



# COMMON GROUND

- Proposing a new site approach for promoting socio-spatial integration in public leisure space

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Independent project • 30 hp  
Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences, SLU  
Department of Landscape architecture, Planning and Management  
Landscape architect Program  
Alnarp 2022



Common Ground - Proposing a new site approach for promoting socio-spatial integration in public leisure space

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<b>Credits:</b>	30 hp
<b>Level:</b>	A2E
<b>Course title:</b>	Independent Project in landscape architecture
<b>Course code:</b>	EX0846
<b>Program:</b>	landscape architect Program
<b>Course coordinating dept:</b>	Department of landscape architecture, Planning and Management
<b>Place of publication:</b>	Alnarp
<b>Year of publication:</b>	2022
<b>Cover picture:</b>	Bim Byström
<b>Picture credits:</b>	All works which do not state otherwise belong to and have been created by the author. Photographs have been anonymized to due to GDPR laws.
<b>Keywords:</b>	Public space, Social integration, Socio-spatial integration, Public leisure space, Cross-group interactions, Site approach

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## THANK YOU

This project could not have been possible without the help and influence of many people. Firstly, I would like to thank all those who came up and chose to participate in the design experiment. Your engagement, positive comments and increasingly familiar greetings revealed social and emotional components of this project which I had never expected. Furthermore, the results of this project could not have been possible without your input.

I would like to thank the city district hosts from the city of Malmö. Our site visit and walk through the area surrounding Ögårdsparken provided me with both knowledge about the site and a very rewarding insight into the important work you do. I also want to thank the landscape architects who contributed with knowledge about Ögårdsparken and who cheered me on throughout the process.

I would like to thank my colleagues at Malmö's department for public space. Your focus on social sustainability in city development processes have influenced my work and provided me with as much inspiration as our days in the office has provided me with happy memories.

I want to sincerely thank my supervisors Caroline Dahl and Matilda Alfengård for exceeding my expectations both regarding your help with the project and your ability to keep me interested and excited even when the road ahead seemed foggy.

I would like to thank Maya Käck for visiting the Participatory prototyping and taking photographs for me to cherish. Your support and excitement contributed to the wonderful experience.

I would also like to thank my fellow students, partner and friends who have discussed both the academic and emotional components of working with this project, making the experience so much more rewarding.

I would like to extend my thanks to Chalmers university, specifically to students and teachers involved in the program 'architecture and planning beyond sustainability'. Learning about architecture for social sustainability through this parallel program has provided important inspiration to this project and my general practice.

I would like to thank SLU and contributors to the landscape architecture program. The past five years have opened my eyes to the complex intersection between social sustainability and the built environment - a topic which I look forward to continue exploring in the future.

## ABSTRACT

This project explores the potentials for landscape architects to work with public leisure space to promote socio-spatial integration. In order to explore this topic, the project aims to propose a site approach for promoting socio-spatial integration through cross-group interactions in public leisure space.

Through a literature review, this project finds that cross-group interactions in public leisure space can be considered a powerful tool for increasing socio-spatial integration. The literature indicates that this process decreases social divide by strengthening mental bonds, sense of belonging and psychological well-being. Furthermore, several theoretical approaches for promoting cross-group interactions through the physical configuration of public space are found in the literature review. These findings are synthesized into a matrix of socio-spatial design principles (SDP), which functions as a theoretical framework for the Common Ground approach.

Most knowledge found through the literature review on how public leisure space can promote socio-spatial integration were tangible enough to fit into the design principles of the SDP. However, some found theories also pertain to the process of producing space for socio-spatial integration. Based on this knowledge, a process-oriented step focusing on public participation and engaged action was created within the approach, called Participatory prototyping. In this step, prototypes in scale 1:1 of certain design elements are placed on site to create discussion, social engagement and a spatial understanding of the design proposal.

In order to practically apply and synthesize different theories found in the literature review, the Common Ground approach was created within this project combining theory, analysis and public participation to read, understand and design public leisure spaces. The purpose of using

the approach is to promote cross-group interactions and socio-spatial integration. The five steps of the Common Ground approach are: 1) Site portrait, 2) Socio-spatial site analysis, 3) Design, 4) Participatory prototyping, 5) Adaptions.

This project evaluates the Common Ground approach by testing it in Ögårdsparken, Malmö. The SDP was used throughout the approach for reading and designing the site. For example, the socio-spatial site analyses in step 2 provided a social interpretation of the park's spatial configuration. The analyses were in line with descriptions about social use in the park given by park visitors and experts, indicating that the SDP was a productive tool for interpreting socio-spatial tendencies in public leisure space. Site users' reflections on how to promote cross-group interactions in the park strongly correlated with findings from the SDP, indicating that the matrix may have practical applications. Furthermore, Participatory prototyping in scale 1:1 proved an efficient way to create social engagement and cross-group interactions on site, in addition to gathering insights about the project. By synthesizing knowledge found through all steps of the approach, a final proposal for the park could be produced.

The Common Ground approach was used to read, engage and design Ögårdsparken for socio-spatial integration. In addition to a all steps informing a design proposal for increased socio-spatial integration, performing the approach in Ögårdsparken resulted in knowledge about the site's socio-spatial qualities through applying the SDP and social engagment from many user groups through the method Participatory prototyping. As such, this project finds the approach to be a productive way to promote socio-spatial integration and cross-group interactions on site. Future applications and adjustments to the approach may illuminate more ways to work towards this goal.



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# PART ONE

## Understanding the context and introducing the Common Ground approach

1.1 Introduction and background.....

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### Foreword

*“Working with the city means to facilitate meetings across borders, to create potentials for and a desire to participate, and to change behavioral patterns.”*

-Brorström (2015, p. 61)

The citation above depicts a line of thinking which has been of interest to me since my first encounters with landscape architecture and working with the urban form. The borders and behaviors inherent to urban theory that Brorström (2015) mentions have long seemed like important parts in a complex whole, which cannot be pinned down or explained by simple graphs. However, the intersection between these concepts of meetings across borders, participation and behavioral patters can be investigated - something which I have aimed to do with this Master’s project in landscape architecture.

As the world and Sweden keep changing, I find these “soft” values to be more vital for our future co-existence in the city every day. Learning to live with each other - rather than just next to each other - can help us find ways to turn our co-existence into thriving community. The importance of community is explained by Grinde (2009), describing how a lack thereof can lead to depression and anxiousness, whereas happiness have been shown to spread more readily in a community with close personal relationships. The psychological factors of belonging, acceptance and comfort that all play a part in building stronger communities are interesting enough to merit a separate thesis. In this project however, the focus lies on what can be done from the landscape architect’s point of view to work with public spaces in the ways Brorström mentions; facilitating cross-group meeting and socio-spatial integration, utilizing community participation and working with the relationship between physical environment and social behavior - a topic which I believe holds much potential yet to be explored.



# 1.1 Introduction and background

## The social segregation situation

Social segregation is generally viewed as a complex and increasing problem in Swedish society today. The Swedish delegation against segregation states that the phenomenon means people and groups spending their lives in separation, divided based on factors such as ethnicity, age, gender or socio-economic status (Delmos 2022). The outcomes of social segregation range from negative life quality and experiences for individuals, to limited growth on a national scale (Legeby 2009).

One city in which the social segregation situation is evident today is Malmö. In the report "Segregation och segmentering i Malmö"<sup>1</sup> (Salonen, Grander & Rasmusson 2019), factors such as purchasing power, immigration status and forms of tenure are mapped, exposing stark geographic contrasts between these socio-economic groups within the city. In addition to spatial division, the city struggles with segregation that is less easy to spot on the map. Johansson, Righar & Salonen (2015) describe that the percentage of unemployment is more than twice as high amongst the city's foreign-born residents as in the Swedish-born population. Dikeç (2019) notes that segregation is also evident within the foreign-born segment of the city's population. Succinctly put, the separation between groups is visible in Malmö's physical, economic and social gaps. Although division appears in different ways, the segregation issues in the city are evident.

In 2013, Malmö appointed a special group called Malmökommissionen to write a report investigating how social sustainability could be achieved in the city (Malmö Stad 2013). The city's segregation issues are stated as part of the challenges that must be faced to achieve a more socially sustainable Malmö. Importantly for the context of this project, the report also states that design and planning of public spaces can strengthen social ties and trust in the city. Finally, the report recommends that: *"The built environment and public spaces should be designed with the goal of decreasing segregation in the city"* (Malmö Stad 2013, p. 73).

## Cross-group interactions in public leisure space – a way forward?

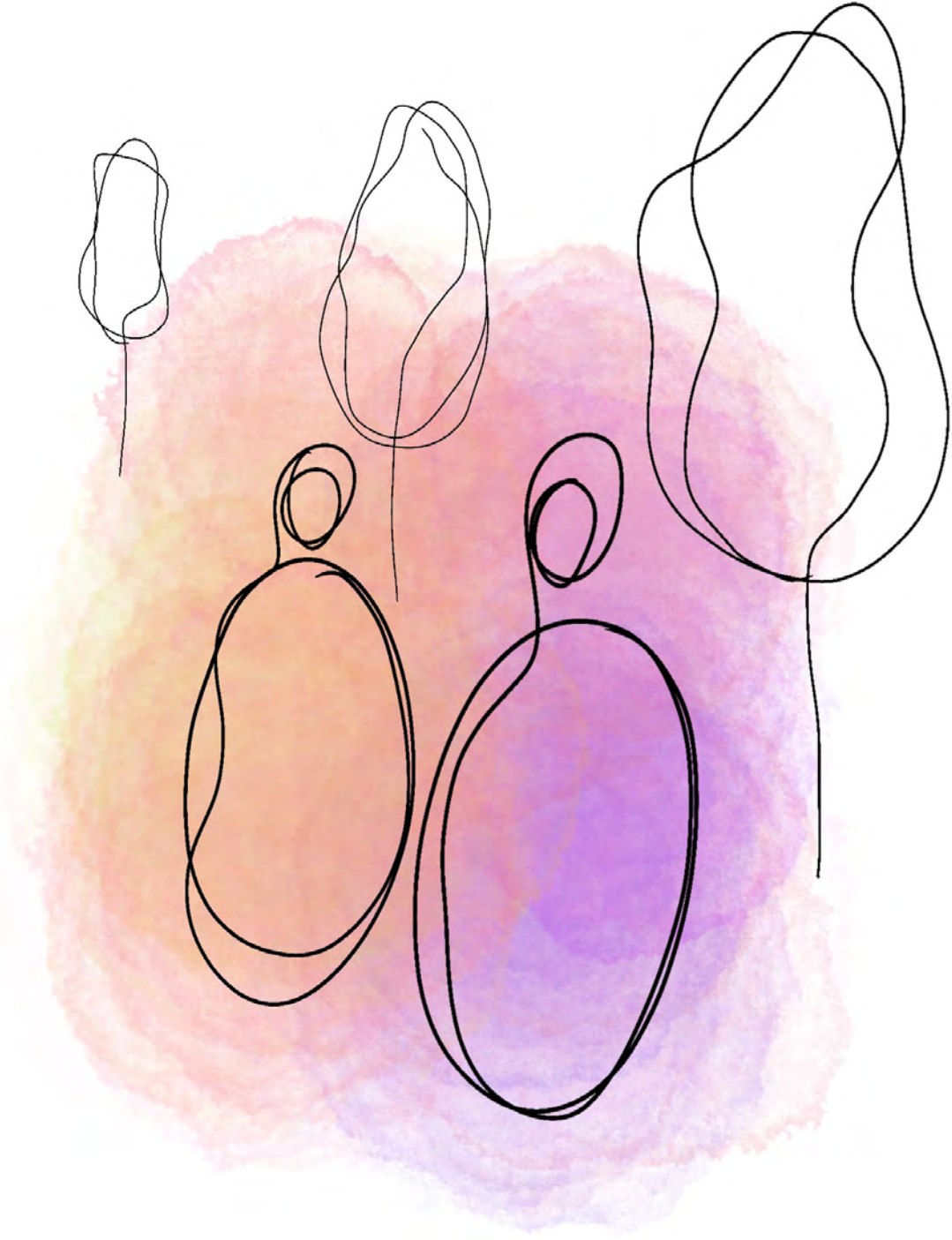
To counteract this division in society, interaction between people from different groups have been described as crucial by many sources. From Allports (1954) book nearly 70 years ago to Swedish Boverket's (2010) report on the mechanisms of segregation from 2010, meetings between people from different groups have been described as an effective tool against the social segregation in our society. For these cross-group interactions to take place, many scholars, including Varna & Tiesdell (2010) point to the importance of public space:

*"Public space affords common ground - for social interaction, intermingling and communication: it is a site of sociability. It is a stage for information exchange, personal development and social learning (i.e. about 'the other') and for the development of tolerance ."*

-Varna & Tiesdell (2010, p. 579)

As is evident by the quote, the authors consider public space to hold an inherent potential to prompt social interactions with people we consider different from ourselves. With this perspective, the design of public environments becomes of interest when looking to decrease the social segregation in Sweden today. Against this background, my independent project in landscape architecture starts to take shape. The project explores the potentials of public space to promote socio-spatial integration through cross-group interactions.

However, public space takes on many different shapes, functions and therefore prerequisites for design and possible social interactions. This project will focus mainly on the potentials of a certain type of public space; namely 'public leisure space'. According to Navarro, Tschöke Santana & Rechia (2018) public leisure space can be described as *"the space of social practice"* (Navarro et al. 2018, p. 759) - indicating that this is the type of space where social activities and behaviors take place. This definition illuminates the relevance of public leisure space for the focus of the paper – which will be explored further in later chapters.



<sup>1</sup>English: "Segregation and segmentation in Malmö".



## 1.2 Research design

### Research question, purpose and aim

As described in the introduction, this project revolves around the social divisions in society and how such issues can be adressed through landscape architecture. In order to explore this topic, the project asks the question: *How can public leisure space be read, engaged and designed for socio-spatial integration?*

To seek answers to the research question, this project aims to propose a site approach for promoting socio-spatial integration through cross-group interactions in public leisure space. This aim is pursued by exploring both theories and practical applications of the subject.

The purpose of this exploration and production of a new approach is to broaden the practical application of social theories in landscape architecture and illuminate the effect the profession can have on socio-spatial integration.

### Methods

In order to answer the research question, this project produced a site approach for promoting socio-spatial integration in public leisure space, named here the ‘Common Ground approach’. By testing the approach on a chosen site in Malmö, the steps could be evaluated and future developments could be suggested. Since the aim of the project is to produce an approach, or method of working, this chapter will present three separate categories: firstly, how the approach was produced, secondly methods describing the approach and thirdly more specific methods used when testing the approach. The approach itself will be presented in its entirety at the end of part one.

Producing the Common Ground approach  
- Literature review

The proposed Common Ground approach was produced by finding inspiration from theoretical sources in a literature review. The aim of the review was to explore which theories exist in different published sources on how cross-group meetings in public leisure space can be achieved, and which consequences this can have for social segregation. The literature was selected through searching in electronic databases, and thereafter either reading online sources or finding literary sources through library services. When selecting the literature, effort was taken to select sources exhibiting different perspectives and research methods, to expand the understanding of the concepts. Key words used when searching for literature were: “public space”, “public leisure space”, “cross-group interactions”, “social-spatial integration”, “social inclusion”, “social architecture”, “design for interactions” and variations of these.

After completing the literature review, the results were synthesized into a matrix of six design principles for socio-spatial integration (hereafter referred to as the SDP, see page 35). The findings were also used to formulate the Common Ground approach, using the SDP as a theoretical framework and consisting of five steps to take when designing for cross-group interaction.

In addition to the SDP being used within the approach, the literature review also informed about more process-oriented ways to promote socio-spatial integration. This resulted in the creation of a new method within the approach, revolving around public participation through prototyping on site in scale 1:1. This central step was named Participatory prototyping and could be described as site-specific actions for encouraging social interaction and participation.

According to Diedrich (2011), site-specific approaches to landscape architecture are characterized by *”refusing a tabula rasa approach and identifying as transformative design, with transformation by its nature being relational design, relating the before with the after.”* (Diedrich 2011, p.12) . It is in this context that the Common Ground approach should be understood - as an overarching method to read, engage and transform a public leisure space with the goal to enhance socio-spatial integration. The approach uses theoretical design principles, socio-spatial site analyses and public participation through prototyping in scale 1:1 to seek this goal.

Methods within the approach

### Research strategy: Design experiment

Swaffield & Deming (2011) proposes a classification of research methodologies within landscape architecture. The classification follows two axes: empirical research in relation to theory (horizontal), and epistemological assumptions (vertical). Below is a figure demonstrating the classification matrix proposed by Swaffield & Deming:

	Inductive	Reflexive	Deductive
Objective	Description	Modelling	Experimentation
Constructive	Classification	Interpretation	Evaluation & Diagnosis
Subjective	Engaged Action	Design Projection	Logical Systems

*Swaffield & Deming, 2011, p 37.*

The general research strategy of the Common Ground approach is considered to fall into the Design Projection category. Swaffield & Deming (2011) present different ways to name these reflexive-subjective strategies, including ‘case study investigation’, ‘experimental design’ or ‘design experiment’. According to the authors, a design experiment is performed on a fixed site, but with variable design, purposefully changing along the process. The proposed Common Ground approach follows along these same conditions and the overarching research strategy of the approach is therefore considered to be that of a design experiment.

*“[Design experiment] is a reflexive strategy. It mediates between empirical observation and theoretical projection of possibilities, and therefore lies midway between inductive and deductive. At the same time, design proposition is inherently active, engaged, situational and synthetic, and relies upon individual creativity, imagination and insight.”*

-Swaffield & Deming (2011, p. 40)

### Research methods: Interpretive and participatory

As described, the theoretical framework (SDP) and participatory method (Participatory prototyping) were central aspects of constructing the Common Ground approach. According to Swaffield & Deming (2011), the relationship between research strategies and their subcategories (research methods) are interdependent, meaning the classification may fit a method within the overarching strategy as well. With this in mind, two research methods of the project’s site approach can be placed within Swaffield & Deming’s (2011) matrix. Using the SDP in step 2 of the approach falls into the category of ‘interpretive research’ (Interpretation) and Participatory prototyping in step 4 can be classifies as ‘participatory activity research’ (Engaged action). This is described in more detail on the following pages.



## Testing the approach in Ögårdsparken

### *Preparations*

Before testing the first step of the approach, an appropriate site had to be selected. This was done by following a few criteria. Firstly, the site should be a public leisure space in Malmö with the potential of cross-group interactions (situated in a demographically diverse area). There should be a possibility of a redesign (not recently renovated or constructed) and it should be able to accept a design of diverse social elements, attracting a wide range of user groups. Lastly, it should be deemed an appropriate site for possibly testing a design to promote cross-group interactions by Malmö Stad<sup>2</sup>. The site ‘Ögårdsparken’ was identified to fit the above stated criteria by using segregation maps produced in Malmö Stad’s document ”Segregation och segmentering i Malmö” (Salonen et al. 2019). The maps clarify social segregation based on socio-economic levels, ethnic background and forms of tenure. To further identify the site as relevant for the stated criteria, consultations with Malmö Stad were carried out, verifying the municipality’s ability to make use of the project’s design proposal.

### *Carrying out the steps of the Common Ground approach*

The following paragraphs describe the methods within the Common Ground approach as carried out in Ögårdsparken. For more detailed descriptions of the case, please see part two of this project. As the Common Ground approach was produced through a literature review, it will be presented in its entirety at the end of this project's theory chapter together with the SDP.

### *Step 1 - Site portrait*

After establishing Ögårdsparken as an appropriate site for testing the Common Ground approach, step one was carried out by creating a 'site portrait'. This step revolves around collecting site knowledge and insights to inform the following steps. The purpose of this exploration is to identify possible synergies and build on existing knowledge.

In order to gain spatial understanding of the site, independent site visits were carried out before further investigating which site knowledge could be found through other sources. The site visits were mainly meant to build a foundation of familiarity towards the site, as deeper analyses would be carried out in later steps. Therefore, no specific praxis was followed during the site visits. Instead they were guided by curiosity and exploration, letting intuition guide the movement patterns and stopping points. In addition, some material was selected for a document analysis, in consultations with landscape architects at Malmö Stad. Firstly, the document "Förstudie Ögårdsparken"<sup>3</sup> by Urban Innovation lab (2016) with supplementary material from relevant sources was studied. The document contains relevant site knowledge about Ögårdsparken, illuminates social perspectives and conditions in the area, and highlights potential futures for the park. Furthermore, the book “Urban rage” (Dikeç 2019) and the document “Segregation och segmentering i Malmö” by Salonen et al. (2019) provided good insights into the socio-geographical context of the site. The material was read, summarized and analyzed by selecting parts relevant for the project’s focus and presenting these together with results from unstructured interviews.

