellefteå believes that their way of performing the dialogue with the residents to explain the purpose of the goals is unique.

The Planning Director in Gävle knows the feeling of fear and unwillingness to take a fight with the residents in Gävle. He states that the city tends to be a bit too cautious due to their fear of stepping on someone's toes. However, the Planning Director sees that the municipality may sometimes need to take a stand to get things done. He emphasizes the importance of the Swedish democracy but identifies a challenge with politicians being afraid of not getting elected in the next election and therefore not taking uncomfortable decisions even if it might be what the city needs.

A sensitive issue in Trollhättan has been how much space is set aside for car traffic in the city centre. A question the Community Development Director believes all municipalities today struggle with. Politically, it is very difficult to make decisions like this since it is a hot topic that raises strong debate that might conflict with the needs of the environment. The Head of Urban Development in Gävle believes that criticism regarding investments in urban planning is often based on a lack of understanding of the larger purpose. She agrees that it is important to explain why the municipality acts as they do but she also explained that the criticism can remain even after explaining the purpose. It isn't easy to make everyone happy, and the citizen dialogues are most useful

in the early planning stages. When decisions are made, and production has begun, it is difficult to change anything.

The Head of the Chamber of Commerce West pointed out that all municipalities face the challenge where the citizens have lost the understanding that they themselves are the municipality. He continued to say that all municipalities have painted themselves into a corner saying that the municipality will solve everything. *“It is a difficult topic, citizens might question why the grass is not cut more often but they do not want the municipality to spend money on it. Democracy is incredibly difficult.”* (Author’s translation). Trollhättan's Community Development Director was on the same track that the municipality cannot do everything. He meant that the municipality can create conditions and be a facilitator, but it is required that more people invest in the city.

Trollhättan's Communicator said that Trollhättan today does not talk about the difficult parts that exist in the city. She mentioned social sustainability as an example where the municipality lacks a common approach to working with the issues within the organisation. Therefore, they do not communicate their vision to the public since they do not have united answers on the population's question. She also said that Trollhättan tends to be a bit frightened of responding to the questions.

Mellander emphasised that urban planning projects often risk being criticised in the media. She described an example of a new area in Jönköping that has been incredibly criticised, among other things, for the houses being too close to each other. Despite all the criticism in the media, today all apartments are sold. This must show that there are actually people who want to live there and appreciate the area. She also described that it is common for many politicians to be incredibly worried about what is written in the media.

#### **4.4.4 Time horizon**

Skellefteå's Community Strategist said that Skellefteå today faces rapid growth with a clear turning point. Due to the rapid growth, it isn't easy to use standard forecasting tools or forecasting models to determine the future and see what development the city is facing. Traditional forecasting tools look back on recent years and convert it to the future, but the Community Strategist sees a problem with this approach since the ongoing development makes a sudden turn. The Community Development Director in Trollhättan said the following regarding future trend changes, *“The only thing we know is that changes have never gone faster than it does today and it will never go as slow as it does today either. So it is very difficult with urban planning today. But that's why it is so much fun working with these questions.”* (Author’s translations).

According to the representatives from Skellefteå municipality, the time frame of goals and visions varies depending on the perspective. The time frame within a business community is significantly shorter than the time horizon needed within the municipality

organisation. The Community Development Director in Trollhättan meant that the time horizon looks different depending on the perspective, but he considers that ten years is a reasonable time horizon. He meant it is difficult to look further than that and also that a 10-year perspective sometimes is difficult because a lot happens extremely fast in today's development. Skellefteå's targeted population growth, is for example set until 2030, but the municipality's idea is to extend the time horizon in the revised strategy. Discussions are taking place on whether new goals should be set for 2040 or 2050. In the revised strategy, the municipality's vision will also be redirected and clarified. Gävle on the other hand, has several time horizons that are planned ahead. Their comprehensive plan is for 2030 with an outlook to 2050.

Mellander said that it is difficult to predict the future. The best way to prognosticate the future is according to her by looking at the history. She believes, for example, that the trend of working remotely makes a workplace location-independent is not likely to continue in the same way after Covid-19 pandemic. In response to the question of whether knowledge can be transferred digitally and no longer be bound to one place, Mellander answered, *“It is an old argument, it has been said since the bicycle was invented that, now we do not have to live here anymore because now we can cycle a mile in an hour. It was the same reasoning when the phone, the car and the digital-era came, people said that now we should start working remotely.”* (Author's translation). According to her, there are more things that must go hand in hand before working remotely makes people independent of a location.

## **4.5 Municipal management**

The investigated municipalities have different views on municipal management and the interviewees gave both personal insights and spoke from their business role.

### **4.5.1 Political climate**

The Marketing Manager in Skellefteå highlighted easy and fast decision-making ability as one of the midsized cities' biggest advantages. The Community Development Director sees a big difference in the decision-making abilities compared with larger cities, like Gothenburg. According to him, people are closer to each other in Trollhättan, which facilitates their internal communication.

A municipality consists of elected representatives and municipal officials, where the composition looks different within different municipalities, according to Gävle's Business Director. The interviewed representative from Confederation of Swedish Enterprise Gävleborg described a challenge that municipal officials often have a higher academic background and knowledge in their specific areas of work than the elected representatives have. The Planning Director in Gävle sees the municipal officials as specialists who act within the framework set by the politicians. In his role as a municipal official, he experiences an opportunity to influence and recognises an understanding

mentality among politicians. The Head of Urban Development in the Gävle partly agrees with the Planning Director and emphasised that people have slightly different views when it comes to the previously mentioned time perspective. According to her, there is sometimes a lack of political understanding that one may have to act directly to achieve the goal picture since it takes time to change a city.

The Marketing Manager in Skellefteå highlights the importance of having a democracy that works and can handle differences within politics. According to her there is a problem with taking long-term decisions that extend over the term of office. The Head of Urban Development in Gävle said that before an election period it is common to sense that something is going on. *“Suddenly there is something in the air, oh right, we are heading into a new election period.”* (Author’s translation). As previously mentioned, the fear of not being re-elected can prevent the decision-making process, according to Gävle's Planning Director. He also claims that the political government affects the city's development and found it interesting that Gävle is governed by a majority, unlike many others who are governed by a minority. The Head of Urban Development in Gävle emphasizes that it is not an individual party that has a majority and compromises in the decision-making is therefore necessary. Gävle has had political shifts in recent terms, in contrast to the historically stable party political situation.

In Trollhättan, the same party (the Social Democrats) has been in power for 105 years and the Community Development Director in the city believes it has been an important part of the city's development. However, he claimed that there are both pros and cons to having the same political governance for a long time. The advantage is the stability about where the city should go and what it wants to do, which has enabled the municipality to work long-term. Skellefteå, like Trollhättan, have not had several major political shifts and the Marketing Manager agrees that it can be both an advantage and a disadvantage. Stability is positive but stagnant politics is not good. She is happy that the politicians in the city still have visions and are engaged and the Community Strategy highlights that they have had active opposition even though they have been in opposition for 70 years. The Marketing Manager in Skellefteå believes that this active commitment depends more on the people than the politics. The composition of parties in the city's governance is not the most crucial according to her. It is more important how the politicians work and that they can agree on important decisions over the party boundaries. The Head of Urban Development in Gävle agrees that personal chemistry between politicians can determine how politics is shaped. In some cities she knows that they highlight certain driven individuals that shape the city, but she lacks this type of person in Gävle.

#### **4.5.2 The right person in the right place**

The Head of the Västerbotten Chamber of Commerce in Skellefteå sees an increased commitment and drive from the Skellefteå municipality, even though the city has the

same political governance as before. She also points out that it is the individuals who make the biggest difference in the city. The same applies to municipal officials, according to the Community Developer Director in Trollhättan. He claims that municipality employees can sit back and only do what is required, but he means that it will not result in a brave and innovative city if the employees take that approach. Sometimes he questions the municipal organisation's drive when criticism in the media flares up but sees it as part of his professional role to resist and not take it personally.

Taking care of the city is very important according to the Head of Urban Development in Gävle. She feels a responsibility for the city due to her professional role. Her daughters sometimes cringe when their mum picks up empty bottles or moves branches. But she believes her work as a planner and developer in her own living environment contributes to pride. She mentioned that she and her colleagues try to be ambassadors for Gävle. If the city grows, it must also attract employees who want to develop the city. It is important that the municipality proves to be an attractive employer and that every employee talks well about the organisation.

The Planning Director in Gävle said that it is not his job to make Gävle into whatever he wants the city to be. His mission is rather to ensure that the municipality has good employees implementing the decisions taken by the democratically elected politicians. The Business Director in the city was also careful to speak from his own perspective and meant that the municipal official should make the politicians' decision into reality. The Planning Director in Gävle thought that the knowledge about the municipality organisation processes combined with the knowledge about the political process is the hardware in his job. He meant that this kind of knowledge can be applied within different departments and municipalities.

The different interviewees had similar professional roles, but their personal journey to the role and where they lived differed. Some were originally from the city or its surrounding areas, some grew up elsewhere, a few were returnees and some neither lived in the city nor have lived in the city.

### **4.5.3 Consultant**

Bringing in consultants is a natural part of Gävle Municipality's work. Urban development is about teamwork and getting a mix of people working with the city's development. Building a city solely using consultants, will not work according to the Head of Urban Development in Gävle. She claimed that there must also be urban planners in the city who know the city's story. *“You need to have an understanding of the city's history, and know why certain decisions were made.”* (Author's translation). She meant that a consultant is better to bring in for help with specific questions.

Trollhättan's Community Developer Director said that the city uses consultants and that it is great to bring in other perspectives. For example, consultants are helping with the

work to develop a target image for Trollhättan's future mobility. According to him, the advantages of consultants are that they bring a holistic perspective, and experiences from other places. The use of consultants is a good complement to the knowledge of an individual municipality.

Skellefteå municipality also takes help from consultants to do scenario analysis, compare the city with other places and see what could be learned about rapid change of the population growth for example.

## 4.6 Comparison and collaboration

Consultants are one way to bring in new skills and new perspectives. During the interviews, several ways emerged to develop the municipality by taking help or learning from others.

### 4.6.1 Comparison

The interviewed municipalities were asked if they compared themselves with other municipalities. In Gävle, the Planning Director emphasized that they look at other municipalities with similar situations regarding demographics, finances and education results. He believed that there is a lot to learn from each other. Trollhättan's Community Developer Director also highlighted that they compare themselves to other municipalities similar to themselves. He thought, for example, that Helsingborg is doing a great job within the municipal sector linked to urban planning.