These interviews were conducted in order to gain knowledge of Ögårdsparken’s role and uses. Two landscape architects at Malmö Stad and two city district hosts of Rosengård were interviewed. The role of the city district hosts includes visiting areas (including Ögårdsparken and its surroundings) and manifesting a sense of safety through social interactions and links. One of the hosts (here labeled as ‘Z’) has moved on professionally, though they stay in close contact with the network. Interviews with the city district hosts

were performed by visiting the site together and using the physical space, views, experience and interactions along the way to guide the conversation. The physical act of walking around the site provided an important and tangible backdrop for the discussion. The environment of the park could therefore be seen as an important facilitating factor in interviews with the city district hosts. Interviews with the landscape architects were done at their offices due to availability factors. The interviewees have chosen to be anonymous.



Interviews with city district hosts were carried out on site in Ögårdsparken.

<sup>2</sup>Malmö Stad is the official name of Malmö municipality.

<sup>3</sup>English: "Pilot study of Ögårdsparken".



### *Step 2 - Socio-spatial site analysis*

The second step of the Common Ground approach can be described as interpretive research by Swaffield & Deming's (2011) classifications. The authors describe this as the type of research where the subject under investigation doesn't have a clear meaning, but instead needs the investigator's interpretation to understand it within its context. In the case of the socio-spatial site analysis, the subject under investigation is the social aspects and elements of the site at hand. By comparing findings from theory with the conditions and design elements on site, an interpretation of its uses and meaningfulness for social life is produced. Findings from the literature review provide a theoretical framework for the interpretive research. By identifying the presence and absence of findings from the literature review using the SDP, the site is analyzed and interpreted from a socio-spatial perspective and these analyses consequently inform the design. When testing the approach in Ögårdsparken, step 2 was carried out by visiting the site on several occasions and wandering through it, observing social behaviors and physical elements along the way. By comparing the observed behaviors and elements with findings from the literature review and the SDP, geographical mappings of social design elements and functions were made. By overlaying different factors that might have an impact on social life, the site could be interpreted as a social space. The socio-spatial site analyses were used as a base for the proposed design, informing which areas were lacking elements that might facilitate cross-group interactions and which areas held potentials to develop.

### *Step 3 - Preliminary design*

A preliminary design of the site was created by studying the socio-spatial site analyses to identify appropriate areas to work with. By observing which potentials for social design elements were present in different areas, a structural sketch could be made. In order to decide what elements might be appropriate to design for on site, both theories from the SDP and collected input from creating the site portrait were used. Due to the size of the site, the preliminary design for Ögårdsparken was at a rather structural scale. However, certain areas which seemed particularly interesting according to the analyses were developed with a bit more detail. The results were visualized with an illustration plan for the entire park, sketches of some important new places and explanatory text.

### *Step 4 - Participatory prototyping*

According to Swaffield & Deming (2011), Engaged action describes research methods that produce new knowledge by interacting socially and actively. The method is not led by theoretical assumptions but rather by the participants themselves. This is how the new method for public participation (Participatory prototyping) of the Common Ground approach functions. The most central part of the approach, Participatory prototyping revolves around visiting the site and hinting on a proposed preliminary design (produced by interpretive research and theoretical findings). The goal is to start a dialogue regarding the site, the design and reflections on the chance for cross-group interactions with site users. The design ideas are made accessible to site users by placing prototypes in scale 1:1 on site, revealing conceptual ideas in a spatially interactive way. In this way, visitors can comment on tangible and spatial interventions,

using all senses to experience the design idea and themselves in it. Instead of asking for what they want in an abstract sense, this method asks users' opinion about specific design ideas, and through it produces tangible comments. This could be seen as giving the participants the role of 'jury' and 'critics' rather than informants or interviewees. It could also be described as testing the relevance of theoretical sources and outsider's site knowledge on the actual visitors.

In the case of Ögårdsparken, Participatory prototyping was carried out by placing prototypes of chosen parts of the suggested design on site, allowing users to interact with them. Furthermore, a large sign showing the design was brought on site, as well as an interactive map were participants could show where they tend to spend time in the park. By standing on site for four days between June 1st-5th, 2022 (one day had to be canceled due to bad weather), around 100 shorter interviews or interactions could be registered. The topics discussed were mainly what the participants thought about the proposal, how they spend time in the park and what could be adapted to increase their willingness to engage in cross-group interactions. This was done either by conversations about the park, documented by hand, asking users to place post-it notes with their opinions on the brought material, or asking participants to use the interactive map. To increase the chance of collected opinions, flyers were distributed with information about the project and how to participate. In order to carry out the Participatory prototyping, a permit was obtained from the police and the municipality. After obtaining the permit, materials were purchased that could work as "prototypes" for the imagined design. For example, chairs were used to signify seating arrangements and signaling markers made from tulle and tent pegs were made to mark new areas such as a proposed theater stage.

### *Step 5 - Adaptions*

After the Participatory prototyping was carried out, the data was collated into three separate categories; behavioral patterns of the park today, general wishes for the future redesign of the park and testimonies regarding what could be added or adjusted to increase the participants' willingness to partake in cross-group interactions. These factors were then used to inform a final proposal for Ögårdsparken. Interpreting the comments and results from the Participatory prototyping was a qualitative work during which knowledge from all of the landscape architecture program was used. Interpreting opinions and testimonies about the use of the public space was an important part in suggesting adaptions to the preliminary design proposal. Because of findings during the Participatory prototyping and the limited scope of the project, the results did not include a comprehensive detailed design, but rather a more overarching design proposal and a plan for continuing the participatory work along different phases.

## **Epilogue**

This project consisted of three main parts. In part one the Common Ground approach was created by interpreting different theories on socio-spatial integration through public space design. In part two the Common Ground approach was tested by carrying out the steps in Ögårdsparken. In part three, the results were discussed and the Common Ground approach was evaluated as a method. An opportunity to test the Common Ground approach on an additional site was presented at the later stages of this project. Kungsbacka municipality in Sweden asked for the approach to be carried out on 'Lindens torg'<sup>4</sup>, as the municipality was looking to focus on designing a safe, social space with the help of citizen dialogue.

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<sup>4</sup>*English: "Linden's square".*



Upon researching the site, it became clear that Lindens torg offered many qualities which were not explored in Ögårdsparken. In the original case, the Common Ground approach was tested on a large park, situated outside the city center and with recurring user groups. Furthermore, the project took months to carry out. Lindens torg on the other hand is a small, central square surrounded by shops and streets and situated in the much smaller municipality of Kungsbacka. Since the scope of this project was limited, rearranging the whole project was not an option. Instead, it was decided to add the case of Lindens torg as a shorter epilogue to the project. By adjusting the Common Ground approach both to the new site characteristics and to a smaller time frame, both its adaptability and more aspects of the approach could be explored. However, the epilogue should not be considered part of the main disposition of this project. This is due to the fact that the scope did not allow a thorough discussion of the results or presentation of all steps used in detail. Instead, the epilogue and case of Lindens torg is meant to inform the reader of possible future applications of the Common Ground approach as well as an exploration into its adaptability.

## Delimitations

This project explored topics such as socio-spatial integration, public leisure space and working with sites as a landscape architect. As the topics of this project are very encompassing, some delimitations were needed to set the framework of the project.

Firstly, the scope of this project meant that there was a finite amount of hours for reading, analyzing the site, designing and meeting site users. This resulted in both the literature review and amount of time spent carrying out the Common Ground approach being limited - garnering results thereafter.

Focusing on public leisure space as defined earlier in this chapter also resulted in a delimitation with regards to which types of public spaces were explored. Within this project, public leisure space was understood as the types of places meant or used for visiting, lingering or spending time in for one's own pleasure. The exclusion from the larger concept of 'public space' were places used as modes of transportation or for private/ non-social uses. Some examples of public leisure places could consequently include parks, pocket parks or squares. Public places which would not be included within the concept would be streets, traffic junctions or memorial grounds. Furthermore, since this project was created within the field of landscape architecture, 'public leisure space'

was in this project understood as outdoor environments. Additionally, public leisure space is vastly different depending on the country, region, functions and demographics of the place. The theoretical research therefore focused on urban public leisure space only, as these places have a higher concentration of people compared to rural public leisure spaces, and is therefore more appropriate when investigating potentials for human interaction. The empirical part of the project was limited to Malmö municipality. Malmö is a suitable city to test the research question, as it holds mixed demographics in several different categories, as outlined in the background chapter.

There are many ways to discuss social segregation and its counter-processes in society. This project focused specifically on 'socio-spatial integration', a process which was explored in the theory chapter and defined as increased levels of social contact between groups through overlapping movement patterns. This in turn leads to more positive contact, which can strengthen social bonds, sense of belonging and psychological well-being according to Allport (1954) and Xiong, Bairner & Tang (2020). Further exploration of the concept can be found in the project's literature review.

Another delimitation pertains to the Common Ground approach which was created within the project, and the SDP used for mapping social potentials and spaces. The classification of these types of spaces could go on indefinitely, and the SDP was made to create a matrix or categorization to work from. Certainly, these fluent concepts could be clustered in different ways. Due to the scope of the project, the SDP was created as a synthesis, in order to have tangible principles to work with in the Common Ground approach.

A further delimitation regards the social reach of the site design. Depending on which site is explored, the expected social effect will vary. A central project may have more people come through it and thus have a higher number of interactions – however a more suburban site may have a higher potential of enabling repeated interactions between the same people. Both these perspectives can be considered to promote socio-spatial integration of a society in different ways (further exploration of this topic can be found in the literature review), but the limitation of either site needs to be considered. The selected site for testing the Common Ground approach, Ögårdsparken, fell into the more suburban category, which meant an anticipated lower amount of people to come through it, but a higher anticipated chance for recurring interactions.





### 1.3 Theory – A literature review

This chapter aims to provide a theoretical foundation for the project. The findings from the literature review will be used to propose an approach to follow when designing public leisure space for cross-group interactions. Therefore, this chapter will explore how the chance for cross-group interactions may be promoted in public space and what impact this may have on social division in society today. By using the found knowledge to construe a site approach and test this in Ögårdsparken, these processes are explored on an empirical level in later parts of the project.

#### The important role of public leisure space

Allport (1954) considers interaction with individuals who are alien to us - with no shared background or context - as crucial to breaking down the social segregation of society. For such cross-group interactions to take place, neutral public spaces where people can meet on equal terms is a necessity, according to Lofland (1998). Other sources citing the important role of public space for combating segregation and furthering the sense of community include Couceiro da Costa, Pestana Lages, Rodriguez Couceiro da Costa & Roseta's book, mentioning the possibility for public spaces to work as places for exchanging ideas and fostering a sense of community (Couceiro da Costa et al. 2017). Furthermore, Legeby (2010) states that segregation is inherently a spatial issue. According to her, the social component of the socio-spatial

phenomenon that is segregation is rarely analyzed properly, which results in lacking insight into combating segregation from an urban form perspective. Another example of segregation being described as a spatial issue appears in Forshed's (2021) book. The author describes how the built environment and the design thereof greatly affects the segregation levels in society, and that ignoring the potential to build for more socially sustainable cities is a common mistake made by city planners and the like today. In Aelbrecht & Stevens' book "Public space design and social cohesion: An international comparison" (2019) this point is built upon by stating that there has been increasing research suggesting a spatial dimension to the social cohesion of our societies, indicating lesser divides between groups. According to the authors a number of interesting design experiments have been carried out, pointing to similar results. The findings indicate that places which are physically integrated with their surroundings seem to enhance urban social cohesion. According to the authors, findings also indicate that the greatest potential for creating this kind of spatial connectivity can be found on a local scale, working with site specific solutions. Public places that facilitate cross-group interactions on a neighborhood scale are described as important to the process of tying stronger social bonds within a city, as these places are often where conflicts of belonging, exclusion and solidarity are played out. In addition to public space on a neighborhood scale being important to consider for city-wide



social ties, Navarro et al. (2018) point to a particular type of public space, namely public leisure space, as playing an important role in the same process:

*“Public leisure space cannot be seen as a product, an object or a sum of objects, or a set of goods, because it is fundamentally linked with the production of social relations. [...] This reinforces the understanding that the public leisure space is the space of social practice.”*

-Navarro et al. (2018, p. 759)

The relationship between leisure activities, public space and social effects are mentioned by many sources, for example in Navarro et al.’s (2018) description of the interplay between social practice and public spaces for leisure above. Furthermore, Johnson & Glover (2016) describe leisure activities as inherently spatial pursuits and call for more research in the field of leisure activities from a socio-spatial perspective. Another author who mentions this interplay is Peters (2010). According to her, many leisure activities involve social interactions. Peters describes the value of public leisure space by pointing out how much of our leisure time is spent in public spaces where we are co-present with strangers and therefore more likely to have the types of cross-groups interactions described as crucial to breaking down social segregation.

### Socio-spatial integration

When discussing the problems of social segregation, one can perceive very different understandings of some terms in the discourse. For the purpose of this project, an exploration of the concept ‘socio-spatial integration’ is made. To understand the context further, the umbrella term of social integration is first explored.

The umbrella term: social integration

Social integration is a term found as early as in the book “Division of Labour in Society” by sociologist Émile Durkheim (1933). The author makes the point that as society grows from smaller units where goods and services can be exchanged directly to more urban contexts, the social system goes through a shift. This is described by Durkheim as the shift from ‘mechanical solidarity’ (indicating a small, tightly knit society sharing the same values) to ‘organic solidarity’. According to the author, the mechanical solidarity naturally decreases as society grows, since the number of people is directly related to the number of differences within the social context. Once society can no longer rely on homogeneity for social cohesion, organic solidarity starts to take over as a way for us to feel connected. Within the organic solidarity phenomenon, our differences create more stable complexes of trade – similar to how the organs come together in the body and each fulfill specific yet interrelated functions. Being able to play a part in a social machinery and thereby sensing a place for oneself within society was once understood as experiencing social integration.

Since Durkheim’s book, much has been written on the topic of social integration. Xiong, Bairner & Tang (2020) interestingly differentiate between social and political integration. Social integration can be understood as the level of which a person feels psychologically linked to others in a larger group. Political integration relates more to empowering marginalized groups through access and opportunities to achieve an economically and culturally acceptable standard of living. The authors continue by pointing out that a socially integrated society is most evident by observing how much individuals actively participate in their own position as part of a larger social context. In contrast, Lemanski (2006) uses ‘desegregation’ as a point of departure to describe social integration. According to the author, the difference can be described by way of measuring – with desegregation being measured quantitatively and social integration qualitatively. The indicators used for measuring social integration can according to Lemanski include perceived friendships, common local identity, the sharing of common public spaces and involvement in local organizations or institutions. The Social integration Commission (2015) of the United Kingdom propose a similar definition of the concept. The commission describes social integration simply as a way of understanding the level of cross-group interactions taking place in an area.

Synthesizing these perspectives, the term ‘social integration’ can be understood as a qualitative phenomenon, often exhibited through the experience of friendships, local engagement and sense of community or local identity. The psychological link one feels toward other people of a group as part of a social context is another important way to understand social integration. Furthermore, cross-group interactions are found to be a vital part of increased social integration.

What is socio-spatial integration?

Ruiz-Tagle’s (2013) article from the Journal of Urban and Regional research explores the term and concept of socio-spatial integration from different perspectives. The article shines light on the complexities of how social segregation and various types of social integration interrelates, building on the distinctions made by Xiong et al. (2020) and Lemanski (2006). Ruiz-Tagle provides a spatial foundation to the social segregation and -integration complexities, by describing ways that segregation appears in urban settings. The described causes of self-separation within urban settings relate to psychological mechanisms according to the author. Ruiz-Tagle finds, similarly to Xiong et al. (2020) that these psychological mechanisms indicate social rather than political driving forces. Furthermore, the spatial components to the social segregation in society is evident in the author’s examples. These examples include the process of excluding groups perceived as

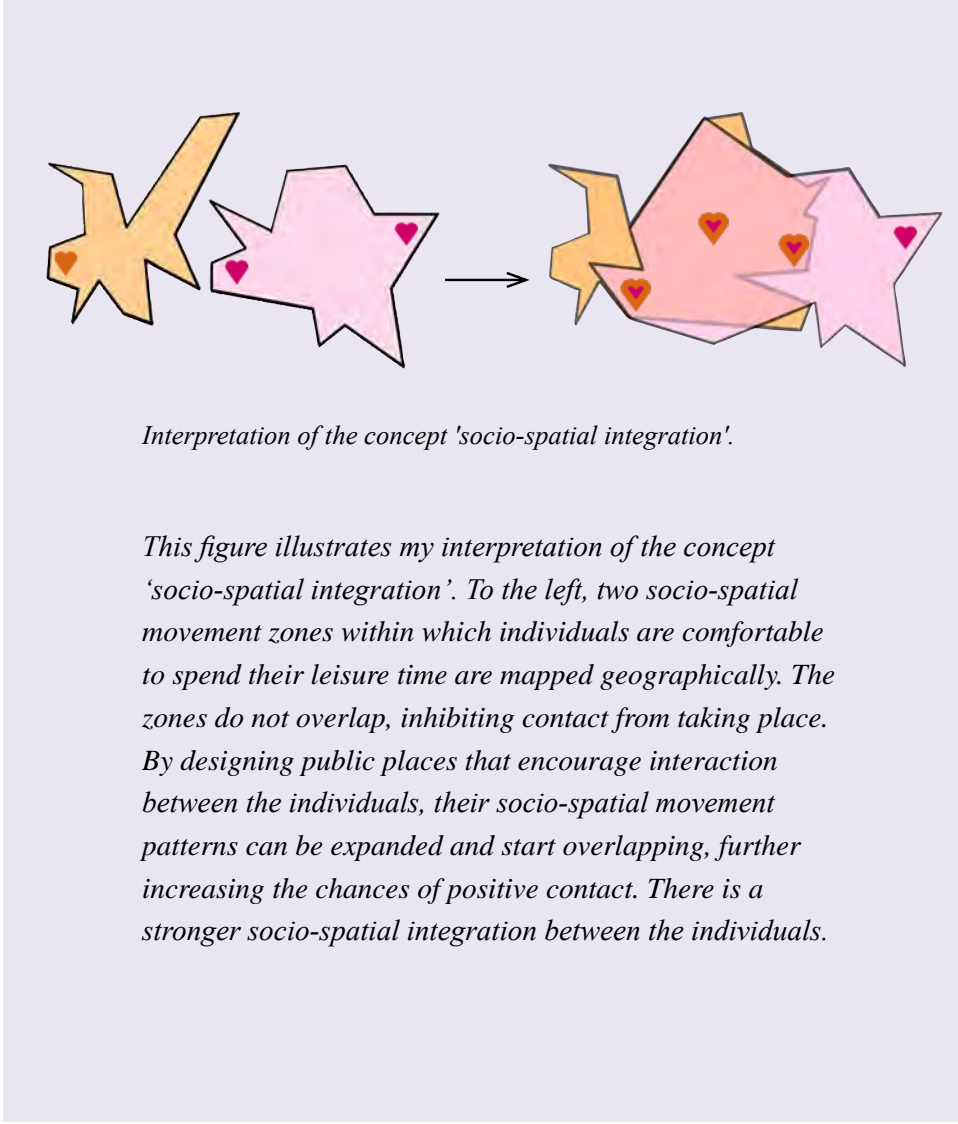


inferior from a neighborhood in order to maintain a perceived superiority, as well as demographical changes to an area leading to homogeneity and consequent segregation. On the relationship between social, spatial and integration issues, Ruiz-Tagle (2013) writes that:

*“Socio-spatial practices of distance may be essential influences on constructed identities of race, class, ethnicity, gender and the like. Therefore, one can see that the issue of integration has been always mediated by distances, which are crucial parts of the structures that shape social relationships.*

Ruiz-Tagle (2013, p. 5)

The author continues by describing spatial proximity as a means for creating social proximity and thus increasing the chances for relations between divided groups. Schnell, Diab, & Benenson, (2015) build on this by describing integration and segregation as aspects within the socio-spatial context. In their article, the authors call for a shift from looking at socio-spatial segregation purely from a residential perspective to viewing the movement patterns and overlapping socio-spatial behaviors of individuals as an important measurement of socio-spatial integration.



In other words, socio-spatial integration could be understood as higher levels of social contact between groups through common meeting places, leading to increased overlap between socio-spatial movement patterns. This in turn leads to more positive contact, which can strengthen social bonds, sense of belonging and psychological well-being (Allport 1954; Xiong et al. 2020). To further illuminate the process by which cross-group interactions and socio-spatial integration relates, theories on this process will be presented in the following chapter.

### Cross-group interactions

The importance of cross-group interactions for the socio-spatial integration process is described by Allport (1954). In his book, the author formulates the 'contact hypothesis' by which positive contact between people is the most efficient way to decrease prejudice against those who are perceived as different from the self. For this effect to take place, Allport describes cooperation between groups, the endeavor to reach a common goal, providing equal status between the groups and support from social or legal authorities as crucial. Aronson & Aronson (2018) build on this point, by discussing the positive effects of equal-status contact between groups. According to the authors, bringing prejudiced groups into direct contact with each other can help individuals overcome their biases by confronting the reality of human diversity. Furthermore, the authors state that these types of cross-group interactions can increase understanding, decrease social divide and encourage

positive social relationships. In other words, decreasing prejudice through cross-group interactions can increase factors of social integration mentioned by Xiong et al. (2020) and Lemanski (2006) such as friendships, common local identity and a sense of belonging.

In summary, the positive effects and relationship between socio-spatial integration and cross-group interactions can be described as follows: Creating places that encourage cross-group interactions can lead to decreased prejudice between groups (Allport 1954; Aronson & Aronson 2018). This in turn can increase understanding and friendships across social borders (Aronson & Aronson 2018), further expanding the socio-spatial overlap between groups. As the process continues and socio-spatial integration is increased, so does the psychological feeling of belonging and general well-being of individuals in our society as mentioned by Xiong et al. (2020). As such, socio-spatial integration through cross-group interactions should be viewed as a valuable potential outcome of public leisure space. This begs the question - how can public leisure space be designed to promote this process?

### Promoting socio-spatial integration and cross-group interactions through public leisure space

Many sources theorize about the ways that public space affects our social lives. Within this field, different parameters to the spatial and functional organization of public leisure space are discussed. One such parameter which is thought to impact social behavior is the perceived publicness of a space.



## Level of publicness

Although spaces can be equally public officially, the perception of publicness can be something quite different. Varna & Tiesdell (2010) aim to create an approach for evaluating the publicness of spaces. According to the authors, the value of public space can be described by three categories: Democratic (affording a neutral and inclusive territory for political representation, display and action), Symbolic (by representing the collective and social life of cities, in contrast to privatized space) and Social. On the social value of public space, Varna & Tiesdell write that public space creates a stage for people to learn about and interact with people from other groups, which in turn leads to increased respect and tolerance for the ‘other’. The authors go on to present five aspects which are thought to determine the publicness of space: ownership, control, civility, physical configuration, and animation. According to the authors, the two aspects relevant for public space design is ‘physical configuration’ and ‘animation’. As this project concerns the design of public space and its impact on social behavior, it is interesting to investigate these two aspects further. On the qualities of physical configuration, the authors state the importance of availability and connectivity of the space both within itself and to outside parts of the public realm. A well-connected space means higher movement, more liveliness and a higher chance of cross-group interactions according to the authors. The accessibility of entrances, orientability and inclusiveness of the space through flexible use is also considered important elements of a space’s physical configuration when measuring publicness. Another important quality is the visual access, both within the space and to the external public realm. A lack thereof can, according to the authors, create a sense of introversion,

division or insecurity of the space. The other design aspect thought to impact publicness of space is ‘Animation’. According to the authors, this relates to which human needs are met by the place, and to which degree a common use between different individuals and groups can be found. Disregarding the aesthetic values of public space design, Varna & Tiesdell point out that different design features can support use and activity in a more functional sense. Availability of service functions (such as restrooms or cafés), diversity of seating types, sufficient lighting, territorial markers, art and the presence of intimate enclaves in the larger public context of the space are a few such features. Furthermore, the authors point out the importance of people-watching for creating a bond with a place and its users. Different types of seating that allow clear views is therefore considered to make a place more public. Other ways to increase observability of a space includes attractive elements such as fountains, public art or temporary events, according to Varna & Tiesdell (2010).

Another author who theorizes on the importance of noticing each other in public space is Peters (2010). In her book, the author claims that strong social ties can be tied through non-verbal cross-group interactions in public leisure space. She claims that when strangers keep encountering each other in their leisure time in public spaces, a phenomenon called ‘public familiarity’ is increased. This could be described as a de-anonymizing process by which individuals form a context across group borders. According to the author, this process can be promoted through simply spending leisure time or people-watching in the same public space – thereby learning about fellow city dwellers and their behaviors. One of the key points of Peters’ book is that spending time in public leisure space is the way we negotiate our social identity. By doing this together

with other groups, a shared identity can be strengthened and through this process, socio-spatial integration can be increased. Furthermore, Cattell, Dines, Gesler & Curtis (2008) found in their study that fleeting contact in public leisure space between two individuals can be very important as a perceived basis for future, more meaningful contact. The authors also emphasize the importance of acknowledged co-presence through an example. Sharing the story of how an elderly woman came to feel stronger connection to her socio-spatial comfort zone as well as a stranger she did not know before, the authors present the quote:

*“It started with a smile and now in the past couple of months she’s started to say hello, and I say hello back. You get a nice feeling, especially early in the morning when you’re grumpy to come to work!”*

-Cattell et al. (2008, p.553)

This example illustrates the potential for stronger social bonds through public familiarity and opportunities for growing connections in public space. The importance of people-watching for social cohesion is also described by professor of urban planning, Jan Gehl (2010). In order to promote this process, Gehl (2010) brings up the importance of comfortable seating with a good view of social spaces, similarly to Varna & Tiesdell (2010). Gehl goes on to mention the importance of a perceived sense of safety for social interactions to take place. High level of publicness through a lively atmosphere is one of the important ways to make a place feel safe, according to the author. Popular places filled with people become more highly valued and thereby feel more secure, according to the author. Furthermore, Gehl brings up the importance of peripheral seating and sufficient lighting as important ways to increase a sense of security in public space. Mayblin, Valentine, Kossak &

Schneider (2015) also describe the importance of physical spaces that allow a sense of safety and security as key for facilitating cross-group interactions. In their spatial experiment, Mayblin et al. test how to achieve this sense of security. Interestingly, the results show that private or intimate zones within public space allowed for greater openness and willingness to interact with other people. The sense of security to which this process is attributed is explained as a basic need for people to share their own identities and feelings, which is more comfortably done in intimate settings. Furthermore, the sense of security was considered to increase the willingness amongst subjects to alter their own prejudice. These findings relate both to Allport’s (1954) and Aronson & Aronson’s (2018) descriptions of cross-group interaction for decreased prejudice and stronger socio-spatial integration as well as Peter’s (2011) point about how public leisure space is where we build and negotiate our identities together with other people.

The importance of perceived sense of security for cross-group interactions in public space is further discussed by Peters (2010). By providing familiar and predictable surroundings, the author finds that a sense of security can be promoted in public leisure space. Perceived security also promotes positive feelings of attachment to public space, which correlates with levels of social cohesion, according to the author. Hashim, Thani, Jamaludin & Yatim (2016) explore another aspect of perceivably safe public spaces for socio-spatial integration. The authors investigate how vegetation design in public leisure space can increase the sense of safety for women enough for them to feel comfortable visiting and have the chance for cross-group interactions. Their findings indicate that open views, well maintained vegetation and clear arrangement such as no understory or thick understory in plantings is important to establish







Another important point about the potentials for mixed group co-presence is brought up by Sanei, Khodadad & Khodadad (2018). According to the authors, flexibly designed public space is a prerequisite for people from different groups to be co-present and find the same leisure space useful simultaneously. As the mixed co-presence increases, so do the chances of interactions across group borders. By this process, Sanei et al. consider flexible design of public leisure space a way to promote social connections and socially sustainable cities. This relates to another interesting parameter discussed within the field of public space design and its importance for social life, namely the level of programming.

#### Level of programming

A programed space can be described as a space that has been defined for specific use or function. Unprogramed space on the other hand is undefined in its function and thereby changeable to different user needs. The impact that programming has on cross-group interactions in public leisure space is interestingly discussed from several perspectives. Building on Sanei et al.'s (2018) findings, Andersson (2013) has found that flexible design of public leisure space promotes cross-group interactions and socio-spatial integration. The process by which individuals can 'make something their own' is essential for a space to function for cross-group interactions, according to the author. For this mental process to be facilitated, the space must provide a flexible base which different groups can bend to their own uses and preferences at the same time. According to Andersson, one way to achieve this is through simply designing hints of functions in public leisure space, rather than programming it too harshly. The same reasoning of loosely programed or flexible space is brought up by Kahn (2005). The dynamism exhibited in

these places is described as a mobile ground, on which she claims diverse perspectives can merge and cross-group interactions can take place. In order for this process to be made possible, Kahn agrees with Andersson that the designer should focus on frameworks of function, to enable a flexible use for people no matter their differences. Similarly, Varna & Tiesdell (2010) bring up the importance of loosely programed spaces for enabling cross-group interactions. According to the authors, a loosely programed place can facilitate a sense of discovery as users figure out how to behave in the space. This can help immerse us in the space and forget social conventions, thereby creating opportunities for cross-group interactions.

On the other hand, too loosely programed space is considered to decrease a space's sense of security and thereby potential for cross-group interaction, according to Gehl (2010). The author brings up territorial markers as important factors of safe public space design. Gehl exemplifies this by describing how clearly defined zones with different levels of publicness can provide and increased sense of safety in residential areas, compared to similar areas without these spatial aspects. Furthermore, Jönsson & Scaramuzzino (2018) have found that public leisure space programed for organized leisure activities can work as an arena to bring people together and start to dissolve the socio-spatial boundaries in society. Examples of the kind of leisure activities which have a positive impact on socio-spatial integration is cultural events, sports or organized hobbies. One of the important positive outcomes of organized activities that is brought up is citizens getting familiarized with new places which are otherwise out of social reach. Furthermore, the findings strongly indicate that common organized activities strengthen social ties between participant groups.

Level of programming directly relates to what kind of use and activity can take place within a space. This leads on to another interesting parameter of the relationship between socio-spatial integration and design, namely what kind of interactions can be designed for when looking to strengthen social bonds.

#### Level of activity in the interaction

When it comes to cross-group interactions for increasing socio-spatial integration, different levels of activity is discussed by many sources. On the more active part of the spectrum, Valentine (2008) describes common activities as crucial for strengthening social bonds between groups. Everyday activities is described as most efficient at increasing respect and positive attitudes between groups. By applying Allport's (1954) contact hypothesis, certain characteristics of such activities can be said to further facilitate positive social connections between participants. The cooperation between groups, a common goal, equal status and support from authorities mentioned in Allport's contact hypothesis are prerequisites that, according to Valentine, can be provided by public leisure space. Valentine gives some examples of design elements which could be said to fit this description, such as outdoor stages or arenas, sporting possibilities or community gardens (Valentine 2008). Building on this, Xiong et al. (2020) describe their empirical findings on the socio-spatial integration effects of carrying out a common activity in public leisure space. In their article, female migrant workers' social integration was evidently facilitated in a number of ways, including socio-spatially, through physical group activities. The article describes how both physical and psychological connections to the city were strengthened through playing sports in public leisure space. The authors describe the

importance of diverse and inclusive public space as an arena for the migrant workers to build social bonds with local citizens. Regarding public leisure space for sports, they go on to state that:

*“It is also an important site for shared interests, which is thought to bond agents together and create feelings of security and equality that can override any anxieties and exclusion. Sports space, in this context, is not only an important geographical medium for their social contacts in cities but also an important place for establishing social relations and social identities.”*

-Xiong et al. (2020, p. 788)

Other sources cite the importance of passive interaction as an effective way to increase the potential for cross-group interactions. As Cattell et al. (2008) state, fleeting contact can be a necessary segue from complete strangers to more active interactions and possible friendships in the future. Building on this, Ruiz-Tagle (2013) mentions that one of the corner stones of socio-spatial integration is 'the identification of a common ground'. This passive quality of cross-group interaction relates to the concept of 'public familiarity' presented by Peters (2010) and creating a shared identity through people-watching, representation and co-presence. Varna & Tiesdell (2010) also present some theories on passiveness and activeness of public space interactions. What the authors call active engagement is thought to be facilitated by a gradient of social spaces - thereby easing users into the idea of interacting as they move through the space. Furthermore, the authors mention that design elements can be used as a bridge between passive and active interaction through a process called 'triangulation'.



The term 'triangulation' in the context of urban studies was coined by William H. Whyte in his book "The social life of small urban spaces" (1980):

*“By this [Triangulation] I mean that process by which some external stimulus provides a linkage between people and prompts strangers to talk to each other as though they were not.”*  
-Whyte (1980, p. 96)

Whyte goes on to describe how the external stimulus could be a physical object, or a more phenomenological experience like a beautiful scene, or attention-drawing behavior of gatherings or individuals. Whyte's observation of this process, by which public space and its components work as an arena for tying new social bonds between strangers was made over 40 years ago. Since then, much knowledge has been collected about this process and its value for socio-spatial integration. Varna & Tiesdell (2010) claim that fascinating or eye-catching elements in public leisure space such as seating, art, visual enhancement or food vendors could be prompts for this process by which cross-group interaction is facilitated and triggered. Furthermore, Peters (2010) point out the potential held by public leisure space design to trigger the triangulation process. When spending time in leisure space, our minds are usually more relaxed than when traveling in traffic or shopping. By introducing an unexpected experience to this relaxed leisure state, Peters states that the triangulation process becomes especially efficient, as it is in the transition zone between relaxation and activity that unexpected interactions, less inhibited by social borders, can take place.

Level of participation in the design process

Lastly, the process by which public space is designed is also thought to have an impact on its social life and potential cross-group interactions. In the report "Mötesplatser i Stockholmsregionen" (Tunström, M., Cars, G., & Dethorey, S. 2010), it is stated that productive citizen dialogue as part of the design process of public spaces can promote a local sense of belonging as well as cross-group interactions. This process is also mentioned by Carr et al. (1992). In their book, the authors describe the importance of public participation in shaping public space for gathering diverse interests, ideas and priorities, thereby creating a space used and appreciated by a greater number of groups. Hoskyns (2014) describes public participation as a profoundly democratic process and states that when creativity and input to the production of shared spaces is inhibited, social alienation and divide increases. Shankar & Larson (2015) build on this by stating that a diverse range of socio-demographic backgrounds and perspectives needs to be represented in order to produce space that is truly public, for everyone. Furthermore, the authors describe how participatory processes in the configuration of public space has the potential to direct actions in a way that caters to site-specific needs and values. The authors also describe how participatory processes may empower local communities in both short and long term perspectives and contribute to the connectivity between people, space and each other. Using public participation processes when designing public leisure space is thereby understood as an important strategy for facilitating cross-group interactions and socio-spatial integration.

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<sup>7</sup>English: "Meeting places in the Stockholm region".

## Summary and synthesis: Socio-spatial design principles and Common Ground approach

In conclusion, there are many different design parameters thought to influence our social behavior in public leisure space. Publicness, level of programming, type of interaction and the design process are a few interesting points of departure when investigating the relationship between public space and socio-spatial integration. Synthesizing the findings from the literature review reveal six design principles or themes, recurring throughout several different sources. Valentine (2008), Xiong et al. (2020), Jönsson & Scaramuzzino (2018) state that public space programed for **common activities** is an important way to facilitate cross-group interaction. Design elements thought to facilitate this process include designing **a gradient of activity throughout the space, providing places for sports, outdoor stages, cultural events or organized hobbies such as community gardens**. Furthermore, **designed spaces for common activity should aim to provide equal status regardless of user groups**.

Ruiz-Tagle (2013), Peters (2010), Gehl (2010), Cattell et al. (2008), Varna & Tiesdell (2010) discuss '**public familiarity**' as a way to increase socio-spatial integration and, by acting as a segue to more active contact and cross-group interactions. Design elements brought up to encourage this process include different forms of **seating to encourage people-watching, visual access throughout the space, space designed to accommodate temporary events and interesting objects such as public art**.

Boverket (2010), Jane Jacobs (1961), Rokem & Vaughan (2019), Roberto & Hwang (2015), Roberto & Korver-Glenn (2021), Aelbrecht & Stevens (2019), Varna & Tiesdell (2010) discuss the importance of **space connectivity** both within the space itself and to the external public realm.

Design elements thought to increase space connectivity include **accessible entrances, visual connections to neighboring areas, interesting elements that motivate movement to or through the site, clear orientability in the design and avoiding unnecessary barriers**.

According to Mayblin et al. (2015), Peters (2010), Gehl (2010), Listerborn (2000), Listerborn (2002), a **sense of security** is vital for cross-group interactions to take place in public space. **Intimate zones within the public context of public leisure space, predictability in the design, inviting entrances for a livelier atmosphere, alternative routes, peripheral seating with good view, sufficient lighting and territorial markers** are design parameters thought to increase the sense of security. Furthermore, **vegetation should be well maintained and accessible, providing clear views** to increase perceived safety and chance for cross-group interactions in public leisure space.

**Flexible places** are another way to increase the potential for cross-group interactions, according to Andersson (2013), Kahn (2005), Sanei et al. (2018), Varna & Tiesdell (2010). **Designing hints of potential usage, places that can accommodate different uses simultaneously and spaces that deliberately provide several uses and create a sense of discovery** by allowing personal experience to guide the use of a space are considered ways to increase flexibility of use and thereby the chance for cross-group interactions.



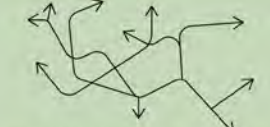



Lastly, the process of **triangulation** is brought up by Whyte (1980), Peters (2010), Varna & Tiesdell (2010). Design elements thought to promote the triangulation process in public leisure space include diverse types of **seating, public art, beautiful scenery, unexpected elements and services such as cafés or food vendors**.



It is interesting to note the contradictions between different design elements thought to increase the potential for cross-group interactions. For example, Peters (2010) state that predictability is an important way to increase a sense of security and thereby facilitate social engagement. On the other hand, Varna & Tiesdell (2010) claim that unpredictable and adventurous spaces are an efficient way to tear down social boundaries. Flexible places are cited by many sources as an important tool for cross-group interactions, and yet clearly programming for activities, safety and triangulation are also considered as beneficial for socio-spatial integration. The conclusion that can be drawn from these dichotomies is that each space needs to be interpreted individually and the results from this literature review should be considered support for interpretive research, rather than an omnipotent solution for how to achieve cross-group interactions in public leisure space. However, the findings can interestingly work as guidelines when analyzing a site through interpretive research. On the opposite page is a matrix of design principles for facilitating cross-group interactions and a summary of examples of design elements found through the literature review. This matrix of socio-spatial design principles will hereon be referred to as the SDP for short.

The findings from this literature review provide insight not only into design of spaces for cross-group interactions, but also for the process of producing them. Public participation in the design process has been described as an important way to increase cross-group interactions in the finished project. This knowledge, in combination with the SDP, informs the Common Ground approach presented on pages 36-37. Creating a democratic way to engage site visitors and promote their input into the design is central to the Common Ground approach. In preparations for such participatory engagement, the site is first explored by constructing a 'site portrait'. This step involves the collection of previous knowledge, site visits and other methods that can paint a picture of the site's social and spatial situation.

After getting familiarized with the site, the SDP is used to geographically map which principles and elements can be found on site - thus illustrating a spatial understanding of the site's social uses and spaces. These socio-spatial analyses are also used to map potential places that can be better designed for cross-group interactions. By interpreting the socio-spatial analyses, a design proposal is created. The design uses site-specific knowledge from the site portrait, spatial knowledge from the analyses and theoretical knowledge from the SDP to propose some transformations thought to increase the chance for socio-spatial integration. By constructing a preliminary design proposal based on outside knowledge and subjective interpretation, a basis for the participatory activity is created. In order to ensure the democratic effect described by Hoskyns (2014), the participants of the following step are presented with tools to understand the proposal that stretch further than complicated texts or drawings. Within the Common Ground approach, a new method for public participation is created called Participatory prototyping, wherein prototypes are used to relay the proposal to site visitors. Prototypes in scale 1:1 of certain design elements are placed on site to create discussion, social engagement and a spatial understanding of the design proposal. Furthermore, the way visitors interact with the prototypes may shine a light on how well the design ideas work in the space. To facilitate engagement, interactive games or similar activities can be used together with the prototypes. By synthesizing the comments and observed behaviors from the Participatory prototyping with previous knowledge found through the Common Ground approach, adjustments are made to the proposal. The final result of the approach may vary - for example it could produce a holistic design proposal, a proposed method for working with the site in the future, or it could be seen mainly as a way to engage with the social life on site. The results depend specifically on the site and the input from users. The main point of the approach is to explore how the site can better provide its users with opportunities for cross-group interactions and promote socio-spatial integration.