As an answer to the question of which municipalities Skellefteå compares themselves with, the Marketing Manager said, “*I think there are lots of different places that you can get inspiration from.*” (Author’s translation). The Community Strategist filled in the answer by saying that they do not have a specific sibling-city to compare themselves to. She meant that it varies depending on which question they are looking into. In the discussion that followed about which municipalities Skellefteå finds as great sources of inspiration, Jönköping and Nyköping were mentioned as good at attracting returnees. Gothenburg and Tampere were, according to her, good at skills matching and Norrköping had preserved industrial buildings well and worked well with experiences. Instead of finding a city that is similar in all aspects, she said that Skellefteå saw that Oulu in northern Finland has a similar location and industrial-heavy business, Norrköping does not have its own university but Linköping University nearby and a Campus, and Reno in the USA has a Battery factory established.

The representative from the Confederation of Swedish Enterprise Gävleborg emphasizes the importance of learning from others, “*Steal with pride!*” (Author’s translation). Among the 290 municipalities in Sweden, there is a good chance that another municipality has been sitting with the same problems and challenges, she said. She also claimed that Swedes risk becoming too proud and that prestige prevents us

from extending a hand for help or giving someone else praise for their good work. The Communicator in Trollhättan sees no problem with seeking inspiration from others before putting a Trollhättan twist to it. However, she believes that both herself and many others can become better at seeing the helicopter's perspective and learning from each other to avoid reinventing the wheel repeatedly.

#### **4.6.2 Collaboration**

Prestige can put a spanner into the collaboration between municipalities. Both the representatives from Gävle and Skellefteå mentioned that the rivalry in hockey is a growing challenge. The Marketing Manager in Skellefteå: *“Of course, the rivalry can be part of the game, but when we step out of the arenas, we leave it there. It does not work that it affects collaborations between the cities negatively just because they have a hockey team that we compete with.”* (Author’s translation).

The Community Strategist in Skellefteå also sees that more and more people realize that they are in the same boat and can help and support each other along the North East coast. The Head of Västerbotten Chamber of Commerce in Skellefteå emphasizes the importance of paying homage to each other's success and realizing that one man's loss is not another man's gain. She believes it is important to have a positive attitude to, for example, new establishments in the region and highlights how it can benefit the entire region. The Marketing Manager said that Skellefteå today collaborates a lot with the local region in different areas and that the collaboration takes place as much north as south. Skellefteå had realized that the challenges they all face are more significant than what a city itself can manage to counteract. It is also emphasized that the long distances between the cities today mean that they do not really belong to the same labour market regions and therefore do not compete on that front, but this may change with new investments in infrastructure between the cities.

Regarding competition between the northern cities, the Marketing Manager claimed that the other cities do not see Skellefteå as such a dangerous competitor. The Community Strategist said that they are more of an underdog. The Marketing Manager would like surrounding cities to see Skellefteå as a little sister who is good and competent and who they want to do well for. According to her, *“Little sister greatness theory”* is much better than having a *“little brother complex”*.

In Trollhättan, the Community Developer Director highlighted how the city collaborates with other social actors to develop the city. When the city centre in Trollhättan was built, a dialogue was held with the police to create a safe place. He believes that communication with other social actors is easier to maintain in a smaller city where you know each other. When it comes to collaboration with people in other cities at the same position or level as Trollhättan's Community Developer Director, he, unfortunately, felt that it is partly about prestige, making it difficult to talk about standard functions and collaborations. The Head of the West Chamber of Commerce

also believes that there may be a difficulty between municipalities, where some municipalities have more problems relating to each other in politics.

At the same time, it is described by representatives from both Trollhättan and Gävle that the growing city can result in growing together with nearby towns. The Head of the West Chamber of Commerce meant that it will soon be necessary to ask whether Trollhättan and Vänersborg are one city. In Gävle, the Head of Urban Development believed that the strong connection and powerful commuting between Gävle and Sandviken meant that the cities had the potential to merge.

Gävle's Planning Director said that Gävle had various municipal collaborations and networks with municipalities related to the city's size. The Business Director in Gävle claimed that the city's dialogue and collaboration between the municipality and the business community have historically been deficient, but this is something the municipality is actively working to improve today.

## **4.7 Society actors**

Two important society actors mentioned during the interviews were enthusiasts and business community.

### **4.7.1 Enthusiasts**

The Community Development Director in Trollhättan thinks that there has been good support from a political perspective that has encouraged new ideas. The political support means that the city has a good collaboration between enthusiasts, the business community, and associations. The Head of the West Chamber of Commerce, on the other hand, believes that the city's proactivity may mean that there is no room for enthusiasts in Trollhättan or that the enthusiasts who exist are inhibited.

Skellefteå's municipal slogan is "*give space to the ideas*" and this is something that the municipality actively works with by showing the city's enthusiasts and their good ideas. The city's Community Strategist emphasised that many in the city can be involved and drive city development. The municipality wants to show that they have a strong public organisation that can influence development but that the municipal organisation cannot change an entire place. She believes that the municipality must support, help and cooperate with the driving forces that exist in society.

Trollhättan's Community Development Director agreed that enthusiasts are super important and that the city today has several that are significant for the city. Trollhättan needed a cultural shift in the city from the bureaucratic to the acting and innovative, even if certain bureaucracy has its important function. The city is described as having been quite exposed and that they have been affected by, among other things, mosque fires and a serious school attack. The bankruptcy of the city's largest employer, Saab,



also created insecurity in the city. The Community Development Director believed that enthusiasts have been needed to lift the city and put Trollhättan on the map in a more positive sense.

In Gävle, the Planning Director emphasized several enthusiasts within the business community associations who do a lot of work and are committed. The Head of Urban Development claimed that the city has many ambassadors who have been an important part in putting the city on the map. From a proposal from a resident came the idea of Gävle Walk of fame that will adorn Drottninggatan to illuminate those who historically and today do good for the city.

Mellander discussed with a colleague about what can make two places that on paper have exactly the same conditions, differ so much in reality. Together they believed that it had to do with the absence and presence of brake pads. By that she claimed that one needs to create a permissive environment that enables rather than limits. to not get caught up in the mindset that “*we do not do that here*” or “*what should they write in the newspapers if we do that?*”. Mellander highlighted an example when an enthusiast tried to contribute to Jönköping’s development but did not get any hearing from the municipality. The person in this case wanted to start an outdoor restaurant by the water where people could swim, have a drink and then go up to the hotel. The problem was that an old law on distance from a building linked to a serving permit. She stated that the officials had two choices, either referring to the law or ignoring it and pretending not to have seen it because it would have been nice. She meant that the mentality can make a big difference. When people who take such an initiative are rejected or resisted, they easily lose their drive and it spreads among enthusiasts. It is therefore important to try to have a permissive mentality even if enthusiasts can be quite hard work to manage as well.

According to the Place Strategist, enthusiasts are everything to a city. “*A lot can happen in a place that allows good forces to act*” (Author’s translation). The Place Strategist believed that people in a city make the place and the importance of giving the enthusiasts space. The enthusiasts must feel that they are part of the city’s development and that their job is important.

#### **4.7.2 Business community**

According to the representative from the Confederation of Swedish Enterprise Gävleborg, the private business community is incredibly important for a city and its development. She believed that, historically, the local business climate contributes to the city’s attractiveness and the number of jobs in the city. She said that the private business community together with the city’s residents create tax revenues that later convert into public welfare such as schools, care, elderly care. In Gävle, for example, external consultants had been brought in to investigate how Gävle municipality can

work to reduce the city's unhealthy competition, said the representative from the Confederation of Swedish Enterprise Gävleborg

When a larger company is to establish in a new location, a municipality often has a short time to answer questions about how the municipality should respond and help the company, said Skellefteå's Marketing Manager. Skellefteå's overall strategy was a large part of Northvolt's choice to establish itself in the city. Within two weeks, Northvolt needed answers to questions about, for example, housing construction and transport routes, something that the municipality already could answer since they had a completed strategy. Skellefteå's Community Strategist believed that the advantage was that the municipality already had time to put the strategy into practice and concretise what it means for the city. In the process of attracting Northvolt they also realised how good the municipal conditions were for being environmentally sustainable with an environmentally certified harbour and access to 100% renewable energy. Skellefteå's Marketing Manager is very happy and proud of Northvolt's establishment but notices a challenge for the small and mid-sized companies in the city. The competence in the already established companies risks being transferred to Northvolt. The population growth in Skellefteå will be crucial to supplement with competence.

The representative from the Confederation of Swedish Enterprise Gävleborg said that it is society's small companies that create most jobs, as much as four out of five jobs are created in the companies that have up to 49 employees. She claimed that the municipality must stimulate a climate where more people have the opportunity to start and run businesses. If the municipality can stimulate a small business community spirit and at the same time have larger companies, she believed that the city will have succeeded in population growth. As a representative of the Confederation of Swedish Enterprise, she sometimes sees that municipalities have a superstition about large global companies' new establishments. According to her, these establishments do not always generate as many jobs as one hoped.

In Skellefteå, the municipality said that Northvolt's establishment will contribute to more jobs in the city than just those that the company can offer. The Community Strategist believed that Northvolt's establishment will allow more companies to establish themselves in the city. She also sees that the establishment contributes positively to the city through all subcontractors and other companies that provide services to other companies.

Trollhättan's Community Development Director said that the city will soon be strengthened by a large international company, something he thought is big for the city. The establishment with the large company has led to other companies getting in touch and finding out why they have chosen to establish themselves in Trollhättan. According to Trollhättan's Community Developer Director, Trollhättan is a city of technology that plays an important role in solving the challenges of the future and has a fantastic business life. Trollhättan has a long history in heavy industry and a knowledge of

manufacturing difficult things that move, is something that has been around for a long time, confirms the Head of West Chamber of Commerce. However, he did not feel that Trollhättan is an industry-narrow city. Instead, the city has a manufacturing and engineering focus.

Both the Planning Director in Gävle and the Confederation of Swedish Enterprise Gävleborg, expressed that Gävle is one of the municipalities with the highest unemployment and lowest level of education. Every year, the Confederation of Swedish Enterprise ranks the business community climate in Sweden's municipalities based on survey responses. According to the representative from Confederation of Swedish Enterprise Gävleborg, a municipality as large as Gävle should not be ranked 279th out of 290 municipalities. She claimed a problem with the attitude towards companies from politicians and officials. The city's Business Director said that the city measures the business community climate in several different ways, where the Confederation of Swedish Enterprise's ranking is one of them. He described that the study does not give a complete picture but should be taken into account.