SOCIO-SPATIAL DESIGN PRINCIPLES (SDP)						
WHAT?	 <b>COMMON ACTIVITY</b>	 <b>PUBLIC FAMILIARITY</b>	 <b>CONNECTED SPACE</b>	 <b>SENSE OF SECURITY</b>	 <b>FLEXIBLE PLACES</b>	 <b>TRIANGULATION</b>
	Through a sense of equal group status and authorized cooperation towards a common goal, prejudice is decreased and positive social bonds can be formed.	Facilitating people-watching and comfortable co-presence in public leisure space increases a sense of familiarity and shared identity between groups, allowing for more active contact in the future.	Spaces that are easily accessible physically and psychologically motivates a socio-spatial flow of different groups.	With clear views, social vibrancy, alternative routes and territorial clarity, a sense of security enables relaxed interactions.	Facilitating simultaneous co-presence of different needs, interests and attitudes enables sharing of the space across group borders.	Providing an external stimulus creates a talking point and easy segue from isoated public space use to cross-group interactions
	-Places for sports or play -Community gardens -Outdoor stages -Spaces for cultural events -Providing equal status regardless of user needs -Sociability of activity increases gradually along the site	-Diversity of seating -Visual access of people -Public art or similar elements -Temporary events	-Accessible entrances -Orientability -Visual connection to neighboring areas -Softening or avoiding barriers -Interesting elements that motivate movement	-Intimate zones -Predictability -Alternative routes -Peripheral seating with good view -Sufficient lighting -Territorial markers -Inviting entrances to promote liveliness -Well maintained and accessible vegetation providing clear views	-Hints of functions -Structures of undisclosed user purposes for discovery -Open spaces that can accomodate different uses simultaneously	-Seating -Public art -Beautiful or interesting scenes -Unexpected elements -Services such as cafés

Findings from the literature review are summarized in the SDP. This matrix of socio-spatial design principles is used as a theoretical framework in the Common Ground approach (see pages 36-37).



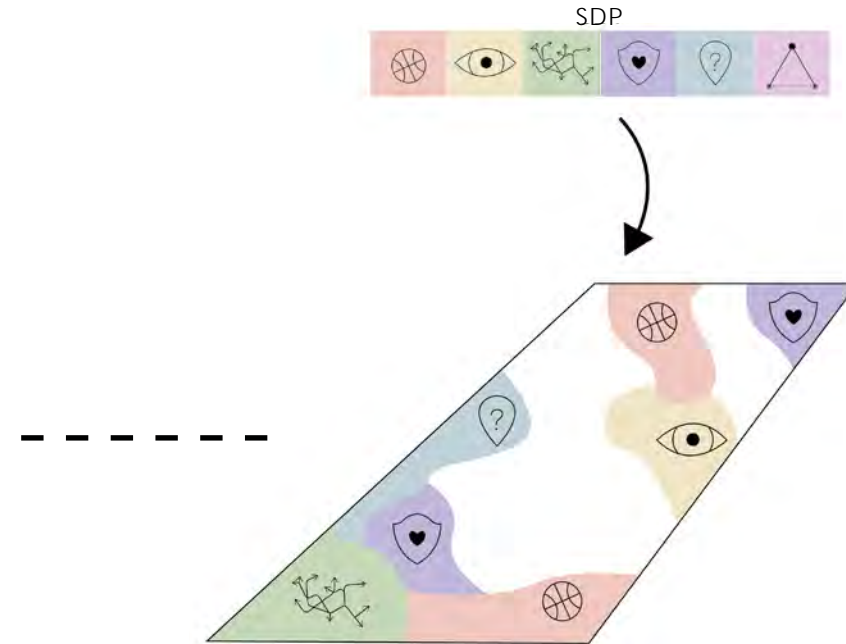
# The Common Ground approach: *Promoting cross-group interactions and socio-spatial integration in public leisure space*

## 1. Site portrait



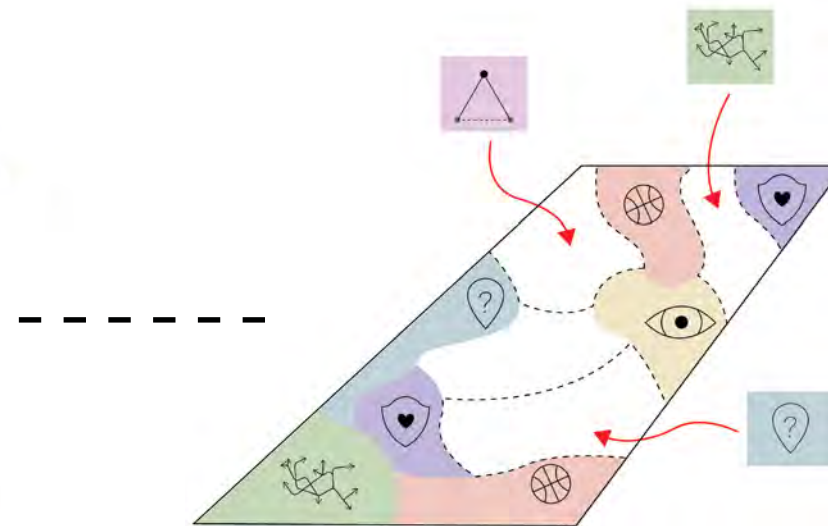
Create a site portrait by collecting knowledge about the site, in order to get familiarized and learn about its current situation.

## 2. Socio-spatial site analysis



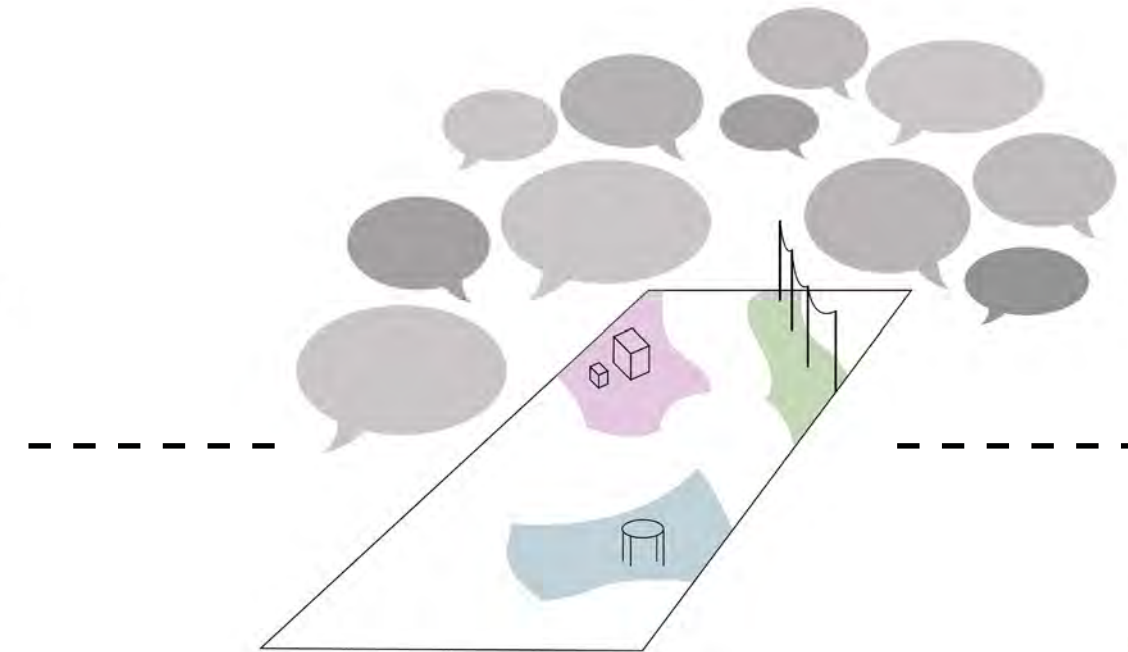
Use the SDP (matrix of socio-spatial design principles) to map which design principles and elements are present on site and where. Analyze the patterns and sketch some potential development ideas using the SDP and site portrait.

## 3. Preliminary design



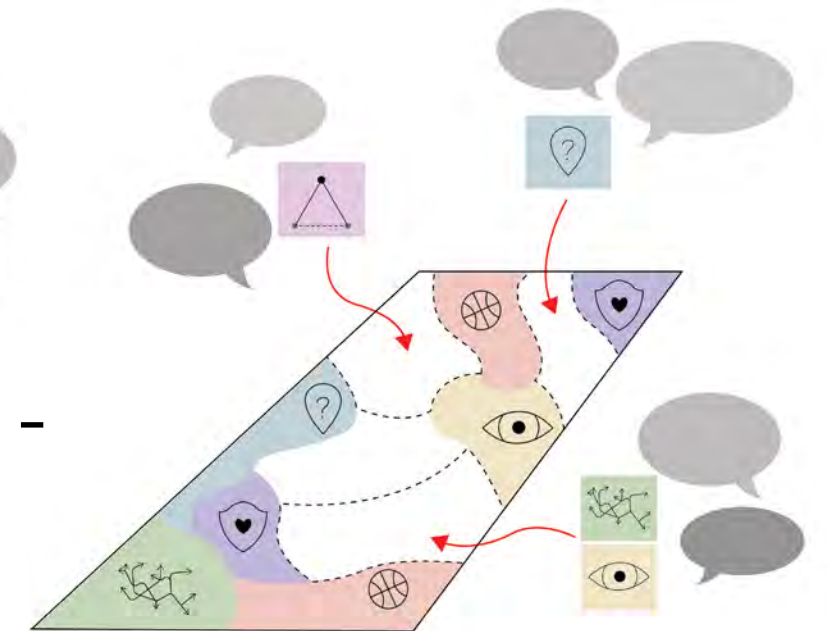
Using theories from the SDP and spatial insights from the analyses, produce a preliminary design proposal for the site. Use insights from the site portrait to tailor the design more specifically to the site at hand.

## 4. Participatory prototyping



Participatory prototyping is a method created within the approach that revolves around letting a range of opinions influence the project, thus creating a site that appeals to more tastes. Furthermore, this central step is used to test the effect of different designs and observe how well they work on site, as well as discussing ways to promote cross-group interactions with site visitors. Using the prototypes to start a conversation is a way to activate the social life on site and let users experience the proposal with all their senses. The Participatory prototyping is carried out by placing prototypes that indicate some design elements in scale 1:1 on site and engage in reactions and conversations about the proposal. This may be combined with activities such as interactive maps or games.

## 5. Adaptions



Use subjective skills to interpret the results from the Participatory prototyping. Adapt the proposal accordingly and produce a final result.



# PART TWO

## Testing the Common Ground approach

STEP 1 Site portrait.....

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STEP 2 Socio-spatial site analyses.....

50

STEP 3 Design.....

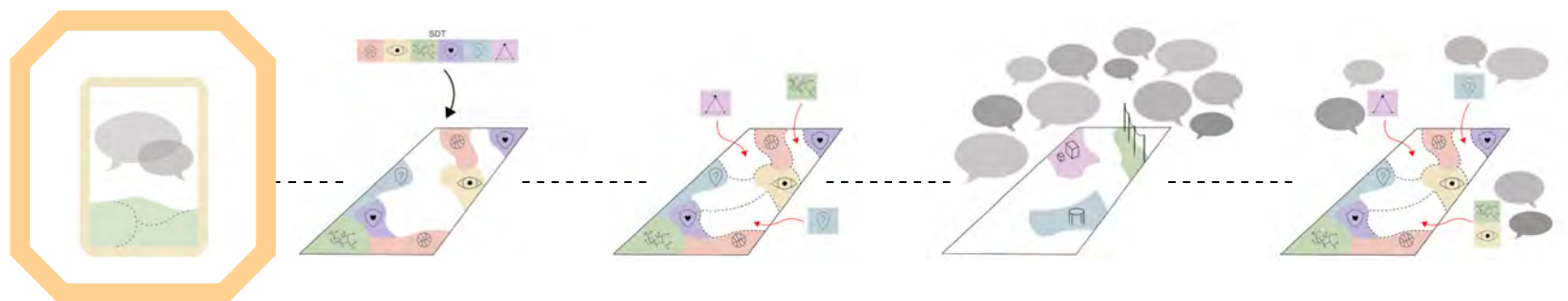
58

STEP 4 Participatory prototyping.....

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STEP 5 Adaptions.....

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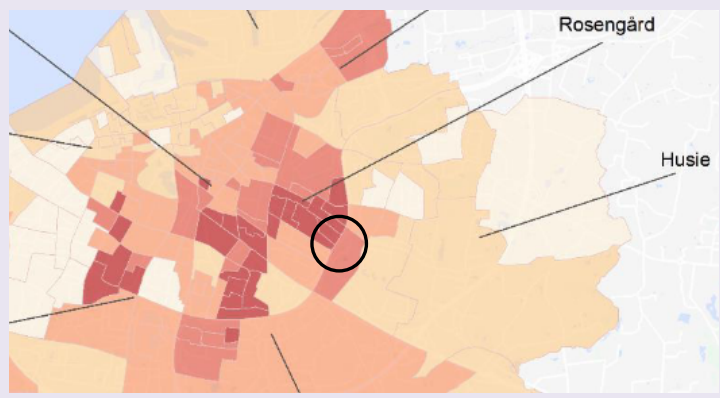


### STEP 1: SITE PORTRAIT

#### Ögårdsparken: the site in a larger context

The chosen site for testing the Common Ground approach is park located in eastern Malmö, called Ögårdsparken. The park lies on the cusp of several borders between segregated socio-economic areas (Salonen, Grander & Rasmusson 2019). The park fits the project’s definition of a public leisure space and during the interviews carried out within the Common Ground approach, it has been described as 'not meeting its potentials', 'a place that is unfortunately avoided' and 'acting as more of a barrier than a place to meet'.

Ögårdsparken lies between the two areas ‘Rosengård’ and ‘Husie’. As is visible from the segregation maps below by Salonen et al. (2019), the parts of Rosengård that neighbor the park to the west all share the same socio-demographic matrix: They represent the highest percentile of non-Swedish born residents and the lowest percentile of purchasing power. According to Dikeç (2019), 80% of Rosengård’s inhabitants are immigrants or non-Swedish born. Furthermore, 62% are unemployed.



Socio-economic segregation in Malmö. Lighter areas indicate a higher percentage of households with high purchasing power. Darker areas indicate a higher percentage of households with low purchasing power (Salonen et al. 2019, p. 34).



Ethnic segregation in Malmö. Lighter areas indicate higher percentage of Swedish-born residents. Darker areas indicate a lower percentage of Swedish-born residents (Salonen et al. 2019, p. 40).

The location of the chosen site Ögårdsparken is represented here by a black circle. In these figures, Salonen et al. (2019) visualize segregation between areas in Malmö based on factors like ethnic background and purchasing power. The contrast between the park’s surrounding areas with respect to these factors makes it an interesting public leisure space to design for socio-spatial integration.



Dikeç goes on to give an interesting description of the rift between Rosengård’s external reputation and internal identity:

*“Media reports typically represent Rosengard as a dangerous place that does not fit in, but [...] many people who live and work there do not think about their neighborhood in this way. Interviews with the residents show, however, that both youth and adults living in Rosengard feel that they are treated differently, especially by the police.”*

-Dikeç, 2019, p. 141

The neighboring parts of Husie on the other hand, display a very different and more varied socio-economic range. With purchasing power within the highest and second-highest percentile, non-Swedish born residents in the middle percentiles, and forms of tenure including areas with either a majority of rental, owned apartments, and owned houses (Salonen et al. 2019). One interesting contrast to note is the diversity of the eastern side of the park compared to the homogeneity of the west. Furthermore, the stark contrast between socio-economic factors on either side of the park is very clear.

### Site visits

Site visits were carried out before looking for further site knowledge from other sources. The visits were guided by curiosity and exploration, with the goal to lay a foundation of knowledge before learning more about the site. During the site visits, a spatial interpretation of Ögårdsparken’s different parts was mapped. A visualization of this mapping is presented on the following page. The identified parts as found through site visits are:

-The northern part, seemingly characterized by offering more clear activities and seating. This area stretches from the park’s most northern point, across a lawn (hereafter referred to as the Northern entrance lawn), a medium sized playground, dog park, a barbeque grill area and another large lawn (referred to within this project as the Open lawn). The northern part is cut off to the east by a lit bike path which seems to be rather frequently used by cyclists. This area was definitely where most people seemed to enjoy the park by engaging in social activities. A neighboring church and schools create a flow of people not only to, but through the park in this northern part.

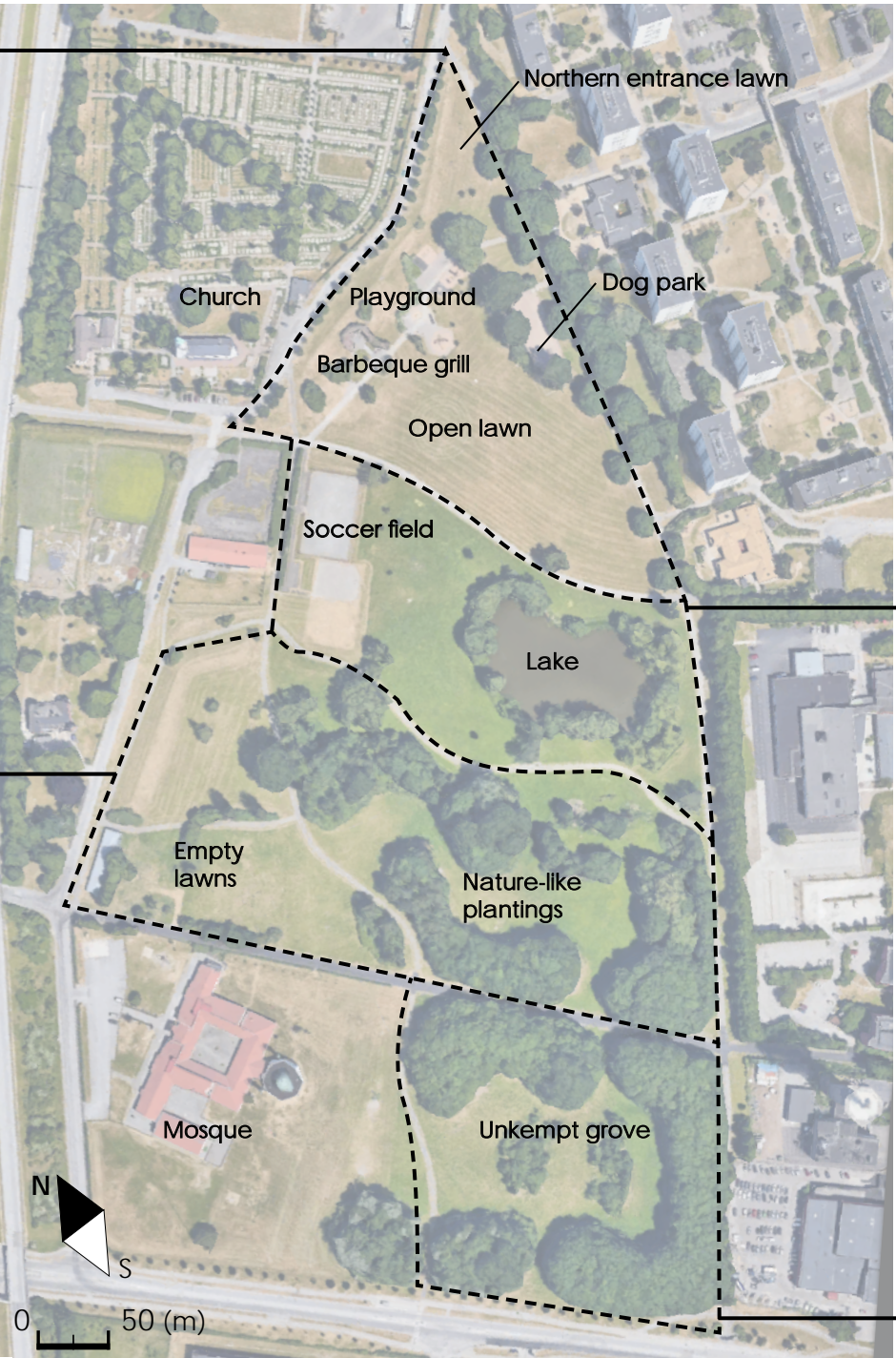
-The lake part, consisting of a belt of high grass stretching from east to west, with a lake in the eastern end and a (seemingly run down) soccer field in the western end. The lake is beautiful and a lot of bird life can be seen, however a rusty fence, bushy vegetation and weeds surrounding it result in limited accessibility to the water. The lake part is divided to the south by a winding path, on the other side of which a curtain of medium high to high vegetation creates a mysterious backdrop.

-The middle part, containing the nature-like plantings which frames the lake part beautifully. This area feels quite large and empty. Stretches of bushy vegetation surrounds a winding open glade. Another winding footpath stretches across the middle part from north to south, separating the plantings from a couple of empty lawns.