The Business Director in Gävle personally believed that the city's business community climate is based on treatment and attitudes between the public and private sectors. He meant that if a company feels that they are not appreciated or that corporate issues are not prioritised, it contributes to a negative image of the business community. The work towards a better business community climate is ongoing, but it will take a long time before the change is seen because Gävle is a large municipality.

For a long time, Gävleborg has, according to both the Representative from Confederation of Swedish Enterprise Gävleborg and the Business Director in Gävle, been one of the best Young Entrepreneurship regions in Sweden. The problem in Gävle, according to the Confederation of Swedish Enterprise, is that they do not take care of the entrepreneurship and drive that exists among young people. They let them go without knowing where they are moving for studies or jobs. The Business Director in Gävle also believed that the entrepreneurship in the city is not visible after young entrepreneurship. He did not think it depended on a specific municipality, rather as a major problem linked to the fact that the entrepreneurial spirit has historically not existed in Gävle.

Trollhättan is a city whose business community identity has been strongly associated with Saab both before and after the company's bankruptcy in 2011. The Head of the West Chamber of Commerce believed that the time around the bankruptcy was dramatic in several ways, especially while the company was closing down. Once Saab went bankrupt, he believed that they came to an end with the thoughts and uncertainty about what would happen. Then it was about surviving and thinking about how to proceed. He draws a parable with the bird Phoenix rising from the ashes. It is panic-stricken, painful, in every way, and traumatic when it happens, but there is a survival force that comes up when the fire goes out. When the Head of the West Chamber of

Commerce looked back, the adjustment after the bankruptcy was rapid, and many of those who became unemployed were caught in a number of smaller technology companies. He pointed out, however, that it can obviously have been experienced differently from an individual perspective.

The Place Strategist was asked whether a city benefits or is limited by having a niche business community. In her answer to the question, she described that many cities with niche business communities today are struggling with a position shift, to go from a more traditional business community to something more modern. She highlighted Borås as a good example where they previously had a textile industry in the classic sense but today have transformed it into a focus on fashion. Many cities today are associated with large industrial companies or other specific areas, this means the location strategist in itself does not have to be something negative. *”It is unlikely that anyone wants to move to a city very good at nuclear power or has a huge truck factory. Instead, it is about finding what strengthens the image of the strong business community and complementing the city's culture”*. (Author's translation) (Place Strategist).

## **4.8 Identity and self-image**

How a municipality is perceived by others and how a municipality perceives itself is closely connected to the identity and self-image.

### **4.8.1 Identity**

All three municipalities have a historical identity closely linked to the heavy industry. In Skellefteå, the Head of Västerbotten Chamber of Commerce in Skellefteå thought that what has been a strength in the city can also be to Skellefteå's disadvantage regarding the city's identity. She sees that being identified by the heavy industry is problematic since it is often connected to a male gender-code. According to her, the current industrial labour market differs from the previous heavy industry. Therefore, a need to become better at communicating that the industrial labour market today rather means an industry that works with technology and innovation. She believed that there is a need to transform male-dominated industries into becoming more gender-neutral and that one must work to advocate diversity in several different ways.

The Planning Director in Gävle highlighted Gävle's industrial labour market as an important factor in the city's development. The business climate that exists in the city today is partly a consequence of the history linked to the fact that Gävle has been an industrial place with large employers where some over time have disappeared from the city, says the Business Director. He sees that the city, like the rest of the country, faces a transformation into a service society. The Confederation of Swedish Enterprise Gävleborg works with the entire Gävleborg region and sees that Hälsingland has a clearer entrepreneurial spirit than Gästrikland (to which Gävle belongs). She believed

that this may be due to the fact that the historical lack of large companies has created a corporate spirit and creativity.

The Community Developer Director in Trollhättan said that what has come out of the great Saab bankruptcy and difficult times is that the city has built a lot around high decision-making capacity, which today reflects in the entire municipality's organisation. Despite the fact that Trollhättan had lower unemployment quite shortly after the Saab bankruptcy than when Saab existed, the Community Developer Director felt that the rest of Sweden still asks how things are going for Trollhättan after the bankruptcy in a belief that it was a bigger thing than it actually was.

In Gävle, they also struggle with the outside world's image of the city. Gävle is often associated with being the Northern Gate, which is an image that the municipality is trying to erase. The Planning Director in Gävle: *“You should not necessarily think of northern Sweden when you think of Gävle. You should think of cities like Umeå or Luleå. Even though Norrland starts in Gävle, we would rather think of ourselves as part of the Stockholm area and the Mälardalen area.”* (Author's translation). He wants Gävle to appear as a city where there is a city life and a city pulse and where the large-scale meets the small-scale. The Head of Urban Development sees Gävle as the “small big city” (Author's translation).

During the decade that the Marketing Manager has worked at Skellefteå Municipality, she spent the first years with internal marketing. They worked hard to create pride and tell the city's residents about everything that happens in the city. When Northvolt thought about establishing the business in the city, she described the experience as holding up a mirror and looking at ourselves and realizing that *“we are very good at this, even though we did not really understand how good we have been before.”* (Author translation). Now the city is facing a challenge to grow and is trying to reach an international target group, among other things. According to the Community Strategist, it is important that Skellefteå retains parts of today's identity and is open to meeting the new and letting the new residents make their mark on the site.

According to the Place Strategist, the creation of the city's identity is a long process. She meant that the image of the place emerges through one's own experiences, input from others, what is written in the newspapers, the world around us, and more, forming an overall picture. As an answer to the question of how to merge people with different cultures and backgrounds she drew an analogy with IKEA. She explained how IKEA works to establish new department stores in other countries to preserve the culture and identity that exists in the company and at the same time bring in the site's culture. IKEA brings its own staff who can train the staff to work there while adapting to the local conditions and culture.

## 4.8.2 Self-image

When the interviewed representatives describe their cities, everyone has highlighted the city's beautiful nature and the good life that inhabitants can live in the city where everything is close.

The Marketing Manager in Skellefteå points out that even though short distances in the city is an important factor for Skellefteå, it is not something they can press in their location marketing. It does not make them unique compared to other midsized cities.

According to the Marketing Manager, Skellefteå municipality's outsider image has changed in recent years. Today, the city works a lot around all sustainability perspectives, something that the city did not do before. It is first now Skellefteå has understood how thriving the city is and has been in certain areas of sustainability. She claims that the city has for a long time created a well-integrated society, with schools and residential areas that work, a mixture of housing, rental apartments, and villas. Skellefteå has a lot of leisure and association life, as well as solid pillars. The Marketing Manager means that a strong society with strong networks is also a challenge if you think about the big city as we may have a bit too tight networks. The Head of Västerbottens Chamber of Commerce in Skellefteå celebrates the municipality for their work in developing the city and that the municipality does what it says.

Trollhättan sees itself as a city of technology that has a fantastic industry linked to the mobility of the future. The Community Developer Director emphasizes that in Trollhättan, the city really takes on the challenges that exist and tries to solve them, even though they may not always succeed. He also meant that Trollhättan is a proud and innovative city with room for the future, which he believes characterizes their vision. *“What I was talking about before about the high decision-making capacity is that we are brave and daring. It gives a kind of identity that Trollhättan would like.”* (Author’s translation).

In Gävle, the Planning Manager indicates that the city has some identifiers that they use to promote Gävle, these include Gävlebocken (A large Christmas display made out of straw, known for getting burned down each year) that, Brynäs hockey, and Gevalia. *“The typical Gävlebo [person living in Gävle] is a slightly sports-interested, coffee-drinking family with children who think it's fun to go to the inauguration of the Gävlebock every year.”* (Author’s translation). He also believes that Gävle has an urban life and an urban pulse beyond that found in the country's large cities. The large-scale can also meet the small-scale in a neighbourhood where families with children and the children's friends can meet simultaneously as there are restaurants, cinemas, theatres, concerts, etc.

According to the Place Strategist, when the municipality works with the city's identity, it is important to have a truthful self-image to portray the place genuinely. Citizens must

recognize themselves in the investments made and feel that there is a pronounced direction for the place where both words and deeds show that the city is heading in the right direction is important.

Mellander expresses that although proximity to nature and short distances is true, it does not make a city unique. For example, nature is not in short supply in Sweden. Nature exists in different ways throughout the country, and 95% of the country's municipalities market themselves with the idea that people should move there because they have such heavenly beautiful nature. The same applies to the 15-minute city mentioned in several urban planning contexts as important.

## **5 Discussion**

In this section the theoretical framework is compared with the empirical results. The discussion section is divided into five major topics; Renaissance city, Identification, Common direction, Driving force and Consequences.

### **5.1 Renaissance city**

With an increasing population, new knowledge, and innovations, society is constantly being shaped. The change affects everyone but in different ways, speed and time (UNDP, 2018). Sweden has had a substantial impact from the industrial revolution. The urbanisation in Sweden has been so intense that urbanisation is no longer defined as a move from rural to urban. The modern definition of urbanisation refers to the urban hierarchy created when people move from smaller cities to larger.

The survey made by AFRY shows that 50% of the respondents, people between 18-35, want to live in a city with 100 000 inhabitants or less. Syssner (2014) highlights the problem small municipalities have to attract the young population. With a change of moving patterns, midsized cities are potentially able to experience a renaissance. Something Mellander is hesitant about as it would mean a transition in the urbanisation trend. According to Mellander, the best way to predict the future is to look back at how society has changed over time. She means that statistics can be misleading when taken out of context. Mellander highlights that there are several reasons for population growth. How the Swedish population moves within the country is one influencing factor that has an impact on the urban hierarchy. Digital and global developments are blurring geographical boundaries and obstacles. There are divided opinions about the place's importance to humans and many hypotheses have emerged in the wake of the Covid-19 Pandemic. What the answer might be to the question of how people want to live in the future can only be predicted. Only the future can give the exact answers, but qualified guesses at least serves as a way to partly understand what awaits.

#### **5.1.1 Attractiveness in the future city**

The theoretical section highlights three authors with different views on what an attractive city should contain. They emphasize that an attractive city should have a mix of people, businesses, and a built environment. The city should also be a safe and inclusive place with short commuting distances and increased accessibility by walking, cycling, and public transport. The authors' theories can easily be linked to the theory of the 15-minute city (Moreno et al., 2021). The aim of the theory is to be able to reach activities and daily needs within a 15-minute walk or bike ride from home. During the interviews, the simple life of living close to all everyday activities was identified to be an important factor, and something cities often use to market themselves.



Several factors that make a city attractive (Jacobs, 1961; Andersson, 1998; Gehl, 2010) can also be found in the surveyed cities. For example, Skellefteå is described as a safe place that has succeeded well in creating a varied built environment. Trollhättan has short commuting distances and invests heavily in new mobility solutions. In Gävle, major infrastructural investments are being made and environmental issues are being highly prioritised.

The identified attractivity factors in both, section 3.2.1 “*What makes a city attractive?*” and from the survey conducted by AFRY can be divided into two categories, primary and secondary factors. The primary factors are seen as basic preconditions that must exist. They are seldom viewed as strengths per se but rather a necessity. Examples of these factors can be functioning infrastructure, access to housing, and work. The secondary factors are not seen as necessary, but they are appreciated and create an interesting lifestyle package. Mellander and the Place Strategist emphasize that it takes more than a good job and housing to attract today's young people. For a city to succeed, Mellander believes that a fun lifestyle package is very important. Examples of secondary factors can be access to nature and culture, vast and varied range of goods and services and the city's identity.

AFRY's survey reached out to respondents in six European countries where all respondents showed dissatisfaction with housing prices in their cities. Swedes were by far the most dissatisfied with the opportunities to find affordable housing. Jacobs (1961), Andersson (1998) and Gehl (2010) do not mention housing prices but particularly highlight the importance of a mixed built environment for people with a variety of economic conditions. This shows that in relation to housing it is important to ensure affordable options in order to attract younger people but it is just as important to ensure that these options are evenly distributed in the city to get a mixed built environment.

Concerns for the environment and climate change is not something that previous research highlights in relation to the place attraction (Jacobs, 1961; Andersson, 1998; Gehl, 2010). However, environmental sustainability might be a new important factor in what makes a city attractive since AFRY's survey shows a great interest in ecological sustainability among young people. No matter if it will make a city seem more attractive or not, the rising importance of working on the climate issue will make it a primary factor that is necessary for the future. “*We are the last generation who can fight climate change*” (Authors translation) (UNDP, 2018).

As a move towards becoming climate neutral cities, municipalities in Sweden can apply to be a part of the program, Viable cities. A strategic innovation program that may become a strong contributing factor to help cities manage the environmental issue in the future. Regardless of whether a city gets to be a part of the initiative or not, it will most likely be important to get on the trend towards climate-neutral cities in order to not fall behind other cities on the development.

The result from the interviews mentioned how the transition from the old heavy industry towards modern service society has affected the cities. Falling behind on this transition often results in consequences of high unemployment and low level of education. Glaeser (2012, p 59) points out that “*Not every city will succeed, because not every city has been adept at adapting[...]*”. One could elaborate if the upcoming transition towards climate neutral cities will result in a comparable outcome for those unable to get up to speed with the leading municipalities. This might be just as important of a trend to priorities. Skellefteå for example would probably not have been able to attract Northvolt if it was not for their environmentally certified harbour and their access to 100% renewable energy.

### **5.1.2 Target group to attract to the municipality**

According to Mellander, a municipality faces significant challenges if they fail in attracting the young target group simultaneously as the young people who already live in the city choose to leave. Skellefteå is one of several cities that have experienced this type of demographic challenge. Something that has affected the business community, the municipality's access to tax funds, and the city's gender equality. Most people move in connection with life entering a new stage. Two common reasons for moving are education or work. In Skellefteå, many young people choose to leave for studies as the city does not have its own university, and in Gävle there have been problems with preserving the youthful entrepreneurial spirit and transferring it to the business community.

According to the Swedish Board of Agriculture's report (2012), it is not a problem that the younger population moves to study elsewhere, as long as the municipality can attract back the highly educated workforce. Returnees become an important target group to attract for several reasons. It has been shown that the tax funds that are invested in attracting new populations have the greatest positive effect on this particular target group. At the same time, returnees have a lot to contribute to the city. They have a personal connection to the city simultaneously as they have made an active choice to settle in the city. The target group also has experiences that extend beyond the city limits and can add new knowledge and new perspectives to the city.

Tidholm (2014) describes that some cities struggle with an inferiority complex where the city is not seen as an exciting place and young people who stay in the city are seen as “losers” as they do not choose “the better lifestyle” beyond their hometown. This mentality can be devastating for a city struggling with skills matching in the labour market and to provide higher educational opportunities. In Skellefteå, they work a lot with pride in their city to counteract this mentality that is common in the northern cities (Tidholm, 2014).

It is not only young people and returnees who are important target groups for the city to attract. Florida (2006) described a new economic class that is extra important for a city, the creative class. The creative class consists, for example, of engineers, creators and entrepreneurs, and can, according to Mellander, strengthen a place. According to her, the creative class is an essential workforce for knowledge companies and contributes through its, compared to the average, higher salary to increased income for the municipality. From the interviews, one can draw explicit connections between the interviewees' description of the desired target group to attract and Florida's theory of the Creative Class. It appears that the creative class promotes innovation and that they have historically proven to be better at dealing with crises linked to changes in working life. Moretti and Thulin (2012) also emphasize that highly educated people create more jobs that benefit society as a whole. The fact that Florida chooses to use the term creative when naming the target group has received criticism from other researchers stating the concept is associated with art and culture rather than entrepreneurship and a high level of education (Markusen, 2006; Kalsø 2008). Regardless of what this group is called, one could elaborate that their core value is that they can find solutions, take the initiative, and are driven.

### **5.1.3 To grow or not**

During the interviews, it has emerged that the inhabitants can easily misunderstand municipal goals for growth. Several interviewees emphasize that there is no golden limit of a population size that makes the city complete, but that growth is instead a way of solving some of the city's basic needs. In Skellefteå, growth is about having an evenly distributed age among the population and better skills matching in the labour market.

The three investigated municipalities have all slightly different views on how important growth is and why it is important. Skellefteå has a great need for growth and works actively to grow, while Gävle has a natural organic growth, which means that the municipality does not have to work as actively with the issue. The aim is rather how the municipality will succeed to keep up with the needs of a growing population. In Trollhättan, the goal to grow is seen as part of the city's wish to develop, and it symbolises the city's drive and high level of ambition.

Syssner (2014) believes that municipalities experiencing a decreasing population, face major challenges. There is a mentality that it is a failure to work with adjustment policy, even if it is necessary with a shrinking population and reduced tax funds. Mellander points out that it is not necessarily a disadvantage for the country as a whole, that some municipalities grow and others shrink, at least not from an economic perspective. However, shrinking can create political tensions in the country and it can be devastating for the individual municipality. The residents in the shrinking municipality may love their city and do not want to leave, but when shops and businesses are forced to close and when the municipality's tax funds do not cover the expenses, the residents can feel deprioritised, which often creates tensions in politics (Mellander, 2021).

## 5.2 Identification

To have a self-image of the city that is true to reality, appears to be an important foundation in developing the city. By identifying the current situation and at the same time having an understanding of the historical journey that shaped the city, the municipality can identify strengths and weaknesses as well as opportunities and challenges. The municipality itself can influence some factors, but others are beyond their control.

During the interview with the Place Strategist, the importance of the municipality having a truthful self-image about the city is emphasised so that the place is portrayed genuinely. This is related to how the municipality lifts the pros and cons of the city and what signals they want to send out.

### 5.2.1 Strengths and weaknesses

The strengths in a municipality are often used to market the municipality, both to its residents and to outsiders. A strength in a city can be both unique to the city or common with others. Depending on who the target group is, the municipality must understand what is specific about them to take advantage of it. According to Mellander, many municipalities emphasise proximity to nature and the city's short commuting distances as their strengths, but she believes this does not make the city unique. Similarities to the 15-minute city may be a great strength in many mid-sized municipalities and something important to work with, but it will not make the specific municipality stand out.

The municipality's strengths are essential to highlight to create a positive feeling in the city and strengthen pride. Skellefteå described that it was first when Northvolt decided to establish a large factory in the city that the municipality realised how good the city's conditions are for being environmentally sustainable. Having to define what is good in the municipality can be a useful exercise since it can lead to a positive self-image being created (Brorström & Parment, 2016) In Trollhättan, it is mentioned that the municipality has worked to highlight enthusiasts who do good for the city and that it has helped to lighten up in tough periods.

Identifying the municipality's weaknesses is a first step in being able to solve what is a problem. Once the weaknesses are identified, there are two ways for a municipality to manage them; work to become better or accept it.

A municipality itself cannot influence certain weaknesses. In Skellefteå, for example, it emerged that the city is not a university city or regional capital. The municipality has accepted the situation and focuses on other factors that the municipality does well.

Although historical events or geographical location are two general factors that the municipality cannot influence, Cars (2010) believes that it cannot be an excuse for future events.

Identified weaknesses are a challenge since they are often based on a complex situation and lack a simple solution. Without a good solution to a problem, it is easy to turn a blind eye to the problem or cover it in positive words to not give too much space to the negative. Segregation has emerged as a growing problem that is difficult to deal with. In Trollhättan, the municipality believes that there is a lot to do about the problem from an urban development perspective, but says that it is difficult. If a lack of solution to a problem results in passivity instead of action taken, it can be perceived as a signal to the affected target group that they are prioritised and not worth investing in. To make the entire population and the business community feel equally seen and prioritised, is a tremendous challenge for all cities.

A municipality that talks openly about the city's weaknesses shows an awareness which is important. In Gävle, people are very self-critical about the city's business community. The way a situation is described risks having a negative effect as more people absorb the negative, making it difficult to reverse the weakness. When it comes to defects in a city, it comes down to the fact that they are important to identify to be able to adjust. There is a need to find a balance between showing awareness of weaknesses and the willingness to change without pouring fuel on the fire and reinforcing an existing negative image.

## **5.2.2 Opportunities and Challenges**

Sometimes investments or opportunities arise that have the potential to affect the municipality positively. When such a chance comes, the municipality must take it. The establishment of Northvolt in Skellefteå was an opportunity that the municipality worked for and used as a stepping stone for future development. In Gävle, there are currently several major national infrastructure investments that can provide opportunities for the city's future development. However, it is important that the municipality of Gävle takes this unique opportunity into its own hands and develops the city together with the infrastructure investments that take place.