### NORTHERN PART



### MIDDLE PART



Background: Ortophoto RGB, 0,25m © Lantmäteriet (2019)



### LAKE PART



### SOUTHERN PART



-The southern part is framed to the north by a large, straight and lit path cutting from west to east. The high vegetation in both this and the adjacent middle part means that the path is framed on both sides, creating an almost forest-like experience. Walking into the southern part, it feels like a strange and arbitrary design. An unkempt lawn filled with sharp thorns and weeds is framed by trees, forming a grove. The middle of the lawn contains some trees, planted seemingly at random. The west side of this area is framed by the same path that cuts through the middle part, opposite which a mosque is situated.

### Ögårdsparken today and development potentials

For this project, interviews have been conducted with landscape architects involved in the park (A and B) from Malmö Stad as well as city district hosts (Y and Z) whose roles includes visiting Ögårdsparken and manifesting a sense of safety through social interactions and links. Additionally, the document "Förstudie Ögårdsparken – Scenarion för utveckling" has been analyzed for further knowledge. The document is a pilot study carried out by Urban Innovation Lab (2016) for Malmö Stad's eastern city district office. The document aims to collect important knowledge and future potentials of Ögårdsparken and focuses on functions and social factors of the park.

In order to find patterns of knowledge about the park, the findings from interviews and the more in-depth document by Urban Innovation Lab are here presented together. Descriptions of the park's spatial and social aspects are presented, as well the development potentials proposed by the different sources.

### Spatial and historical descriptions of the park

By conducting interviews with professional landscape architects who operate in and around the park, some more in-depth spatial descriptions could be added to those found through site visits. The interviewees remain anonymous, and are referred to as A (landscape architect), B (landscape architect), Z (previous city district host of the area) and Y (current city district host of the area).

A shared many interesting background facts as well as analyses about Ögårdsparken. According to A, the park is among Malmö's largest, spanning 225 500 m<sup>2</sup>. There has been archaeological findings indicating life here from around 4000 years ago. The neighboring church, Västra Skrävlinge kyrka, can be found in documents from the 1300s and the nearby mosque was built around 40 years ago. The closest neighborhoods of Almgården (east) and Herrgården (west) were built in the 1960s. A describes the park with similar divisions as found through the site visits. According to A, the southern part is described as rich in vegetation but very low in functions and with nonexistent human activity. A describes that this is a confused area for many reasons and believes the lack of clarity is one reason why

people hesitate to visit this part. The lake- and middle parts are described as somewhat more programed, with some topography (used for sledding in winter), natural plantings, a pond and several grassy areas. The natural plantings in the middle part create a leafy room which is very popular for pick-nicks and semi-private socializing during the summer. B agrees with A's description of the plantings in the middle part creating a kind of micro-climate and acting as spatial dividers. As a result, this is a popular place to have pick-nicks or relax in the summertime. B shows images of a self-made and yearly re-built barbeque grill in this area – a proof of the kind of space users create for themselves in this leafy and semi-permeable room. Furthermore, many visual qualities exist in the middle part according to B, including large old trees, spring-blooming geophytes and the vast lawns which catch the light beautifully.

A states that the pond tends to overflow and create a swamp-like ground stretching across most of the lake part and into the Open lawn of the northern part. This happens when there is rain and throughout the winter season. This observation is built upon by B, stating wetness of the ground in winter as one of the main problems with the park. According to B, there is an historic stream running north-to-south through the current location of the pond. The water tends to overflow and as a result, much of the ground surrounding the pond becomes to sodden to walk or carry out any activities on. B describes the southern part of the park as unpleasant and giving of a sense of unsafety. However, A describes that there is a pleasant spatial quality

around the pond which has great potential to be developed. The area surrounding the soccer field in the middle part is described by all interviewees as very confusing. Parallel paths, unprogramed areas and low maintenance are stated as possible reasons why many visitors feel discouraged to go there. Furthermore, Inre Ringvägen creates a lot of noise in the western parts of the park.

Another issue raised by all interviewees is the lack of complexity in the path system. Little to no lighting is on many paths in the park is also described as a problem. Regarding the southern, middle and lake parts, they are described as having low orientability and sense of safety, but great spatial and scenic potentials. The northern part is described as the most programed and well kept. The church, playground, dog park, barbeque grill and lawn are the major elements to be experienced here. The ground slopes from a high point in the north and down towards the southern parts – this means that the view is very good looking south but quite poor looking north. .

### Social descriptions of the park

Urban Innovation Lab point out that developing Ögårdsparken has been on the agenda several times, and that the park is generally viewed as not meeting its many potentials. One of these potentials can be found in its socio-spatial location. The document clearly identifies Ögårdsparken as located in a social borderland between different groups. As such, it is described as a perfect opportunity for increasing socio-spatial integration:

*“Ögårdsparken lies on the cusp between Almgården and Herrgården, between Islamic Center and Västra Skrävlinge church, between the economically stabile Jägersro villastad and the economically weaker Rosengård. In this borderland, the opportunity should be seized to spare no efforts in creating a green meeting place breaching economical, social and cultural division.”*

*-Urban Innovation Lab (2016), p. 11*

Both A and B agree with this statement. According to B, one problem with the park is the socio-spatial segregation between the eastern and western side. By this, B clarifies that the movement patterns rarely intersect between visitors from different areas, resulting in low to no cross-group interactions. A builds on this by mentioning the socio-spatial segregation between the areas as one of the main issues of the park today, and would like to see future plans take on the challenge of transforming the park into a 'melting pot' where different people can interact. Urban Innovation Lab (2016) describes this division by summarizing what attitudes can be found about the park from the neighboring areas Almgården (to the east) and Herrgården (to the west). In Almgården, the social participation and neighborhood identity is described as low. People from the area depict Almgården as isolated from adjacent areas, thereby increasing internal trust but decreasing external trust and social connections. Positive aspects of the neighborhood as described by its residents include green environments and a general sense of well-being. Negative aspects include insufficient public space maintenance and a lack

of activities for teenagers and young adults . It is clear that people from Almgården rarely or never visit Rosengård. However, residents describe people from Rosengård visiting Almgården. Residents in Almgården are said to describe how people from Rosengård create an unsafe environment . It is described how if someone who is not known to the community is seen in the area, neighbors call each other up and go out together with their dogs to try and maintain a sense of social control.

This description by Urban Innovation Park is interestingly mirrored in the interviews conducted with landscape architects involved with the park and city district hosts of the surrounding areas. On the topic of Almgården's social profile, Y noted a clear distinction between how residents from the east side (Husie) and the west side (Rosengård) interact with them during their frequent walks in the park. According to Y, the residents from Husie tend to stay more to themselves and participate in more 'introverted' activities. Furthermore, Y pointed out that residents from the eastern side – more specifically from the neighboring area Almgården tended to stay in the south-eastern parts of the park, rarely participating in the barbeque grilling or soccer in the north-west parts. Y perceived a sense of fear or insecurity between site users from either side of the park, resulting in a lack of cross-group interactions. One place which Y describes as popular for both sides is the playground, although they were not sure whether it was used simultaneously by residents from different sides of the park. Urban Innovation Lab (2016) on the other hand, describe the

playground as a perceived unsafe space. According to the document, many residents forbid their children to visit the playground, and it is said to be a hangout spot for older teenagers at night – apparently creating a sense of unsafety. The playground is also said to be frequently vandalized and not sufficiently lit. Furthermore, those who barbeque grill on the lawn are described to drive their cars up to the playground to load off material, creating uncertainty about letting children run free on the Open lawn by the playground. Regarding the sense of safety in Ögårdsparken, Urban Innovation Lab (2016) also bring up a problem with the wide, straight paths inviting motorized vehicles to drive through and create a sense of unsafety in the park. In addition, the area surrounding the lake is mentioned as feeling particularly unsafe to visitors. These findings are mirrored in interviewee B's reflections. B states that the wide and straight path between the southern and middle parts of the park is a problem. This is frequently used for driving through and dumping waste in the park. The feeling of unsafety in the area surrounding the lake is also mentioned. Furthermore, the lack of paths lighting is regarded as a major problem – limiting both movement and sense of safety. B also suggest a noise barrier towards Inre Ringvägen, in order to reduce the constant sound of traffic. This point is later mentioned by Z, pointing out the unsafe environment surrounding Inre Ringvägen and that perhaps parents were worried about letting their children play freely so close to dangerous traffic. A lack of plank or fence toward the large road was noted. B also describes the lack of seating as a major issue, limiting the possible points of rest and conversation. both Y and Z also mention the lack of seating groups as detrimental to the social life of most parts of the park.

The playground and adjacent grass lawn is described as very popular by Z. The collected and clear functions are said to create liveliness in the northern part and therefore increase a sense of security. Y pointed out that although there is a formal barbeque grill by the playground almost all barbeque grilling takes place on the Open lawn - signifying a wish to be in an open space and enjoy the sunshine. Furthermore, Y and Z both mention that dog owners are a frequent user group from Almgården and that the adjacent dog park is much too small and ill managed to accommodate for all those who wish to use it. This often results in the dogs running freely on the lawn which sometimes creates conflict with the playground visitors.

Y and Z agreed that while the entrances from the eastern side provide visual contact between the park and Almgården, the barrier of Inre Ringvägen and the resulting underpass-entrance towards Rosengård plays a huge part in the park being unknown from the Rosengård side. According to A, the greatest challenges regarding the western entrances is the barrier that Inre Ringvägen creates. Having to travel through the underpass' current design feels unsafe and unpleasant. Furthermore, the northern entrance is very unclear, though there is great potential for a common entrance point here with a beautiful view. A mentions that there are many local actors in the area that play an important role in the social life around the park, including the Islamic center, two pre-schools in Almgården, the church congregation and cemetery, Botildenborg, two areas for urban cultivation/farming and one rehabilitation home with assisted living. Furthermore, there are plenty of offices and industries directly neighboring Ögårdsparken.



# Development potentials and priorities

Regarding a redesign of Ögårdsparken, Urban Innovation Lab (2016) points to wishes for a Temalekplats (a playground designed around a certain theme such as movement, water, etc, recurring on many places in Malmö) and a park café being expressed from either side of the park. Independently, A expressed similar recommendations, with the motivation that these types of "unique" places may draw social life to the park. Furthermore, A develops on the idea of a Temalekplats by putting it in a geographical context. According to A, the southern part is generally confusing in its design. Therefore, they suggest clearer programming in combination with territorial markers indicating the park's outline, as this would encourage people to visit this part. A also suggests that the rich vegetation could be redesigned to create opportunities for nature play, or a nature-themed Temalekplats. They state that this could create an interesting balance with the more urban playground in the north.

Other activities are also proposed by the sources. According to Urban Innovation Lab (2016), residents recurrently express wishes for more activities directed at young girls and generally more places for social interactions. More opportunities to play soccer is also brought up, as the sport is described as an important part of

the area's identity. Building on this, Z shared their experience of which activities were always brought up in dialogue with residents from Rosengård. According to Z, a wider range of ball sports are of interest to the residents including soccer, cricket and more. Furthermore, Y and Z both stated that although there are many soccer fields in the area, they are often occupied and perhaps more informal ball sports opportunities would be valuable for the area.

According to Urban Innovation Lab (2016), a strong desire for cultural outdoor spaces has been expressed in Herrgården. The document describes Ögårdsparken as hosting potentials for the cultural arena, recreation, leisure activities, social connectivity and places for interactions mentioned as important for Herrgården's development. Another development potential according to the document is an agility dog park which could offer something different and challenging to the many dog owners visiting the park. Using public space for communal cultivation and farming is also stated by Urban Innovation Lab as an important quality to be further developed in the area. Using public green spaces in communal ways is generally said to be a cornerstone when working with social sustainability here. This leads on to another topic which has been frequently brought up, namely collaborations with local actors and possible benefits of communal gardening.

The local actors surrounding the park are brought up as opportunities for collaboration by both A, B and Urban Innovation Lab (2016). One tangible example of how this could be done with neighboring actor Botildenborg (a local food company and restaurant) is brought up by Urban Innovation Lab (2016). The document presents "Trädgården", a project from 2014 that focused on creating green meeting places in eastern Malmö as a potential future redesign for part of the park. The project aimed at using public green space to promote social sustainability. Although Urban Innovation Lab mention that the project Trädgården has been left idle due to economic reasons, the proposals produced within the project is still interesting to explore. One goal of project Trädgården was to link Herrgården and Almgården together, as well as the larger areas Rosengård and Husie. The project's development proposals included a garden in Ögårdsparken, opposite Botildenborg to create a strong connection outwardly. Fruit trees, seating, edible plants and play areas were proposed as strong aspects to add in Ögårdsparken. This is interesting to compare to interviews with Y and Z, which both mentioned that edible materials such as fruit trees or an herb garden would be a certain way to attract people from Rosengård, as these elements are popular within the community. Motivating stronger connections on several sides of the park, A states that the local actors create a sense that the park is somehow a backyard – therefore,

better collaboration with these actors could be beneficial to increase harmony in all park borders. B suggests that since the southern part is today mostly unused, perhaps this part could be cut from the park and developed for more urban functions like a square or small scale markets, to increase the liveliness of the area. Furthermore, Urban Innovation Lab (2016) proposes green connections on a larger scale connecting the park to Husie, Rosengård and all the way to the city center as a good way to promote social cohesion and meet the site's potentials as a meeting place for all. The need to make movement patterns to and through the park is emphasized. This suggestion is similar to what both A and B describe as the major problem with Ögårdsparken's current design. A lack of holistic design and cohesive use results in fewer social interactions, according to A. B builds on this by stating that the path system is lacking and creates uncertainty regarding how one can move in the space, further limiting social use of the park. A believes that the accessibility needs to be addressed in terms of flooding, lighting, seating, vegetation and paths. The separation of functions in the park needs to be re-thought and stronger connections are required. Furthermore, A suggests planning the park on a gradient of activities, with the northern part being most active and the southern part being more relaxing. A talks of the entrances from the east as feeling somewhat private and suggests a redesign to create a more publicly attractive entrance from

<sup>8</sup>English: "The garden".



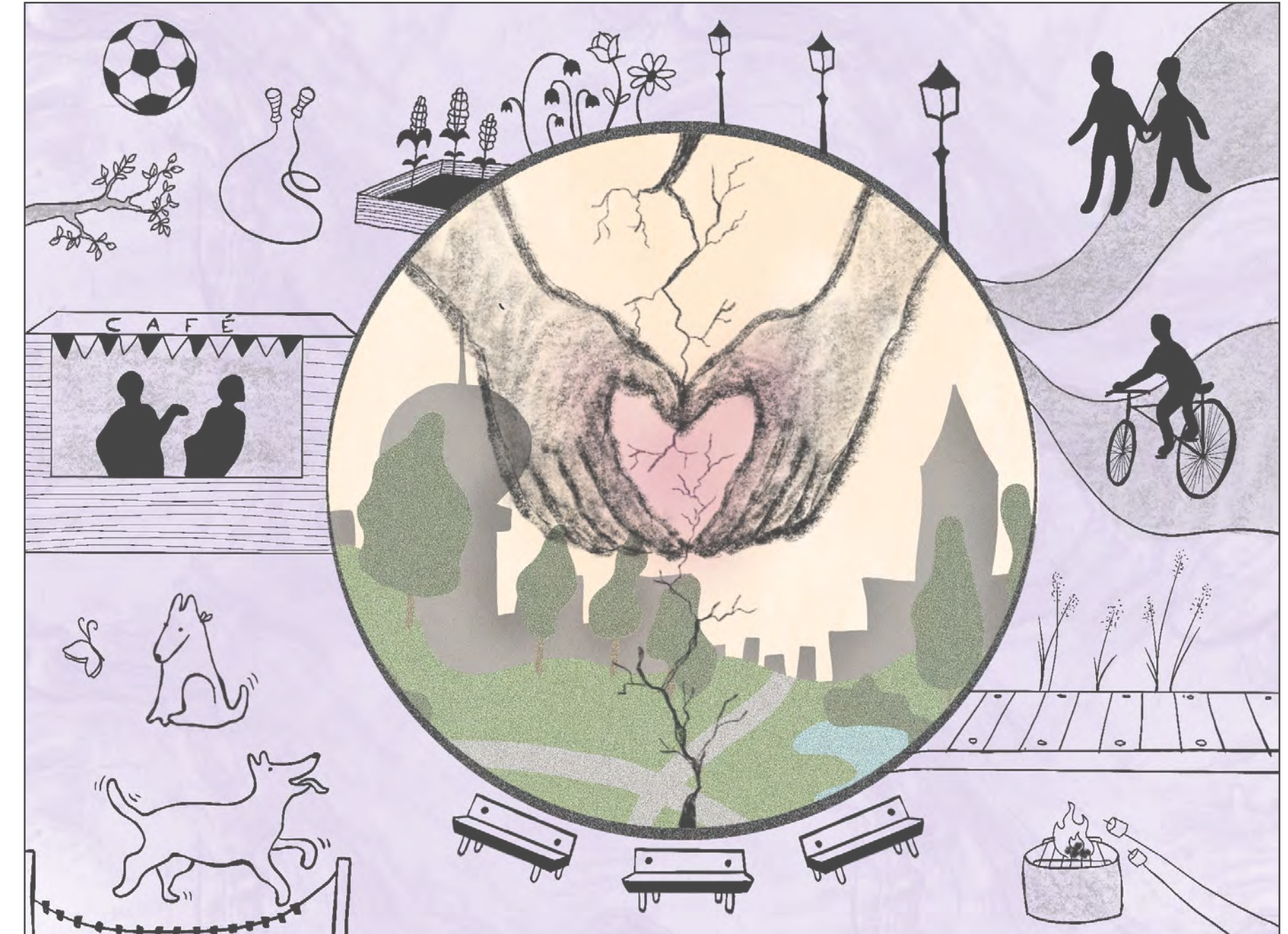
the east. B, Z and Y all agree that the park is in need of more inviting entrances. Generally, most sources mention that a redesign needs to address the sense that the park is a ‘leftover’ space, without any clear intention or spatial cohesion.

Urban Innovation Lab (2016) suggests making space for temporary engagement through for example spaces for outdoor education, bike schools, yoga in the park, outdoor cinema, history walks or group exercise. This idea is mentioned by Z and Y as well, pointing to the Open lawn as a good place to host temporary events. Y also suggest to use the park for communal festivities with the church and mosque around holidays. Urban Innovation Lab goes on to mention how Malmö Stad aims to create attractive, safe and accessible outdoor environments in the city. Spontaneous activities are said to be a tool for increasing social participation. Based on Malmö Stad's aims, Urban Innovation Lab (2016) argues that it is vital to meet Ögårdsparken's high potential for activities and social interactions. The park is described as currently unused and unsafe, creating a barrier between different areas. With the right interventions however, it could become a melting pot for different groups and residents to visit and mingle. According to the document, Malmö Stad's vision for the future includes goal of erasing barriers and creating new movement patterns across both social and spatial borders, as

well as providing more possibilities for cross-group interactions. Urban Innovation Lab points to the park as an important potential where this complex goal could be achieved in a meaningful way. In general, Urban Innovation Lab suggests that there is a clear need to work with the social life of the area – creating more openness towards adjacent areas and a stronger sense of social inclusion. This notion is agreed upon by the interviewees. A explicitly proposes that a redesign of the park should be considered as a way to turn the place into a site of social integration between different groups.

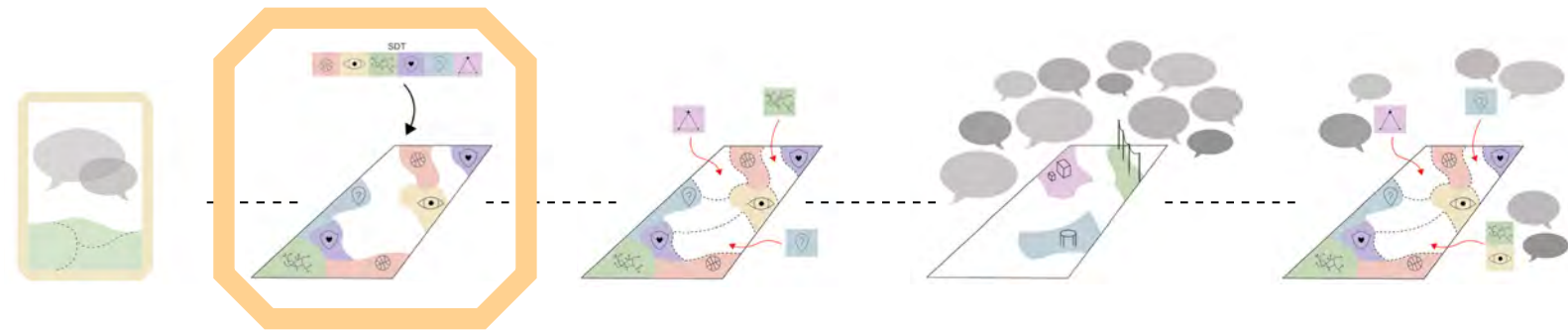
## Summary

In summation, Ögårdsparken is described as holding great potentials for a redesign focusing on social life and cross-group interactions. Spatially, there are many places that could be designed in a more social and inviting way. Socially, the sources point to the park being a great opportunity for increasing integration between people and actors of the area. The need for better connection to and through the park, a wide range of activities, collaborations with local actors and making space for events and social life are the main development potentials mentioned by the sources. This knowledge is brought into the following steps of the approach.