Identified challenges are also important to address. In Gävle, a clear example of a future threat is linked to rising sea levels. With preventive measures, the consequences of the threat can be reduced. Fighting challenges before they develop into a problem can save time, money, and resources. However, some challenges are difficult to predict and come more unexpectedly which make it more difficult to work proactively. There can be challenges such as new technology, new behaviors in individuals, a pandemic, or a natural disaster (Nordström & Schlingmann, 2021).

## **5.3 Common direction for the city's development**

A common direction is equal to having a united vision of the future and how to get there. It can be useful for different reasons and applicable in different ways. Defining goals for future development makes it easier for the municipality working to achieve the common direction.

### **5.3.1 Why is a direction needed?**

A municipality must have a clear direction that both show the residents that the city has a will to develop and where the city is headed, according to the Place Strategist. During the interviews, it emerges that a common direction contributes to the municipality's decisions being made more quickly, thus avoiding disagreement about its development. It also turns out that political shifts between terms of office can complicate long-term decision-making and the courage to make tough decisions. This can both complicate the work of coming to an agreement on a direction but facilitate the work that follows after the direction is set. In Skellefteå, it was seen that politicians easily got caught up in conflicts of interest over issues but that they nevertheless managed to agree on a more general direction. It is important to create future visions and plans that everyone can agree on, so that decisions are not changed as soon as there is a majority change (Brorström & Solli, 2012)

In Skellefteå, the need for a clear direction was crucial to creating the rapid growth that the municipality is now facing. The fact that municipal officials and politicians form a united front facilitates the work as it creates a mentality of moving in the same direction. The strategy has also contributed to the municipality maintaining a good dialogue with the city's residents. In Trollhättan, there is a lack of common direction, which according to the Communicator, makes it difficult to know what should be communicated to the city's citizens.

### **5.3.2 Reverse trend or keep up the good work**

Having a direction is important, but it does not necessarily mean that the municipality needs to find an entirely new approach for the city. The need for direction differs from municipality to municipality. The direction a municipality chooses should reflect the previously identified strengths and weaknesses, opportunities and challenges. Not everyone needs to reverse a trend or change direction. For example, Trollhättan has not had a stated direction or strategy before but it does not mean that the city has fumbled blindly. Today, the city's priority is to put into words the direction that has existed in the city to get more people on board. Skellefteå exemplifies a city with a greater need for a turning point. The important thing is perhaps not where the direction points in relation to the previous direction, it is rather the importance of having a direction for the future.

### 5.3.3 Wide or narrow direction span

How clear the municipality's direction is for the city's development seems to vary. Skellefteå has chosen to develop a strategy that clearly sets a fairly specific and pointed direction. In Gävle, the direction is quite broad.

A broad direction is easier to live up to. In a broad direction, a lot of space is given, and nothing is excluded. However, the broad direction risks becoming too general and non-specific. A broad direction can almost be likened to having no direction. In Gävle's case, the municipality may need to think about what the city wants more concretely and dare to be more specific with what they want with the city.

A narrow and or pointed direction span is challenging to determine as it requires more unity among politicians. The more narrow direction also requires that the municipality have to priorities, even if it implies *“killing your darlings”*. If a municipality fails to include something in the direction that later on is proven to be important or if the city encounters something that was previously unforeseen, the direction risks pointing wrong. The advantages, however, are that with a more narrow direction, you become more concrete and can move from idea to action faster. In the case of Skellefteå, their narrow direction has required a prevent work together with an open dialog to the city's residents.

### 5.3.4 Goals and visions

For the chosen direction to follow, it is usually required that the visions for the city are documented and that the municipality creates goals in line with the visions. Figure 5.1 shows a standard model, designed by G. T. Doran (1981), of what is essential in setting successful goals.

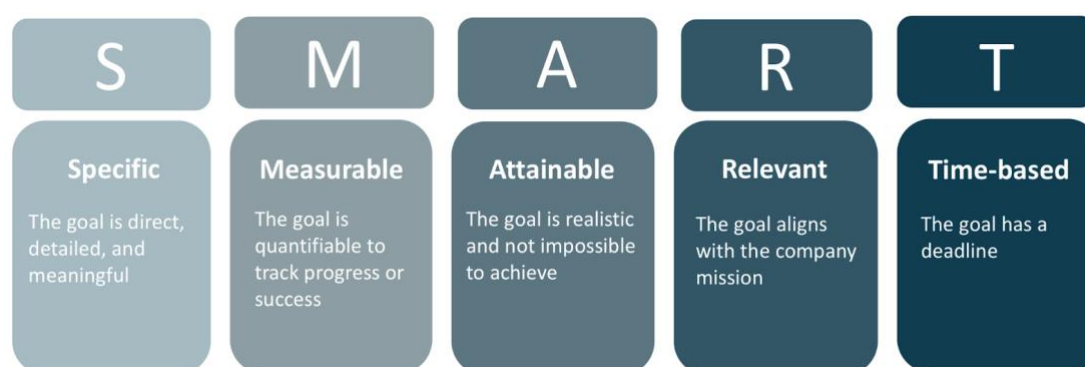


Figure 5.1, Illustration of the SMART- model. Made by the Authors.

How specific and measurable the goals are, as previously mentioned, is primarily determined by how the municipality chooses to set the direction for the city. Whether the goals are attainable and relevant is affected by how well the municipality has identified its own city's current and future prospects. Gävle, Skellefteå, and Trollhättan,

for example, all have a target of population growth. The municipalities' goals are significantly higher than the growth that has taken place in the last ten years. There is no question that the goals are specific and measurable, the question is whether the goals are attainable and relevant. In Skellefteå's case, the target of growth may be both attainable and relevant, even though it is far from what the city has previously experienced. What enables this sharp turnaround can be the city's clear strategy and large new establishment in the labour market. The goal of becoming 120 000 inhabitants in Gävle 2030 does not feel as attainable and relevant as the goal to grow in Skellefteå. The goal set by Gävle's municipality is not drastic compared to how the city's population has been growing previously, but the municipality does not show any attempts to reach the goal. If the city relies on organic growth, perhaps one should consider a goal that rhymes better with what is expected on a national level. The Planning Director, believed that 110 000 inhabitants by 2030 would be a more realistic goal.

The last part of the model for a successful goal setting is that the goals should be time-based. There is a divided opinion among the interviewed municipalities about how far it is possible to predict. Gävle divides the time frame into two stages, Trollhättan has lived more in the present, and in Skellefteå, there is ongoing work to develop a new time frame. None of the options need to be right or wrong. The future is uncertain and setting goals far in the future will be difficult. At the same time, working with urban development means working with long time horizons, the view of what is far ahead can vary depending on who you ask. Dividing the time frame into stages like Gävle, is probably not entirely wrong. Having one time-based goal for the city is good, but having several can perhaps be better?

Amongst the goals there might be a possibility of prioritisation, where short set goals can be more specific and have a clearer measurability. Goals that aim further can help the municipality to keep an eye out for future opportunities and challenges. A good example from Gävle is how they, by widening their horizons, realized that rising sea level can become a major problem in the future and would more easily be prevented today.

In addition to the factors considered important in the model for successful goal setting, by analysing the results, one can find two more important parameters for municipal goals.

The first is the importance of the goals resulting in action. It does not matter if the goals are measurable if they are never measured, and goals will not be met if measures are not taken to achieve them. Developing a good goal is only a first step. The fact that the Chamber of Commerce's representative in Skellefteå says that what the municipality promises also comes true indicates that the direction and goals in Skellefteå have an effect.



A recent study of Gothenburg shows that the municipality has more documents regarding visions for the future city rather than documents determining how to turn the goals into action (Svensson et al., 2017). Trollhättan works hard not to get caught up in visions but to act and ensure that things are being done. The decision making capacity is a strength in the city, but it has disadvantages. The city emphasizes that one must have great respect for the tax money that is handled and protect the democratic process.

To enable the goals to be transformed into reality, the second factor for successful goal setting is that the goals reach everyone in the city. In several interviews, it has emerged that alone is not the strongest and that a municipal organisation cannot change an entire city on its own. The opportunity to communicate the goals begins with how the goals are documented. As previously mentioned, Skellefteå chose to gather its goals for the city in a strategy. In Gävle, the goals can be found in a collection of documents that form the city's comprehensive plan, and in Trollhättan, the municipality does not know how to present the goals for the city. The important thing may not be if the goals are presented in a comprehensive plan, a strategy, or another municipal governing document. The importance is rather that it is easy to navigate among the information. Too many documents make the task of achieving a holistic perspective close to impossible (Svensson et al., 2017). One could speculate how difficult it must be if several documents contradict each other or describe things slightly different. Andersson et al. (2014) proposes that if documents are conflicting, it is important to find a weight system, in which one can weigh their respective advantages and disadvantages against each other in concrete situations.

Our interviews show that there might be a need to rework the traditional way of documenting municipal goals and plans. Today's systems are not efficient enough and therefore do not always fulfil their function. As previously mentioned, the municipality must turn goals into action to add value to the city, it would not be very reasonable if the documentation is seen as a time-consuming must instead of a rewarding forecasting tool.

## **5.4 Driving forces**

*“Community planning today is based on a reality where municipalities must, to a greater extent than before, collaborate with other actors to drive the development in a desirable and sustainable direction.”* (Author's translation) (Engström et al., 2016).

No man is an island and as the quote above states, no municipality can thrive on its own.

### **5.4.1 The influence of the citizens**

One common problem in many municipalities is to make the city's residents understand that they are the municipality and a place they develop together. During the interviews, it has emerged that the citizens' opinions and views are a very important part of the

city's development. However, the interviews also highlighted that some residents do not seem to know that they can influence the city's development. One could speculate whether this might be due to the fact that municipalities are bad at showing responsiveness and interest. Or maybe it's because residents do not feel a need to influence urban development.

In the three investigated municipalities, urban development is something that usually causes debate. According to Svensson et al. (2017) decisions made without involving the citizens are often criticised by dissatisfied inhabitants. To ensure that the decisions are made with everyone's best in mind, it is necessary to get citizens to participate (Svensson et al., 2017). From the interviews it has been highlighted that all citizens are not heard in the same way. The Communicator in Trollhättan sees that some citizens are more difficult to reach than others giving the municipality an demographically uneven distribution of opinions to take into consideration. She means that reaching all citizens is difficult, children and young people are raised as a target group whose opinion is rarely expressed.

As well as the fact that the citizens' opinions are essential to the municipality, it is difficult for the municipality to handle and accommodate everything that comes to them. As has been shown in previous research it is difficult to build a society that is attractive to all its residents (Andersson et al, 2014). During the interviews the challenge of building a city with all the city's inhabitants also became evident. Many residents take their own perspective opinions and lose the holistic view and complexity around urban development. Therefore, experts within the municipality have an important role.

According to the interviews, residents' opinions and views often reach the municipality too late. This is a common occurrence in Swedish municipalities (Boverket, 2002). The problem this creates is that those who want to make their voices heard do not feel that their opinions are received goodly. Residents described during the interviews having difficulty painting a picture of how something should turn out. Their thoughts take hold when the construction process is underway and most decisions have gained legal force. Therefore, a challenge for municipalities will be to refer citizens to express their opinion where it has a chance to actually make a difference.

There are apparent differences in handling views and criticism from the city's residents in the three municipalities. In Trollhättan, the municipality is aware that there are many debates about investments and projects that they do but they acknowledge differences of opinion. According to the Community Development Director, it is important to choose their battles and not engage in all discussions as it is time-consuming and sometimes pointless. He means that the municipality spends some time explaining, but there is a limit to how much space the municipality should give the discussion.

In Gävle, the municipality acknowledges that urban development easily provokes debate. The municipality does not want to fight with the citizens since they do not want

to clash into anyone. However, it appears that it is almost impossible to satisfy everyone's wishes and that the fear of criticism can make Gävle a little too cautious in its actions.

That urban development arouses debate, and strong opinions are something that the municipality of Skellefteå is well aware of and even expects to happen. However, the municipality believes that much criticism is based on misunderstanding and ignorance. Urban development is seen in the literature as complex since there is no perfect solution that suits all (Aronsson, 2007). It is a process consisting of many compromises and prioritised trade-offs. In Skellefteå, they have seen a tremendously positive effect of educating the population in urban development and highlighting the aim with the goals or acting in a certain way. On the other hand, it is a very time-consuming job, and an understanding does not mean that everyone agrees. Disagreements cannot be avoided.

### **5.4.2 Enthusiasts**

Enthusiasts are essential for a city and have become apparent during the interviews. Some even say that enthusiasts are everything. From the interviews, it emerges that enthusiasts can be found everywhere. What defines an enthusiast is the burning enthusiasm and desire to change something to the better (Philips, 1988). Parallels could be drawn between the creative class and enthusiasts as they both describe a person who has an inner drive and is innovative in the work. The Swedish word enthusiasts would directly translate as fire-soul, a person who burns for something.

It is important for the municipality to show appreciation to the city's enthusiasts and their work. An enthusiast who is not encouraged easily loses the spark. The municipality's task is to ensure that it supports, helps, and cooperates with the driving forces in society. Mellander points out the importance of creating a permissive environment and enabling people who want something rather than limiting. She also believes that many municipalities must change their mentality about “this is not what we do here”. When a person takes the initiative and receives rejection or opposition from the municipality, the driving force quickly disappears, and it spreads to the rest of the city's enthusiasts.

The right person in the right place has previously been highlighted as an important part of the city's development. According to the Community Development Director in Trollhättan, municipal officials can choose to sit back and only do what is required of the work, but that would result in a city that does not dare and challenge. How a person describes their professional role and how it talks about their city differs between municipalities and individuals.

There is no commonly agreed upon way to work with urban development. As one representative said during the interview, democracy is important but a difficult issue. It is essential to find a balance between personal commitment and freedom to act in one's

area of expertise and for the municipality official to respect the democratic processes and create a city for all citizens. Abuse of power by overriding the democratic process means that the population's trust in the municipal organisation can be lost (Söderlind, 1998).

The interviews showed that the municipality officials that lived in or had a personal relationship to the city also seemed more enthusiastic when talking about the city. Some of the interviews stressed the importance of living in the municipality you work in. The benefits presented during the interviews with living in the municipality or having a previous connection are that the person knows the city, wants it well and has his heart there. If the person lives in the city, there is a sense of responsibility and that the planning and development of the city contributes to pride. According to Syssner (2014), a challenge with having a strong private connection to the city can be to make uncomfortable decisions when a municipal representative is quite exposed. Not living in the city you work in or with yourself can create a healthy distance, but there is a risk that a lack of personal commitment can decalcify the city's development. During the interviews, it is emphasized that it is possible to be passionate about a city you do not live in, but Söderlind (1998) and Troedsson (2010) see that the common problem is that those who develop a city, themselves cannot imagine living there.

### **5.4.3 Business community**

Succeeding in recruiting the right skills for the municipal organisation appears to be very important for the cities. Previous research has shown this to be a difficult task for many municipalities (Syssner, 2014). The problem of skills matching applies within the own municipal organisation and permeates the entire business community in the cities. The smaller the municipality is and the more geographically isolated it is, the greater problems with skills matching in the labour market.

Skellefteå's growth goal is, among other things, to get better skills matching in the labour market. The municipality sees today that they are locked geographically into a smaller labour market. With better infrastructure, there is an opportunity to exchange expertise with other cities in the north. Trollhättan elevates itself as a labour market region that can access labour from Gothenburg, which the Head of West Sweden Chamber of Commerce sees as an advantage. In Gävle, another perspective is highlighted that connection to other vital labour market regions can be a challenge as there is a risk of losing skills. The different views on what benefits or does not benefit competence matching concerning the geographical location show both strengths and weaknesses. The cities must work with what they have in the best way as the geographical location is difficult to change. Skellefteå is an example of a city, with the Norrbotnia line, that can have a changed relationship with other labour market regions. It can be necessary for the city to be aware of both the pros and cons it can bring.

Today's labour market is not the same as before (Mellander, 2021). The need for labour market skills changes in step with the service society that is developing. This contributes to the fact that highly educated skills are increasingly in demand. Work is mentioned in the literature as a key factor in becoming an attractive city, and AFRY's survey shows that today's young people find work to be one of the most important when choosing a city. The cities that have not succeeded in the transition to a service society are today struggling with the consequences. Gender equality in the labour market and in society has been raised as a major consequence of having a city that is still characterised by industries.

The representative from Confederation of Swedish Enterprise claimed that the local business community climate contributes to the city's attractiveness and the number of jobs. Since the business community is of great importance to a city, the municipality needs to support, help and cooperate with the city's business. In Gävle, the city has for a long time had problems with the business community climate. Representatives from the city highlight the attitude, prioritisation, and treatment of politicians and municipal officials as a contributing factor to the negative image of the business community climate. Today, the work towards a better business community climate is high on the municipality's agenda. But it will take a long time before a change will be seen in the city, says the Business Director, since Gävle is a large municipality. Even though the municipality is now taking active measures, it is unclear why the problem has existed in the city for so long. A negative trend or attitude becomes more difficult to reverse the longer the problems continue.

One of the reasons why a good business community climate is essential in the city is that it creates more jobs. New establishments of companies in a municipality can benefit the city. Northvolt is an example of an establishment that both has and is expected to have a major impact on Skellefteå. According to Skellefteå's Community Strategist, the Northvolt establishment will provide a ripple effect for the city's business. Trollhättan has also noticed an increased interest among traders since a large international company chose to establish itself in the city. The representative from the Confederation of Swedish Enterprise is sceptical about the establishment of large global companies. In that it does not necessarily mean as many jobs as the municipality hopes for. On the other hand, global large companies' strong and exciting image can elevate the city's attractiveness.

Although much is positive about establishing large companies, it can disadvantage the city's small and midsized companies. The representative from Confederation of Swedish Enterprise emphasizes that small and midsized companies are of the utmost importance for a city as they create the most jobs and that municipalities must stimulate a climate where people have the opportunity to start and run businesses. Something that is lacking in Gävle as there is a great commitment and drive among young entrepreneurship, but which is not reflected in the city's business community life.

Being in a dependent position, for example having a few large companies in a city, can be high-risk for a municipality (Mellander, 2021b). Trollhättan, who lost Saab in 2011, is still asked how it has been going for the city since the bankruptcy. The West Chamber of Commerce's representative points out that a bankruptcy-like Saab's is difficult for a city from many perspectives. But he can now see in retrospect that the city is more stable today than then. New smaller companies were started from the bankruptcy and today the city has lower unemployment than at the time of the bankruptcy.

#### **5.4.4 Learn from each other, help each other**

An important lesson from the interviews is the opportunity to learn from each other. In Sweden today, there are 290 municipalities, and the chance that more people face similar challenges/opportunities or possess similar strengths/weaknesses is very likely. From the interviewees, it appears that cities are unique and it is probably not worth trying to find an urban twin to compare with. On the other hand, municipalities can find another city with a similar dilemma or find another good city at something the city itself wants to be good at. In surveyed cities, good examples are presented of not limiting oneself to cities of similar size or cities in their immediate region to draw inspiration and draw lessons. Look up, let go of prestige and “steal with pride” as the representative of Confederation of Swedish Enterprise said, so that we do not need to have 290 municipalities reinventing the wheel.

Alone is not always the strongest, and it is not just about learning from others. Collaborating and being helped is also preferable. Collaboration can take place in different ways and with different actors. Just as it is important to create the city that the citizens want, it can also be beneficial to shape society with those who work in society and with its challenges. In Trollhättan, a collaboration with the police is being promoted to increase security in the city centre. Finding others who fight against the same goal to work together is something many municipalities can benefit from in different contexts.

Another important collaboration can be to share thoughts with others who are in the same position as oneself. Even if you are relatively alone in working in a certain role or with specific issues in your city, there may be others with similar roles in other municipalities. However, some problems are common and must be resolved together. Climate change is one such issue that cannot be resolved on its own. An initiative that has been developed to improve collaboration on the climate issue is Viable cities. Municipalities that sign the climate contract 2030 have the opportunity to collaborate with other municipalities, authorities and research to find a common way forward.

According to Syssner (2014), it can be difficult in small municipalities to have all the skills that may be needed within its municipal organisation. One solution may be to share expertise with other municipalities. Shared resources can help municipal officials to specialize in their area instead of having a more general knowledge. If there is no opportunity to share expertise or a municipality wants to bring in other perspectives, a

consultant is a good alternative. However, the Head of Urban Development (Gälve) emphasizes that a city cannot be built solely on consultants as urban development is about understanding the city's history. She believes that consultants are good to use but to get help with specific expertise.

What hinders collaboration can be the feeling of competition. In Skellefteå, they want to beware of being seen as a competitor by the neighbouring municipalities. Brorström (2010) emphasizes that a competition does not have to be a contradiction to collaboration. Instead, she believes that competition creates a need to collaborate.