*The constructed site portrait reveals Ögårdsparken to be a place of social division, but with many potentials for becoming a place of social integration instead.*





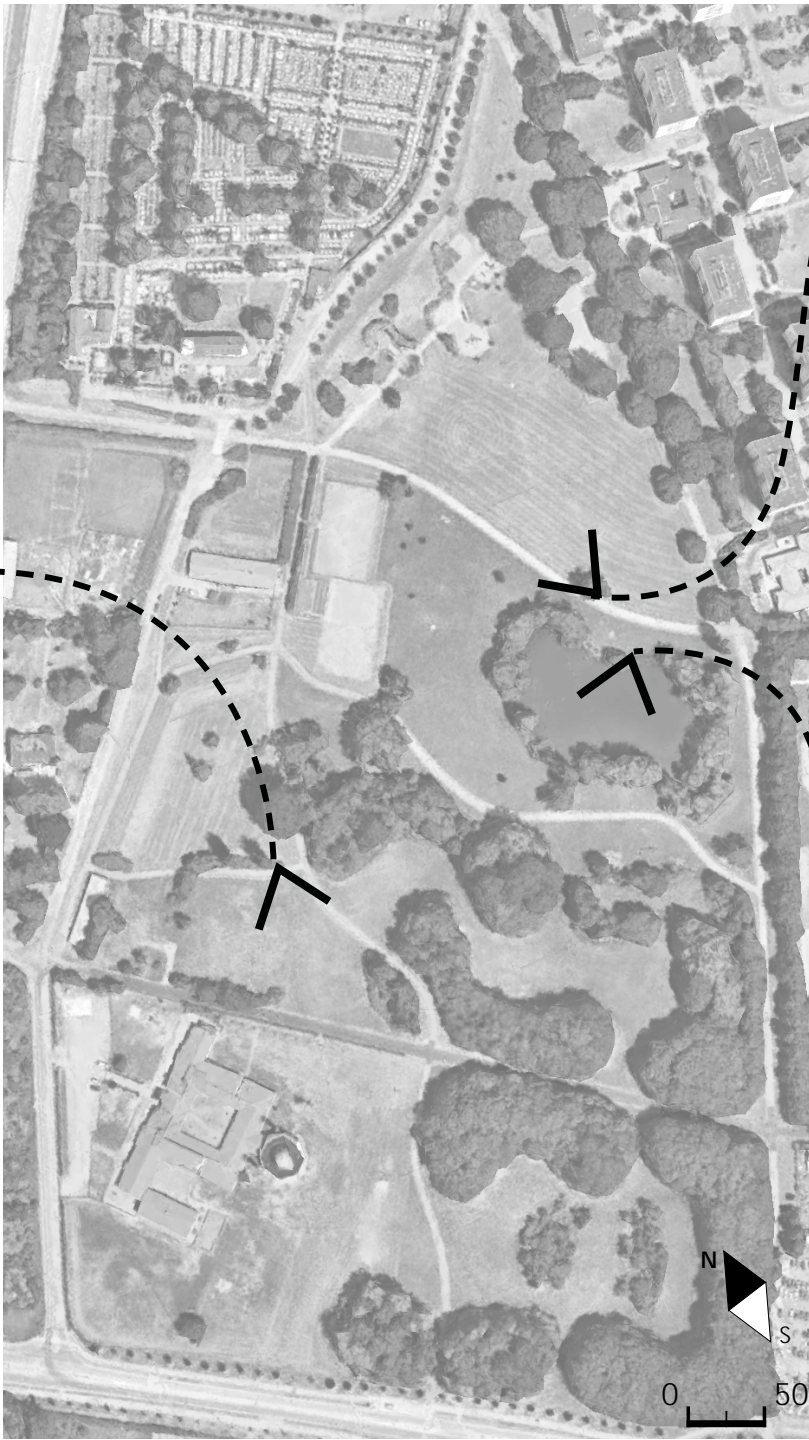
## STEP 2: SOCIO-SPATIAL SITE ANALYSES

In this step, insights from the SDP (see page 35) and the created site portrait are used to interpret the site from a socio-spatial point of view. On the following pages are some illustrations showing how this was done in Ögårdsparken, and what conclusions could be drawn about the park from a social perspective. To the right are a couple of examples from the park, showing different ways in which the public leisure space was read using design principles from the SDP.

As is visible in the analyses on the following pages, a gradient of SDP-elements was discovered, indicating that some parts of the park have a stronger social significance today than others. The southern and middle areas were lacking many design principles and elements from the SDP which could promote cross-group interactions, including Sense of security, Triangulation and Public familiarity. By analyzing the site using the six design principles of the SDP separately and then together, several potential new functions and designs could be sketched out. These findings are used in the following step to propose a more tangible re-design of the park.



*Large stretches of open lawns could have been used for Common activity or more flexible uses. However, these patches are uneven, unkempt and without any place to sit, inhibiting most usage. The only activities observed have been letting dogs run freely.*



Background: Ortophoto RGB, 0,25m © Lantmäteriet (2019)



*This picture shows the Open lawn, a Flexible place cut through by one of the few paths with lighting for increased Sense of security. In the foreground, a bench looking over the path provides an opportunity for Public familiarity, and in the distance the playground, which can trigger Common activities and Triangulation, is visible.*



*The pond, as seen in this picture, is beautiful to look at but is surrounded by a fence, bushy vegetation and without any seating or lighting. Because of this, the potentials for Triangulation, Sense of security and Public familiarity are decreased in this area.*



## COMMON ACTIVITY

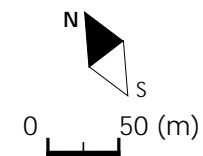
## PUBLIC FAMILIARITY

## CONNECTED SPACE

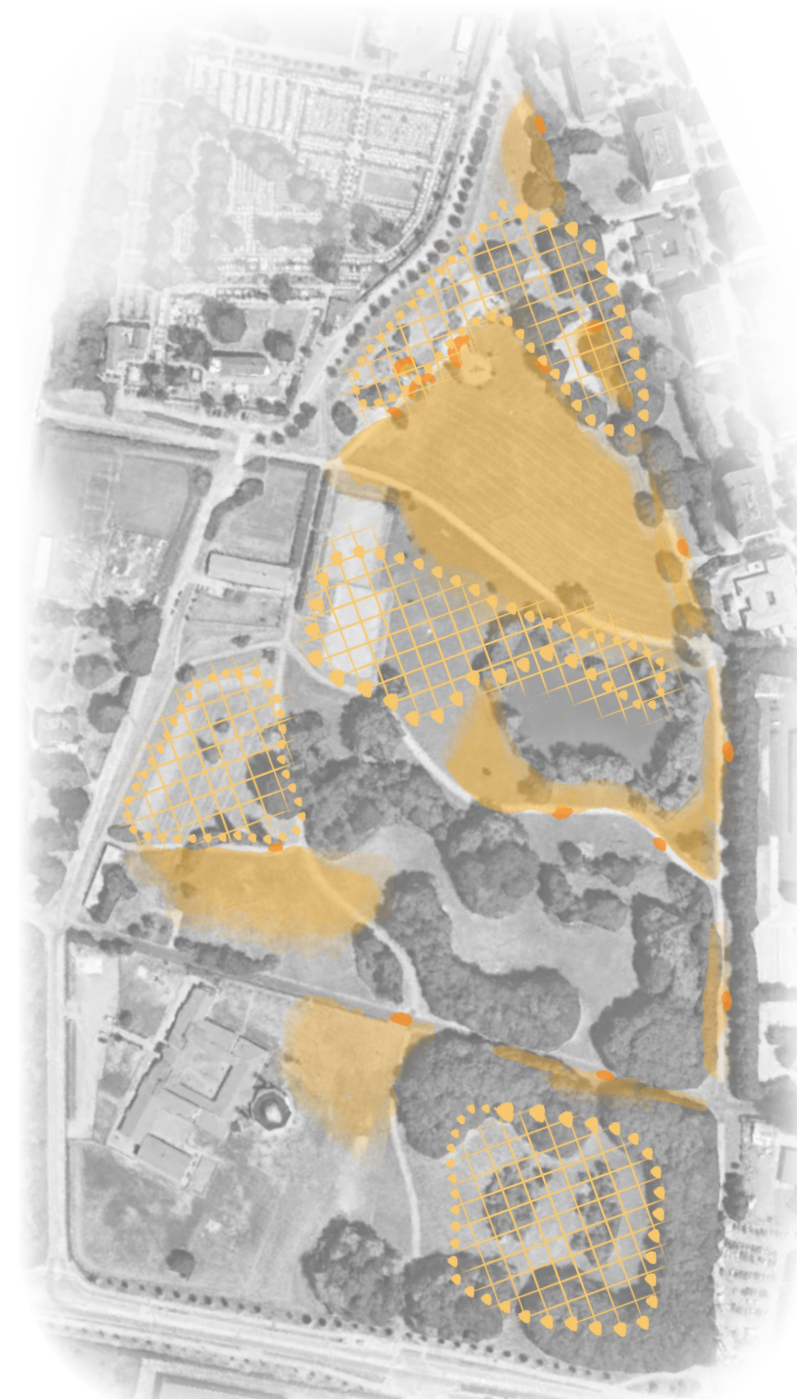
LEGEND FOR  
SOCIO-SPATIAL  
SITE ANALYSES:

EXISTING  
SDP-ELEMENTS

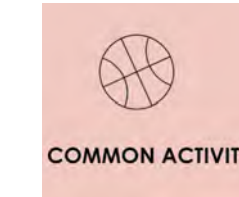
DEVELOPMENT  
POTENTIALS



52



Background: Ortophoto RGB, 0,25m © Lantmäteriet (2019) 53



Few places in the park seem programed for activities that can be enjoyed together. The dog park, soccer field and playground are identified as such places. Regarding development potentials, it would be interesting to build on existing usage patterns and expand the current places for Common activity. This could be an opportunity to add a wider variety of activities, inviting different people to partake. Furthermore, adding opportunities for Common activity in the southern part would be a good way to counteract the imbalance of use and social life in the park. Potentials for playing in the southern grove seem very interesting to explore.



This map shows which areas provide an opportunity for Public familiarity and people-watching in the park. It would be interesting to develop more opportunities around the northern part's edges. Working with a lookout-point of some kind is a possibility here, as these parts are the highest in the park. Having something to watch like sports or the beautiful lake might invite people to stay longer, therefore the lake part contains good places to promote Public familiarity as well. Providing opportunities for Public familiarity in some unused areas may make these places feel more comfortable to visit and integrate them in movement patterns throughout the park.



Adding a more complex path system could be a good way to increase movement through the park. The proposed new paths (dotted) are motivated by considering new and more inviting entrances, natural movement patterns and breaking up areas that today are inaccessible or work as barriers. As recommended in the SDP, a way to motivate movement would be to complement the suggested path with interesting elements that inspire visitors to walk towards certain focus points. For example, art or similar unexpected aspects could be added in the middle part to spark interest.



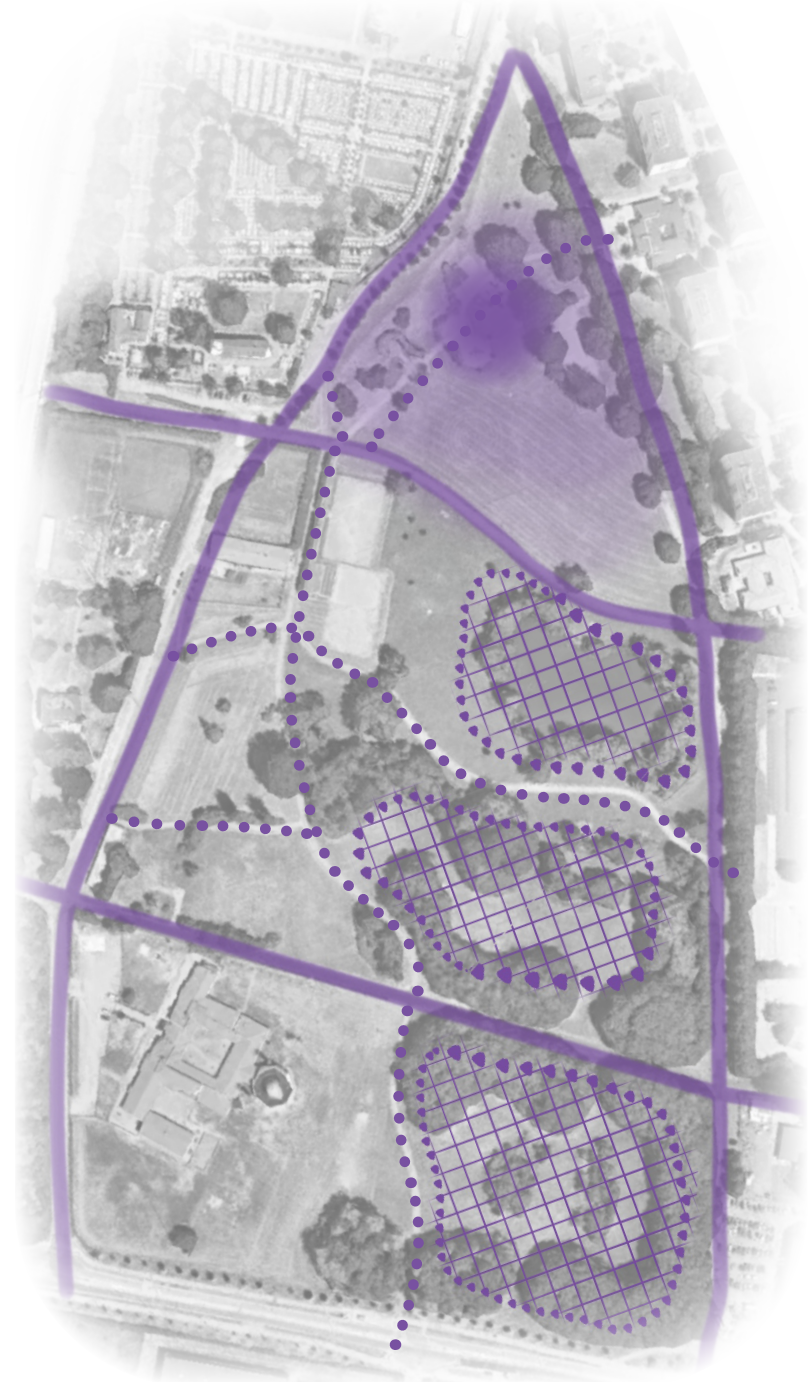
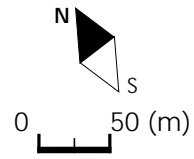
## SENSE OF SAFETY

## FLEXIBLE PLACES

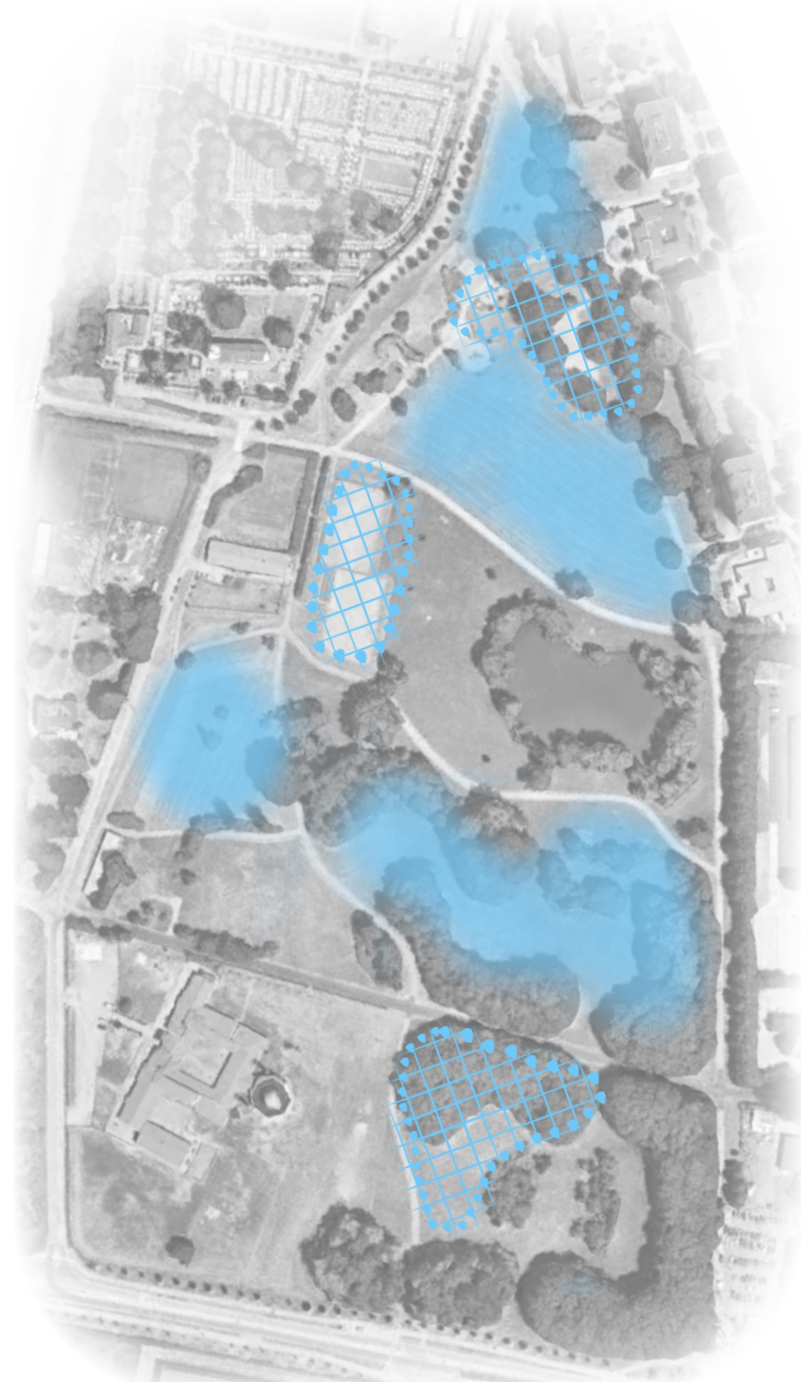
## TRIANGULATION

### LEGEND FOR SOCIO-SPATIAL SITE ANALYSES:

- EXISTING SDP-ELEMENTS
- DEVELOPMENT POTENTIALS



54



Background: Ortophoto RGB, 0,25m © Lantmäteriet (2019) 55



A lack of lighting greatly affects Ögårdsparken, even in places where other SDP-elements can be found. In the Sense of security-analysis to the left, the solid purple lines represent the only paths that are lit. This scarcity of lighting most of the park in darkness at nighttime. The northern part feels somewhat more secure, as the playground is lit and there are territorial markers, good views and liveliness. In general, more lighting seems important along the paths. Perhaps some additional lighting could be added to the vegetation in the middle part to create artful and pleasant spaces. Furthermore, working with all SDP-elements to increase a sense of security around the lake and southern part seems especially important, as these areas feel particularly unsafe today due to lack of liveliness lighting, orientability and predictability.