## **5.5 Consequences**

Urban development is a circular process meaning that it is never finished. All steps of the process need to be revisited and there are no linear steps to follow.

### **5.5.1 Goal follow-up and revision**

According to the model for successful goal setting, an important factor is that the goals are measurable. An important part that is not clear in the model is that it is not enough that the goals are measurable, but they must also be measured to see if they have been met as planned. Goal follow-up does not only have to take place when the time frame expires. In Skellefteå, the goals are followed up every year to see if the city develops in the right direction to achieve the goals in their entirety. The idea is that with the result of a goal follow-up, one can either continue the ongoing work with self-confidence, adjust the approaches that do not meet the standards and/or revise the goals that no longer feel relevant or attainable.

### **5.5.2 When it does not turn out as expected**

Even if the municipality has been good at finding the city's strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and challenges, agreed on a direction, set relevant goals and works with the city's driving forces to develop, the result does not necessarily have to be as thought or desired. The Covid-19 pandemic created a situation that the municipality had never been able to imagine. However, the fact that a goal is not met as desired does not necessarily mean a disadvantage. Unforeseen crises can create insights and act as a platform for development (Matthews, 2020). In Trollhättan, people talk about what rises out of the ashes is stronger than before. Unwanted or unsuccessful results generate an opportunity to reflect and draw lessons that can be helpful in the future. In Skellefteå, several company establishments were first lost before it was realised that an overall strategy was lacking in the city.

### **5.5.3 A lot at once**

A representative from Trollhättan expressed at one point that the development has never gone as fast as now and that it will probably go even faster in the future. We can see clear examples that cities have a lot going on and no shortage of development. In Gävle, major infrastructure investments are being made simultaneously as a lot is being built in the city. Although it is described as necessary for residents to feel that things are happening in the city, it can be difficult to live and work in a city during the construction period. There will also be a lot of work for the actors involved at the same time. In Skellefteå, a lot also happens at one and the same time. Housing will be built, the population will grow and the infrastructure will be updated. In both cities, some major investments may have a ripples effect, which presents the city with many challenges and opportunities at once. Maybe there is a risk of biting off more than one can chew. When a lot happens at once, it can be not easy to take the time to reflect and look up and look forward.

### **5.5.4 Ripple effects**

Even desired results can have unpredictable consequences. The municipality in Trollhättan has for a long time worked hard to densify the city with apartments. Today, 90% of the city's residents live in the city centre with proximity to most things. In recent times, the municipality has seen an increased interest and desire from the city's residents for houses. A challenge that in the future will be great for the municipality because there is no land to build on. In the case of Skellefteå, the municipality works with a high growth target, compared to its historical growth. Today, the dense network in the city is suspected to be an upcoming challenge when the city has to accommodate and include the new population. According to the Place Strategist, meeting new residents is a work that the municipality must not neglect. The new residents can bring new cultures, opinions and interests. It can make demands on the city's identity both when it will invite others to take part in the identity and be open to adapting to the new demographics. New thoughts and values may also be introduced along with new inhabitants, which may result in shifts in the previously very stable party politics.

The results also show that when cities grow and infrastructure changes, geographical boundaries are blurred, and new ones are created. In some cases, there is talk about places that will grow together. This can challenge the traditional structures in Sweden existing today and create new challenges and opportunities for municipality organisations, regions, and residents.

One specific thing is that urban development will never be completed and since cities develop, new challenges emerge and follow. Planning a city must therefore be seen as a circular process rather than a timeline.



## 6 Conclusion

This section presents the conclusion based on the discussion of theoretical framework and the empirical results. 11 key factors to consider in order to be a thriving and sustainable mid-sized municipality will be presented together with suggestions for future research. The key factors are presented in no particular order of importance. A summary of the key factors can be found in Figure 6.1

### 6.1 Key factors to consider in order to be a thriving and sustainable mid-sized municipality

Urban development is a never-ending process with high complexity. The definition of sustainability is to meet the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. Sustainable urban development requires predicting the unpredictable future and prioritising and compromising among the different needs of the society. A challenging but important task for municipalities in a rapidly changing society. There are plenty of elements that shape the society and the municipal organisations play an important role in how the built environment develops but also how people, organisations and nature interact, collaborate and thrive.



Figure 6.1 The 11 key factors that have been identified.

All municipalities have many things in common but they are at the same time very different. Similarities can be found in the different characteristics that create the municipal society but each municipality's individual composition of different characteristics is what makes it unique. One important key factor for urban development is linked to this individuality.

### **Identify characteristics**

It is very important for the municipality to have a truthful self-image in order to be able to customise future investments and development according to the individual needs and prerequisites. Self-awareness helps to portrait the municipality in a genuine way and facilitates predictions of the future. Most solutions and actions will have the greatest effect if they are adapted to the circumstances. A key factor is therefore to identify strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and challenges and to focus the development accordingly.

### **Steal with pride**

A municipality is seldom alone in facing a challenge or opportunity since municipalities are similar in many ways. Out of 290 municipalities in Sweden and even more beyond the country's borders, there is always someone else to learn from. A key factor is to let go of the prestige and steal with pride. Do not limit the comparison to similar municipalities within close distance. Anyone and everyone can be a good comparison, let it vary depending on which question you are looking into. Just make sure that you adapt the solution to the municipality's individuality.

### **Accept what is beyond control**

Out of all the characteristics that create opportunities or challenges for a municipality, some are beyond control. The municipality's geographical location is for example of great importance to the municipal development but impossible to change. Sweden's northernmost cities face greater challenges than similar cities with different geographical locations due to the isolation created by long distances. Distance in travel time is more important than the distance in length and the national infrastructure connecting places and people is managed on a state level rather than a municipal level. *“You are located where you are located, there is nothing you can do about it”* as one interviewee said. A key factor is to focus on what the municipality can change, improve and create instead of getting caught up in what is beyond control. However, it is essential to separate challenges that lack a clear solution from what is beyond control. It is very important to make an effort to address weaknesses and challenges rather than hide from the complexity.

### **Turn smart goals into action**

The complexity of urban development results in difficulties regarding decision making and daring to act. It is therefore important for the municipality to decide a united direction for the development and to convert visions into reality. To enable this, an

important key factor will not only be to formulate goals that meet the SMART-model (see Figure 5.1), but also to work on making the goals easily accessible and user-friendly. Goals and visions lose their entire purpose if you do not take action and investigate the outcome by doing follow ups. The recommendation is to not get too abstract, and then risk putting time and resources into creating documents that do not commit to anything. If a municipality does not priorities goal fulfilment, there is a risk that the residents will lose confidence in the municipal organisation.

### **Mentality**

It is not just how the municipality acts or lack of action that affects the confidence in the municipal organisation. It is also important that those who work with the city's development care about the city and its inhabitants and speak highly of the municipality. A key factor will therefore be to think about the municipality's mentality and what signals that are being sent out consciously or unconsciously. To highlight strengths of the municipality can build pride and a positive self-image. Although it is just as important to show awareness of weaknesses and proof of a high decision making capacity.

A part of the key factor is to encourage the enthusiasm and drive that exists in the city. Both to endeavour recruiting the right person to the right place, but also to give driving forces the right conditions to utilize their full potential. The influence of individuals can make a huge difference. The city's image has been shown to start from within and it will be essential that those who live and act in the municipality believe in their place so that others can do the same.

### **Involve the citizens**

How much space and time is given to network and discussions with the population in the municipality differs. Both when it comes to gathering input and when it comes to communicating decisions and explanations. Disagreements appear to be a rule rather than an exception, but whether it is an asset or an obstacle varies from situation to situation and between municipalities depending on the mentality. A key factor is therefore to successfully involve the citizens in urban development and make them feel heard. Previous research shows that those who feel heard accept the outcome to a greater extent, regardless of whether it is in line with their desire or not (Svensson et al., 2017). It is important to find ways to reach everyone and to guide citizens to the right forum where their views and opinions can be taken into consideration, before final decisions are made. It may also be required to help residents visualise future initiatives in order for them to form an opinion since decisions regarding urban development often are made long ahead of time. Input that comes in late in the process also needs attention. It is important to find a balance between answering questions with explanations and accepting that some differences of opinion cannot be avoided.

### **Share responsibility**

Who is really responsible for urban development? It seems that some are stuck on the idea that the municipal organisation is responsible for most things regarding the municipal development. In fact, everyone who lives and acts in a city is an important cell in the urban organism. It is therefore important that the municipal organisation invites other actors and residents to both plan and create a joint future. The municipal organisation's role is to support and guide in a direction that creates added value for all residents and actors without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their needs. A key factor will therefore be to work with and not against each other. Collaboration between different actors gives more power to the development work. It provides more resources that share the responsibility to develop and strengthen the city.

### **Demographic distribution**

Population growth is described as a norm and those municipalities who deviate from the norm are considered less successful. In fact, growth just for the sake of it is not important and lack of explained purpose to why the municipality should grow risks leading to misconceptions. The core value of population growth is rather to create a more even demographic distribution to increase tax revenues and increase welfare within the municipality. A key factor therefore is to target population growth in accordance to the individual need and capability and to explain the purpose behind the goals, priorities and measures taken. Be aware of both benefits and challenges that come with rapid growth or decreasing growth of population. Growing pains, segregation and political tensions are examples of consequences to keep an eye on. In addition to the key factor, municipalities with a population growth must also make sure to welcome new residents. To include them in the municipal identity but also to be open to change and give new residents the power to influence the municipality.

### **Attract the right target group**

The target group that a municipality chooses to attract and try to preserve can have a major impact on the future development. People in the creative class find solutions, take initiative, and are driven. They often enable employment to others and are proven to be better at dealing with crises. Young people (18 to 35 years old) move the most and are there for the easiest to attract but also to lose. Those with a previous connection to the municipality have a higher tendency to return. The key factor is to be aware of the impact different target groups have on society and to put extra focus on making the municipality attractive to the young, the returnees and the creative class. It is important to emphasise that all citizens of the municipality are crucial and that the municipality must take care of everyone's needs and not just a certain desired target group.

### **Collaborate**

The municipalities have a lot to gain from collaborating with others. Alone is not always the strongest and collaboration can take place in different ways and with different actors. A key factor is to be better at collaborating with others and to not compete as much.

Examples of preferable ways to collaborate are:

- Shared resources between municipalities can help municipal officials to specialize in an area instead of having a more general knowledge. Taking help from consultants can also be a good alternative.
- Finding others who fight for the same goal and work together. The municipal organisation can for example collaborate with the police when discussing safety in the city.
- People with the same business role from different municipalities can share thoughts and network.

### **Stay up to date**

A world of constant change demands development and an important key factor is that the municipality does not end up too far behind national and global development. The municipality must try to keep up to date and preferably take the lead in developing innovative solutions and collaborations. The climate issue is predicted to become extra important and there is no time to wait for action. As Glaeser (2012) put it, only those who are adept at adapting succeed. The consequences of not prioritising ecological sustainability risk becoming both costly and having a negative effect on the city's attraction for companies and individuals.

## **6.2 Suggestions for further research**

How to work with comprehensive planning and goal documentation in the municipalities is something that is predicted to change in the future. Future research could investigate alternative possibilities and methods to facilitate the municipal work around goals and visions. It would also be interesting to investigate how a change could affect different types of municipalities.

With cities growing, the attitude towards the environment changes. Some cities grow together and form a larger city together while other cities grow and form several cities in the city. Future research should investigate how this affects cities and whether the geographical divisions Sweden has today with region, county, municipality and more will continue to be a good distribution in the future?

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# Appendix 1

## Questions to interviews in the municipalities

### Inledning

- En presentation av rapportens forskningsfråga och syfte
- Går det bra att vi spelar in intervjun?
- Bakgrundsinformation om intervjupersonen, nuvarande yrkesroll, yrkesbakgrund, bor den intervjuade själv i kommunen.

### Identitet och varumärke

- Hur vill ni att utomstående ska uppfatta [Kommunen]?
- Vilka kommuner jämför ni er med?
- Vad särskiljer er kommun från andra?
- Vad tror ni har varit [Kommunens] största framgångsfaktorer?
- Vilka är och kommer vara [Kommunens] största utmaningar?

### Kommunen- samarbete/ledarskap

- Har ni tillsatt/ ser behov av att tillsätta nya tjänster inom kommunen/externa resurser för att uppnå tillväxtmålet?
- Har staden några Eldsjälar som påverkar dess utveckling?
- Hur uppfattar du att politiken styr?
- Samarbetar ni något med andra kommuner?

### Geografisk placering

- Hur ser du på er geografiska placering? Vad finns det för för/ nackdelar?
- Hur viktigt skulle du säga att närheten till stora städer är för [Kommunen]?
- Hur ser du på er status bland Sveriges alla studentstäder?

### Flyttmönster

- Finns det någon målgrupp som ni helst vill locka till kommunen?
- Varför tror ni att man lämnar [Kommunen]?
- Vad gör att man stannar i [Kommunen]?
- Hur arbetar ni med tillväxt? Och vad är din syn på att växa?
- Vilka vill ni locka / bevara till [Kommunen]?

### Specifika för Trollhättan:

- Hur förknippad var Trollhättans identitet kopplat till SAAB och hur har ni arbetat med er identitet sedan dess?
- Vilka konsekvenser kan du nu i efterhand se med att ha haft en så dominerande arbetsgivare i kommunen?
- Har ni tagit med er några lärdomar från motgången ni upplevde och kunnat använda när nya motgångar dykt upp, tex under pandemin?

- Er senaste antagna Översiktsplan är från 2013. Mycket har hänt sedan dess, inte minst inom smart mobilitet med nystartade företag. Hur kommer det sig att man inte har tagit fram en reviderad framtidsplan?

Specifika för Skellefteå:

Ni nämner i strategi 2030 att detta är “det största gemensamma framtidsarbetet som genomförts i kommunen utifrån en helhetssyn på samhället och den långsiktiga utvecklingen”. Med en ambition om 80 000 invånare 2030.

Just nu investerar Skellefteå mest per capita i hela Sverige

- Varför har man inte satsat mer innan?
- Fanns Northvolt och Norrbottniabanan med i planerna när man beslutade att ta fram strategin?
- Om vi uppfattat det rätt så antogs strategin 2015. Vilka förändringar har ni sett sedan dess? Och har det haft någon påverkan på hur ni har arbetat vidare?

Specifika för Gävle:

2009 antogs en översiktsplan för Gävle med sikte mot 2025. Redan 2017 antogs en ny Översiktsplan som sträcker sig fram till 2030 med utblick mot 2050. Vad vi förstår så är processen att ta fram en ny översiktsplan både tids och resurskrävande. Hur kommer det sig att ni valde att ta fram en ny översiktsplan relativt tätt inpå den förra med målsättning som endast ligger fem år fram i tiden?

- Har ni redan nu planer på när nästa översiktsplan ska påbörjas?
- Du som har erfarenhet av flera olika kommuner. Ser du några större skillnader i hur man arbetar med stadsplanering och framtidsplaner?

# Appendix 2

## Questions to the interviewees within the business community:

### Inledning

- En presentation av rapportens forskningsfråga och syfte
- Går det bra att vi spelar in intervjun?
- Bakgrundsinformation om intervjupersonen, nuvarande yrkesroll, yrkesbakgrund, bor den intervjuade själv i kommunen.

### Näringsliv:

- Vad gör att man vill etablera sitt företag i [Kommunen]?
- Vad gör att man inte vill etablera sig i [Kommunen]?
- Vad särskiljer [Kommunen] näringsliv från andra kommuner (både i samma region men även ur ett nationellt perspektiv)?
- Vad hämmar/ främjar utveckling och entreprenörskap i kommunen?
- Hur ser ni på [Kommunens] Geografiska placering? Vad finns det för för/nackdelar?
- Vad är dagens arbetsmarknads styrkor och svagheter?
- Hur uppfattar du att politiken styr stadens utvecklingen?

### Arbetsstagare

- Hur arbetar ni med kompetensförsörjning?
  - Arbetar ni med att hjälpa näringslivet att hitta rätt kompetensmatchning?
  - Hur arbetar man med arbetslöshet?
- Hur ser samarbete ut mellan näringsliv, er och kommunen?
  - Får ni det stöd ni behöver från kommunen för att hjälpa näringslivet att utveckla och bedriva sin verksamhet?

### Målgrupp

- Vilka vill man helst locka till staden och dess näringsliv?
- Hur arbetar man med de som inte tillhör den önskade målgruppen?  
(Bristande språkkunskaper, lågutbildade, funktionsvariationer, mm)

### Specifika frågor Skellefteå:

- Hur ser du på de satsningar som är planerade ur ett näringslivsperspektiv?
- Ni beskriver kompetensförsörjning som en högt prioriterad utmaning från er sida. Hur arbetar ni med det?
  - Arbetar ni med att hjälpa näringslivet att hitta rätt kompetensmatchning?
  - Internationell arbetskraft, hur når man den?
- Vad var anledningen till att Northvolt valde att etablera sig i just Skellefteå?
- Vad tror du Northvolts etablering kommer innebära för Skellefteås näringsliv ur ett större perspektiv?
  - För- och nackdelar med att koppla stadens identitet till en arbetsgivare/näringsverksamhet.
- Spelindustrin är en annan växande bransch som det satsas på i regionen. Hur ser ni på den utvecklingen?



- Det är historiskt sett och än idag mansdominerade yrken som präglat staden och som kommer vara drivande i framtidsutvecklingen och statistik visar att fler unga kvinnor flyttar från staden än unga män. Hur ser ni på detta?
- Vilka möjligheter/utmaningar ser du med att Skellefteå ligger mellan två stora universitetsstäder?

- 

Specifika frågor Trollhättan:

Trollhättan är en stad som påverkats starkt av näringslivet och där stadens identitet har haft en stark koppling till Saab.

- Hur har ni arbetat med att stötta stadens näringsliv sedan tidigt 2000-tal?
- Vilka har varit de största utmaningarna under resans gång?
- Vad har varit stadens styrkor och svagheter under den resa som gjorts?
- Vilka utmaningar finns kvar än idag?
- Hur ser ni på stadens identitet idag?

Specifika frågor till Gävle:

Gävle ligger på plats 279 av 290 kommuner i svenskt näringslivs undersökning av företagsklimatet.

- Vad tror du ligger till grund för den relativt låga placeringen?
- Har ni vidtagit några särskilda åtgärder kopplat till detta problem?
- Har åtgärder vidtagits tidigare och i så fall vilken effekt har det gett?

# Appendix 3

## Questions to the Place Strategist

### Inledning

- En presentation av rapportens forskningsfråga och syfte
- Går det bra att vi spelar in intervjun?
- Bakgrundsinformation om intervjupersonen, nuvarande yrkesroll, yrkesbakgrund.

### Detaljfrågor

- Vad är enligt dig viktig för att få människor att bosätta sig i en stad?
- Vilka vill man locka till en stad?
  - Hur lockar man dessa?
  - Vad är viktigt när man vill locka internationella invånare?
- Hur tycker du att kommuner arbetar med sin identitet och platsmarknadsföring idag?
- Hur tycker du att en kommun ska arbeta med platsmarknadsföring för att attrahera nya invånare?
- Hur viktigt är Eldsjälar för en stad?
- Vi ser att många marknadsför sig som 10/15 min staden eller närheten till naturen. Hur ser du på att kommuner platsmarknadsför sig med natur och 10/15 min staden?
- Place branding inom staden kontra utanför staden. Hur man marknadsför sig mot befintliga invånare kontra andra delar av landet?
- Hur ser du på nischade städer kontra allmänna städer. Viss typ av näringsliv (taxifordon), studentstad, könskodat?

# Appendix 4

## Questions to Charlotta Mellander

### Inledning

- En presentation av rapportens forskningsfråga och syfte
- Går det bra att vi spelar in intervjun?
- Bakgrundsinformation om intervjupersonen, nuvarande yrkesroll, yrkesbakgrund.

### Detaljfrågor

- Vad är din syn på diskussionen kring den medelstora stadens uppsving? Och tror du att den medelstora staden har potential att bli framtidens stad?
- Du nämner ofta den kreativa klassen som en viktig målgrupp att locka till sin stad men vad krävs av en stad för att attrahera denna typ av målgrupp?
- Fördelar/nackdelar med att ha en nischad eller bred arbetsmarknad?
- Vilka andra faktorer framöver anser du som viktiga för kommuner att arbeta med?
- Vi tycker även att det ibland är svårt att sälla i all information och ibland genomskåda det som är “mycket snack och lite verkstad”. Har du några tips på hur vi kan tänka när jämför kommuner med varandra?



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