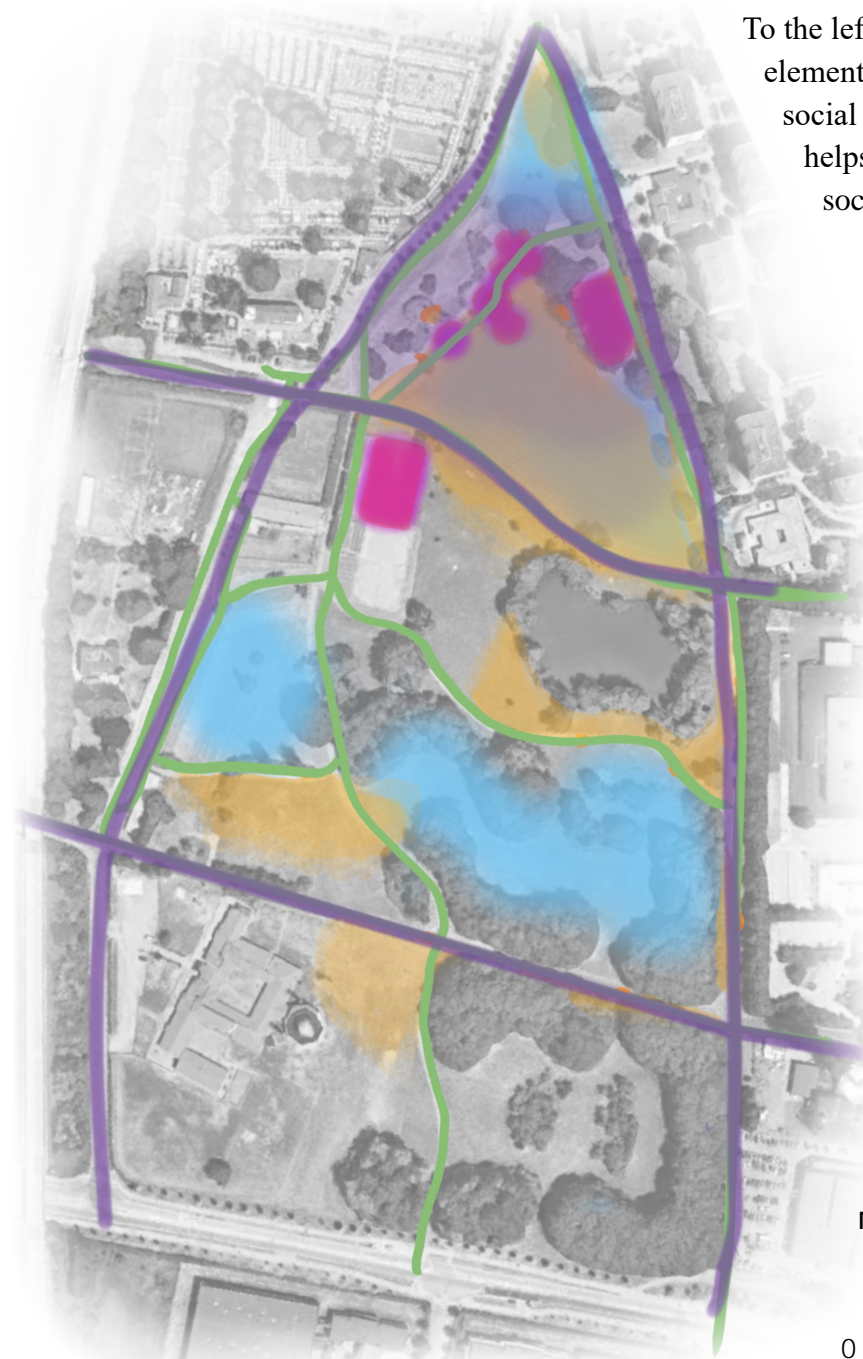
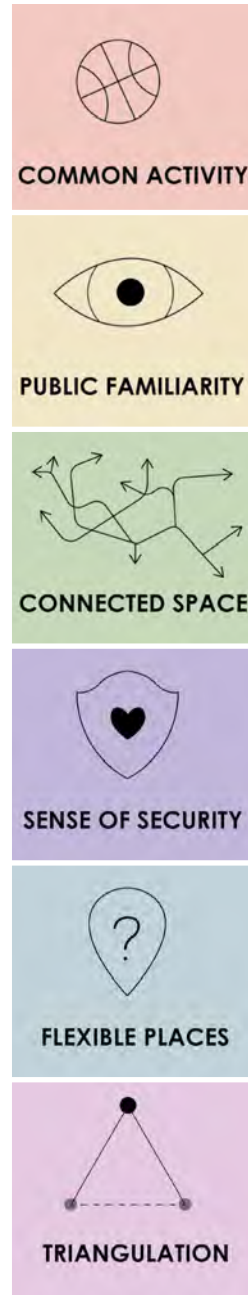
Ögårdsparken has several large open areas, however due to different factors only a few seem inviting or interesting enough to offer flexible use. None of the activities that are available in the park offer a wide variety of uses. This seems like an unused potential, and a development proposal for making the park more flexible would be to adapt the places to accomodate a wider range of activities. For example, the soccer field could be replaced by a multi-sport-arena, and the playground could be designed to invite a wider range of ages and activities. Furthermore, the woody areas in the southern part could be an interesting place to implement nature play in combination with activities for parents.



Opportunities for Triangulation in Ögårdsparken seem to correlate with places for Common activities. Adding a café in the northern part and integrating this with areas for common activity could make this whole part a place for where the triangulation process can happen. The lake could be thought of as a place for triangulation as it is a beautiful scene, however its lack of framing, maintenance and seating makes it a rarely visited place. Adding these elements would increase the chance for triangulation. The lawn in the lake part could also be used for watching events or arenas. Lastly, the idea of a common garden in the park could fit in the western middle parts. This would be a great opportunity to collaborate with local actors such as Botildenborg.



## EXISTING SDP-ELEMENTS



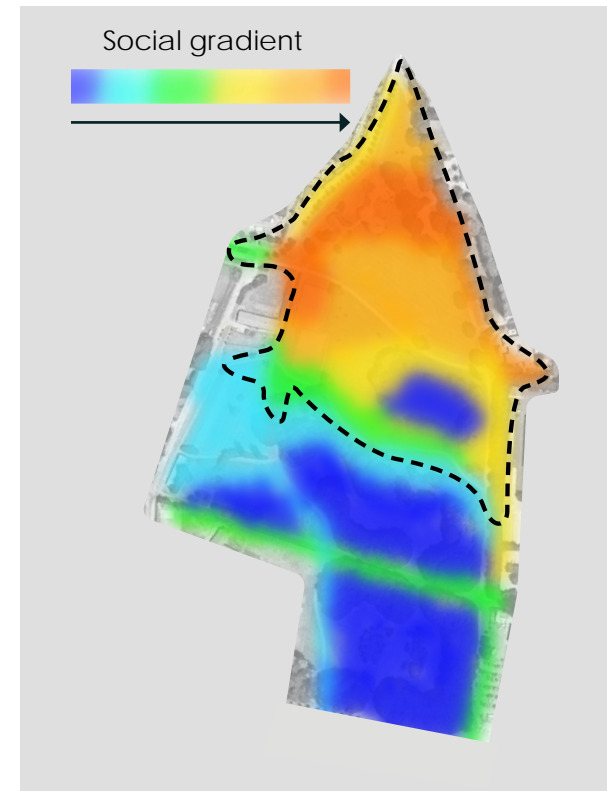
Background: Ortophoto RGB, 0,25m © Lantmäteriet (2019)

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To the left, some conclusions from the analyses of the site's current social elements are shown. By overlaying the different categories from the SDP, a social gradient is revealed within the park (see figure below). This analysis helps to identify which areas of the park has the highest potential to offer social functions today, and which parts are less suited for such activities.

The found gradient reveals an important social structure of the park, and provides a foundation for working with social- and activity gradients in the design.

An area with higher concentration of potentials for social life is identified (see dashed line below), to inform the following steps.

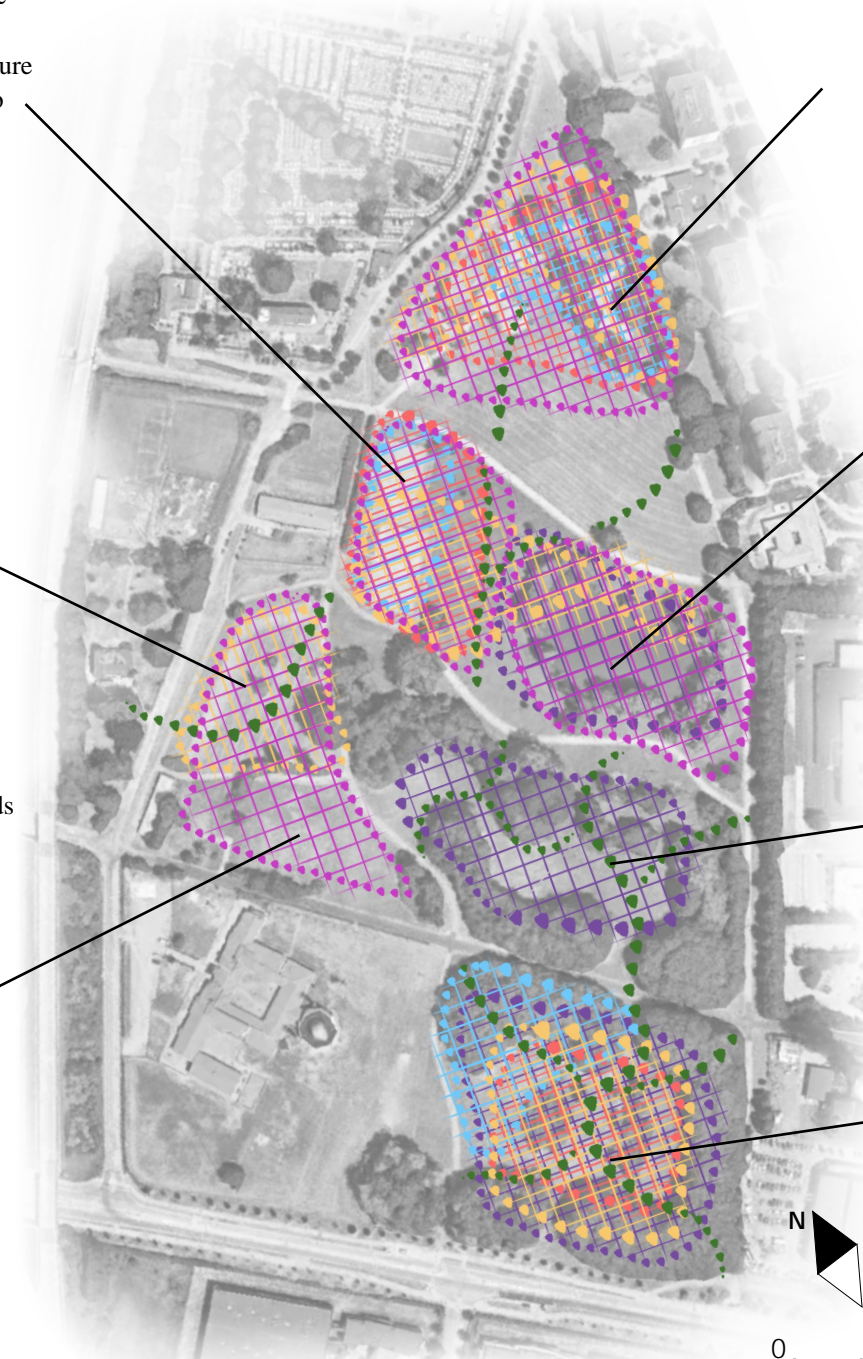


## DEVELOPMENT POTENTIALS

Transforming the soccer field into a more flexible place for common activities is a way to build on the park's existing structure and add new possibilities for cross-group interactions. The possibility of cultural activities could be enhanced by adding a stage and seating, which could double as bleachers for given performances. The new path provides a spatial division to the lake part and can make this more active area distinct from the naturalistic experience around the lake.

As previously mentioned, this area seems like a good place to implement a common garden in the park. Possible collaborations with the restaurant (Botildenborg) on the other side of the road would help to strengthen the park's identity and attract more people. A new entrance could also be introduced towards the establishment, with a path leading visitors further into the park.

Dog agility has been suggested for the park. By placing it on the opposite side of the park to where most observed dog owners walk today, perhaps there might be a better chance of overlapping movement patterns and interactions between different groups.



Background: Ortophoto RGB, 0,25m © Lantmäteriet (2019)

57

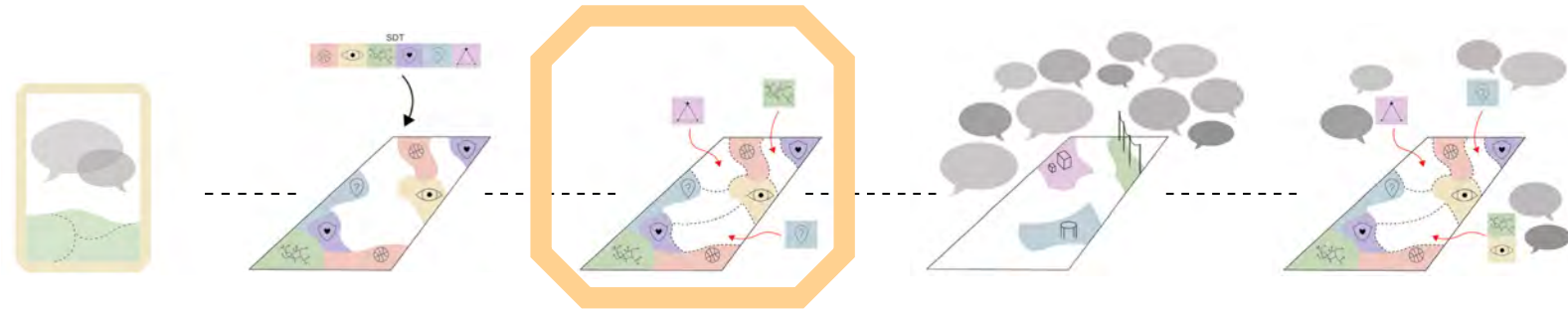
This area holds potential for common activities, triangulation, flexible use and public familiarity. Adding new types of seating and a lookout-point is considered a good measure to take to capitalize on these potentials. Furthermore, developing the playground into a larger, more flexible "playscape" could increase the chance for cross-group interactions. Adding a café and more barbeque grills for triangulation purposes, as well as considering ways to make the northern entrance more inviting could also be beneficial for promoting social behavior.

The area around the lake has potentials for increasing a sense of security, public familiarity and chances for triangulation. By removing the shrub layer of vegetation and thereby creating clear views, all these potentials can be met. Furthermore, creating an inviting and accessible milieu around the lake can improve liveliness and familiarity. By incorporating this area in the movement patterns of park users and connecting it to new paths, the lake may also work as a point of attraction and draw people to spend time in the same place, watching the water.

The woody middle parts are not deemed to be suited for the same intensity of programming as the northern part. Instead this area's naturalistic beauty can be enhanced and made more accessible through smaller footpaths and measures to increase a sense of safety. By combining new light fixtures with some interesting artwork in some kind of "art park", this part could also become a unique attraction for Rosengård and Husie.

The southern part is considered to hold much potential for development. Today, this area seems barely a part of the park. Therefore, adding traversing paths as well as common activities and flexible use such as a nature playground could benefit social life here. Furthermore, creating a strong node via another café or something similar could help to better connect this part with the rest of the park.











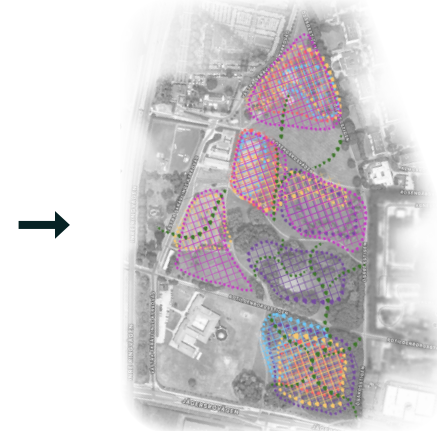
## STEP 3: PRELIMINARY DESIGN

Below is an illustration of how the preliminary design proposal was created by synthesizing the site portrait with theories from the SDP and socio-spatial insights from the analyses. The results from the analyses have been carefully weighted against how the site functions as a whole and the found site knowledge. This resulted in a structural design proposal, shown to the right. The added or transformed elements have been pointed out, and four new "places" of priority have been selected to present with a bit more detail. Number one is the new, larger 'playscape', which is a result of moving the unused dog park and allowing more room for playful activities here. The playscape also allows the northern entrance to become more alive and connected to the surrounding areas.

Number two is a communal garden, which could be maintained in collaboration with Botildenborg, a neighboring local actor. This would also mean greater chance of Common activity and Triangulation taking place in the middle part of the park. Number three is a renovation of the pond. New seating and better view of the area is meant to increase the Sense of security and promote Public familiarity. Number four is a combined nature-themed playground and social seating area for adults. Possibly, this place could host a café or similar actor. For example, an idea is to create a 'Café Summer job', and work with local youths to provide early working opportunities. A similar Café could be placed in the northern parts to increase the interconnected feeling in the park. With higher level of programming and seating in the souther part, Public familiarity and Triangulation may be promoted as well as an increased Sense of security and opportunities for Common activity.



SOCIO-SPATIAL DESIGN PRINCIPLES (SDP)						
WHAT?						
	<b>COMMON ACTIVITY</b>	<b>PUBLIC FAMILIARITY</b>	<b>CONNECTED SPACE</b>	<b>SENSE OF SECURITY</b>	<b>FLEXIBLE PLACES</b>	<b>TRIANGULATION</b>
WHY?	Through a series of equal group status and authorized cooperation towards a common goal, potential is discovered and positive social bonds can be formed.	Facilitating people watching and comfortable co-presence in public leisure space increases a sense of familiarity and shared identity between groups, allowing for more active contact in the future.	Spaces that are easily accessible physically and psychologically motivates a socio-spatial flow of delivery groups.	With clear views, social visibility, alternative routes and symbolic clarity, a sense of security enables relaxed interactions.	Facilitating simultaneous co-presence of different needs, interests and attitudes enables sharing of the space across group barriers.	Providing an external stimulus creates a talking point and easy access from isolated public space use to cross-group interactions.
HOW?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Places for sports or play</li> <li>Community gardens</li> <li>Outdoor stages</li> <li>Spaces for cultural events</li> <li>Providing equal status regardless of user needs</li> <li>Availability of activities increases gradually along the site</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Quantity of seating</li> <li>Visual access of people elements</li> <li>Temporary events</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Accessible entrances</li> <li>Orientation</li> <li>Visual connections to neighboring areas</li> <li>Softening or removing barriers</li> <li>Intervening elements that increase movement</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Intuitive access</li> <li>Predictability</li> <li>Adaptability to changing needs</li> <li>Physical seating with good view</li> <li>Softening lighting</li> <li>Intervening elements that increase movement</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Goals of function</li> <li>Structures of architecture and purpose for discovery</li> <li>Open spaces that can accommodate different uses simultaneously</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Seating</li> <li>Places are beautiful or interesting</li> <li>Unconnected elements</li> <li>Services such as cafés</li> </ul>



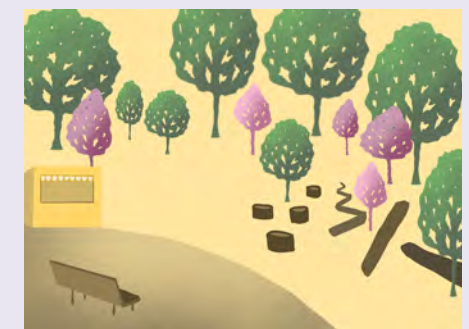
**1**  
The playground grows and becomes a 'playscape' by the northern entrance, surrounded by barbeque grills, seating and a possible café - a social center of the park.



**2**  
A new entrance facing Botildenborg opens the park to a shared garden with cultivation and fruit trees. This creates a meeting place with seating, paved areas and a chance for clubs or communities to host activities.

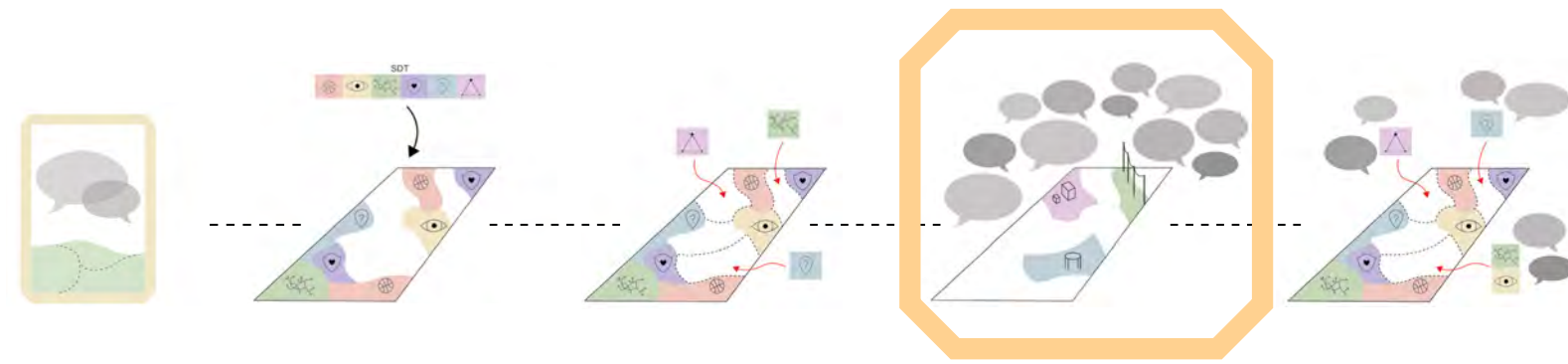


**3**  
The lake's beautiful water feature is made accessible by seating decks and adjacent footpaths, making the surrounding area walkable. The fence and shrubbery is removed and replaced with lower vegetation



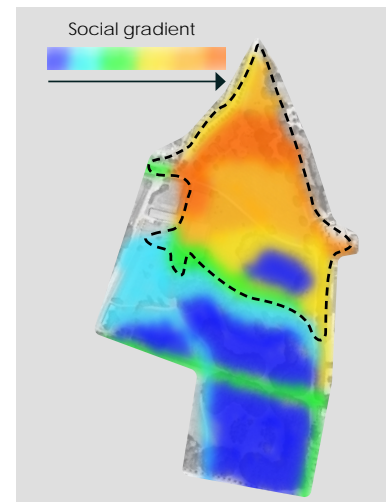
**4**  
The grove of trees in the park's southern parts is transformed into an exciting nature-themed playground, whilst the open area in the middle becomes a place for all ages to enjoy the greenery and a cup of coffee.





## STEP 4: PARTICIPATORY PROTOTYPING

The fourth and most central step of the Common Ground approach consists of Participatory prototyping and collecting insights from site users about the proposal. Recalling the socio-spatial analyses, an area including the northern part and some of the lake part was selected to focus on during the Participatory prototyping, as these parts are designed for most social experiences today and would thus be expected to attract a larger flow of people than other parts.



On the opposite page, a map shows the placement and configuration of the prototypes. They were made not only to represent the design proposal in scale 1:1, but also to trigger interest, curiosity and hopefully the process of triangulation, as described in the literature review. In addition to the placed prototypes, I (the conductor of the design experiment), stood on the Open lawn with a clear view of all prototypes and a sign showing the design proposal. Furthermore, I provided a table with some cookies and an interactive map on which visitors could explain how they tend to use the park.

The results were engaging, surprising and more rewarding than ever expected. The Participatory prototyping was experienced as a sort of “socio-spatial field work”, informing not only about the design ideas but also about social behaviors of site users and their own reflections on what it would take for them to explore more cross-group interactions in the park. The playfulness of the prototypes sparked many children to start playing, which in turn led to parents’ curiosity and consequent contact with me (the experiment conductor). Furthermore, the colors and abstraction of many of the prototypes led people from different parts of the park to come up, stating that they had been curious about something they saw from a distance. This indicates that the physical manifestation of prototypes on site contributed to their tendency to participate in the experiment. Almost everyone who came up to the sign started the conversation along the lines of “So what is all this then?”. This seems like an important result to note, as it indicates that the participants started the interaction of their own interest or curiosity. The power to engage was put entirely in the hands of the site visitors. Being on site for several days added to this power shift, as many people noted that they had been curious for a couple of days before deciding to come visit and participate.

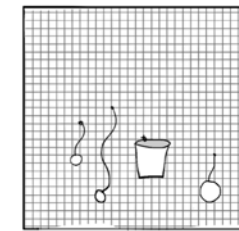
A surprising result was the number of interactions between site users prompted by the prototyping. Some social engagement through triangulation had been expected and planned for, but as many handshakes, shared ‘fikas’, laughs and conversations were observed, the evident power of triangulation caused by this temporary event and the many cross-group interactions that sprung from it became overwhelmingly clear.

Inviting entrance  
Guiding signs and artwork



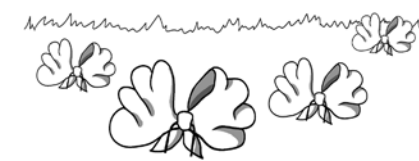
1

Multi-sport arena  
Balls and goals in fence



2

New area (open stage)  
Markers in the ground



3

Low bleachers  
Chairs



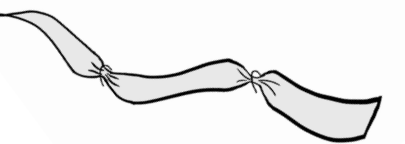
4

5 New area (playscape)  
Markers in the ground



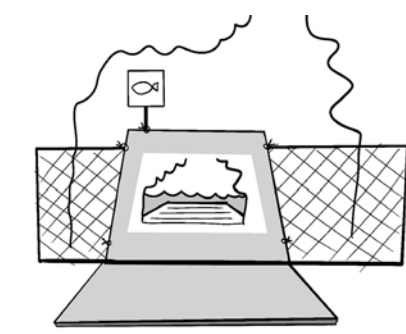
6

Paths  
Ribbons



7

Seating deck  
Future view of pond (visualized)





PROTOTYPES

1    Inviting entrance  
Guiding signs and artwork



2    Multi-sport arena  
Balls and goals in fence



3    New area (open stage)  
Markers in the ground



7    Seating deck  
Future view of pond (visualized)



4    Low bleachers  
Chairs



5    New area (playscape)  
Markers in the ground



6    Paths  
Ribbons





## CROSS-GROUP INTERACTIONS

Here, a small selection of the many meetings and interactions around the project are shown. These images are meant to illustrate both the variety of interactions, and expressed opinions within the Participatory prototyping. Visitors from both sides of the park and from a wide range of age groups, ethnic backgrounds and living situations came up to interact with the prototypes and each other. To the right, some observed patterns are used to categorize the examples of interactions and participatory behaviors. Below are shown some illustrative examples of people striking up new conversations across group borders. Children talking with a group of retired women and teenage boys from Herrgårdén talking to an older woman from Almgården and are a few of many examples.



## CHILDREN

*played with prototypes and influenced their parents by sparking curiosity.*



## DOG WALKERS

*often came up to discuss the project. The dogs were the topic of many new conversations.*



## VISITORS FROM ALMGÅRDEN

*were predominantly dog walkers, older people and young parents.*

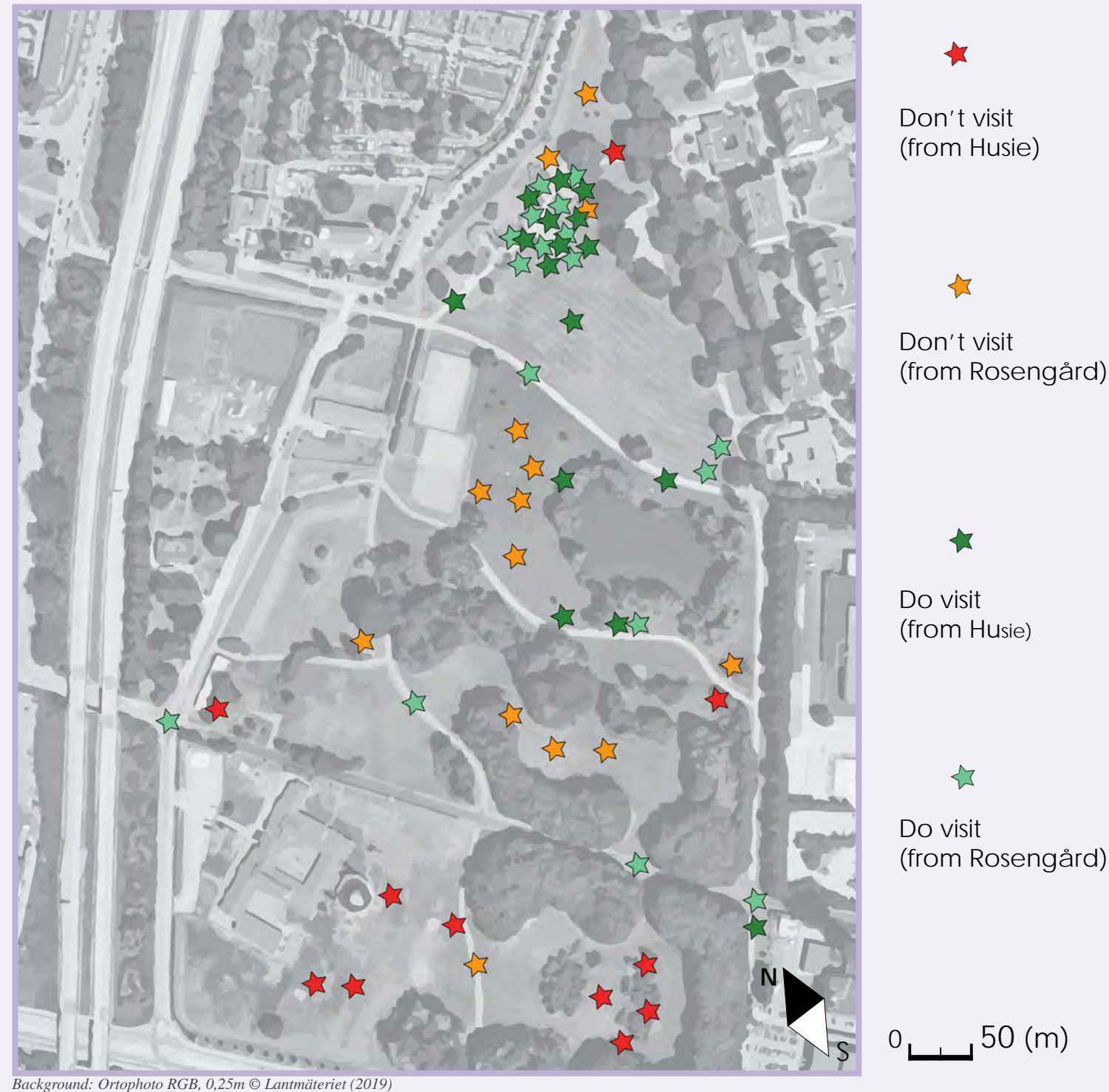


## VISITORS FROM HERRGÅRDEN

*included people with a variety of ethnic backgrounds, large family groups and young couples.*







### Current movement and usage patterns

The Participatory prototyping was carried out during 4 days, averaging about 25 interactions per day. Consequently, around 100 people stopped to interact with the prototypes, and of them around half stayed long enough to have discussions. It was interesting to see that all age groups, constellations and nationalities came to interact with the Participatory prototyping – something which supports the result from the literature review of triangulation being a powerful tool for cross-group interactions. To the left, the map on which people could communicate where they tend to spend time in the park is visualized.

Verbally, almost everyone agreed that they spend time in the northern parts and rarely by the lake or the southern parts. This result was mirrored in the interactive map - showing that people from both Rosengård and Husie mostly visit the playground, barbeque grill or group seating. Except for the playground, the markers for where people spend time were almost exclusively on paths – indicating that most people use the park for traveling through it and not for activities or staying a while. Regarding the least used spaces, results varied somewhat between the areas. From Husie, most responders said that their least visited spot was around the mosque and the

overgrown southern part. From Rosengård, the least visited spot was in the middle part, around the lake and in the nature-like plantings. Furthermore, the rift between Almgården and Herrgården was expressed by many visitors, stating that they rarely or ever interact with people from the other side. When asked if they would have anything against such interactions should there be space for them, most people answered that they wouldn't mind spending time with people from the other side. This was an interesting and hopeful outcome, indicating a willingness among the park users to bridge the social gap. Ways of promoting their willingness to meet new people in the park was also a frequent topic of conversation, as described on the following pages.

Another interesting rift that was exposed during the Participatory prototyping was expressed by dog owners and families of little children. Both these groups relayed how they tended to avoid each other as dogs would frighten the children, or according to some dog owners, the parents would be hostile towards the dogs when they came to close to their children. As families and dog owners were among the most observed groups in the park, this seems like an important conflict to consider when redesigning the park. Only one age group was rarely seen participating, namely teenage boys and girls.



**Comments on proposal and additional ways to promote cross-group interactions in the park**

The Participatory prototyping resulted in discussions both about the proposal in general and what would be required of the park for users to engage more in cross-group interactions. Overall, respondents agreed that moving the dog park in favor of a larger play area was considered a positive measure to take for this result. Similarly, working together with Botildenborg to maintain a communal garden, adding more lighting, barbeque grills and seating were often mentioned as things which would improve the participants willingness to interact with new people they hadn't met before in the park. Similarly, having a café in the park, adding more social seating groups, providing more intimate zones as well as places for events were said by most participants to likely increase their willingness to meet new people here. The nature playground only received positive comments. Some people loved the idea of seating and bridges by the water, some people were worried about the safety of such a redesign. In addition, some were concerned about disrupting the bird life around the pond. Although few comments were actively against the ideas in the proposal, some negativity was expressed towards the general idea of making Ögårdsparken a nicer place to visit, motivated by vandalism being a higher risk if more people should wish to visit the park.

However, most responders were eager to build on the proposal. Summarizing the constructive comments, the following aspects were independently and recurrently expressed as a way of increasing the participants' willingness to meet new people in the park:

- More play areas with room for adults
- More social seating groups
- More intimate zones or rooms
- More barbeque grills
- Café
- Places for events
- Better lighting
- Communal garden

Furthermore, additional wishes regarding the proposal which were recurrently brought up included:

- Some shade or roofs
- Public bathrooms
- More flowering plants
- Outdoor gym
- Dog agility
- Better waste management

*Expressed opinions were collected through open-ended conversations discussing the design proposal and its development potentials for cross-group interactions. Use of the prototypes and the interactive map supported the discussions with regards to how visitors see themselves in the space and how they use the park today versus how they would like to be able to use it. In addition to participating in developing the proposal, visitors engaged in many cross-group interactions and shared their stories of what the site means to them from a social perspective.*



*Photography: Maya Käck, 2022. Talking to the participants was very rewarding.*

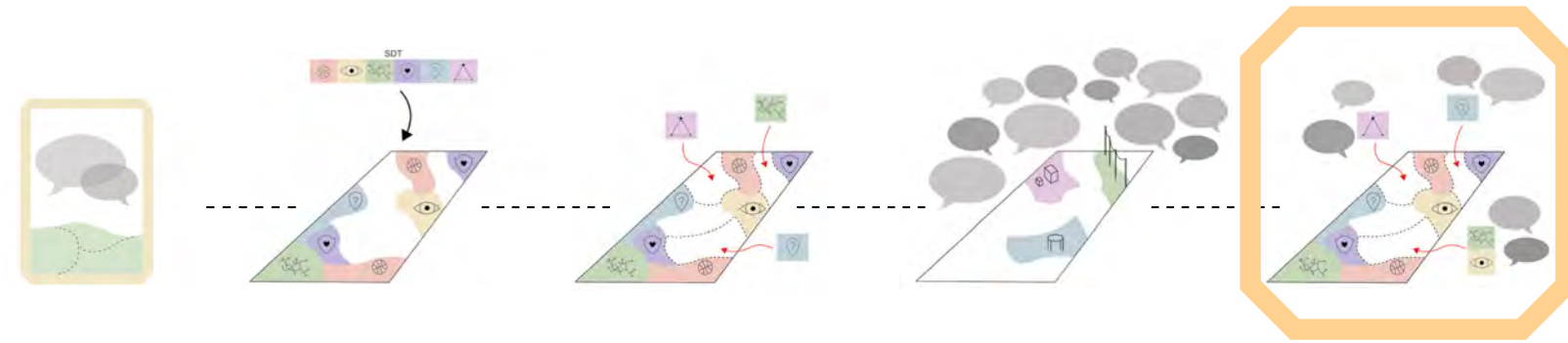


*Referring to the sign supported communication.*



*The interactive map revealed interesting movement patterns and social knowledge about the site.*





## STEP 5: ADAPTATIONS

It is clear from the Participatory prototyping (see step 4) that most park users prefer the area around the playground, barbeque grill and group seating to any other part of the park. Therefore, this area could be considered a good first priority when redesigning the park, in order to catch people's attention and invite them into the redesign phase. Since the park is large and the main issue (as found through many comments and conversations with park users) is social isolation between users and a lack of common activities, a plan for the redesign that not only covers the whole park spatially, but also stretches in time is suggested. By redesigning the park slowly and in carefully thought out phases, users of the park (who were very engaged and expressed excitement over only a few days of participatory activity) can have a real chance to interact with prototypes, raise their wishes and participate in the design process. As the power of triangulation became overwhelmingly clear during the Participatory prototyping, this approach is believed to be a vital tool in bridging the social divide

between the two sides of the park. By following the design principles for cross-group interaction and adjusting them to fit the users wishes, the end result would continue what the process creates – stronger socio-spatial integration between the areas surrounding Ögårdsparken.

In the following pages a phase division is proposed based on results from using the Common Ground approach in Ögårdsparken. More in-depth adaptations are presented only for phase 1. This will allow for the possibility of adjusting coming phases based on results from phase 1. It is suggested to continue working with prototypes for each phase, as the effects on cross-group interactions observed during this step of the Common Ground approach was overwhelmingly positive.

Both movement patterns and expressed wishes indicate that the area surrounding the playground is of highest importance for social life in the park today. By extending the playground in phase 1, the dog



*Photography: Maya Käck, 2022. Continued work with Participatory prototyping is recommended for Ögårdsparken, as this resulted in many cross-group interactions and expressed wishes for more similar opportunities from participants.*

park is removed. Therefore, focusing on a dog agility park in phase 2 could be positive, providing both dog walkers and families with children with something new. During the Participatory prototyping, these groups expressed how they avoid each other. Therefore, building something for each of them early on and possibly connecting the places with similar design elements could be an interesting approach when considering the redesign from a longer time perspective. The southern part would be interesting to develop next. By drastically adding activities and connections,

this part - which today feels severed from its surroundings - could start to play a new role in the park's spatial matrix. An area connecting phase 1 with the dog agility part and introducing the collaborative communal garden as well as the multi-sport arena could be planned for next. In this way, a connected belt of activities and entrances provides the park with a succession of places for social behavior. After these more active parts have been developed, the area surrounding the lake as well as the art park can be created to enhance the natural beauty these parts provide the park with.



Phase division for Ögårdsparken



*Phase 1 includes the most important spaces for social activities, as reported by users. The northern and western entrance are also included in this area. More details regarding phase 1 are presented in the following chapter.*

*Phase 2 consists of the new dog agility park. In this way, users of the dog park that is removed during phase 1 get a new and improved space early on for visiting with their dogs. Adding a fence around the area is an important aspect of the dog agility park.*

*Phase 3 includes the southern area, proposed to include a nature-themed playground, some paths and a new park café with social seating. This is meant to activate the southern parts of the park as well, tying the park together.*

*In phase 4, the previous phases of the park are connected and a new entrance towards Botildenborg is created. The multi-sport arena with neighboring social seating and stage is established. Furthermore, the communal garden with fruit trees that can be maintained in collaboration with Botildenborg is a big part of phase 4.*

*Phase 5 revolves around the pond and includes establishing new types of wet plantings, footbridges, seating and floating bridges. This ties the functions of phase 1 and 4 together and increases connectivity throughout the park.*

*In the last phase, the most intimate part of the park gets adjusted with some new naturalistic paths and sculptures with added lighting. Still leaving the area flexible and largely unprogrammed, this phase complements the surrounding areas and conclude the proposed development of Ögårdsparken.*





## In-depth adoptions for phase 1

Upon reviewing the comments, opinions and wishes collected through Participatory prototyping, a more detailed adjustment proposal can be made for phase 1. This can be an indication of how to continue working iteratively with the coming phases, and learn from the reactions to each phase before starting to adjust the next one.

The preliminary design proposal for phase 1 contains a **café**, **barbecue grills** with seating, **social seating groups**, **lighting** and **larger play areas**. Furthermore, a **communal garden**, **dog agility** and areas for cultural **events** are planned in adjacent areas. The idea of an **outdoor gym** could be combined with the wish for more place for adults at the playscape by providing flexible gym- and playing equipment. The point of better **waste management** can easily be provided in different parts of this social area. Similarly, a **public bathroom** could be suitable in close proximity to the playscape.

The wish for more **intimate zones** interestingly correlates with examples of the design principle 'Sense of security' from the SDP. More such places could be added in phase 1. For example, the benches around the lookout point could be made more intimate, with the help of some vegetation. By using rose bushes, this could also relate to the wish for **more flowering plants**. Lastly, the wish for some shade may be more relevant to more open phases such as phase 2 or 4. In phase 1, there is a quite thick canopy cover which provides a nice shade around the playscape. A pavilion could be a way to add even more **shade** to phase 1, whilst also providing more intimate and social seating. An illustration of these in-depth adoptions can be seen on the following spread.

In addition to adapting the spatial configuration based on gathered insights from step 4, a proposed method of working can also be suggested based on the experiences from Participatory prototyping, presented on the opposite page.

## Proposed method for working with prototypes in phase 1

Within this project, a wide range of user groups were engaged in the Participatory prototyping, conveying their wishes and reflections. Visitors from both sides of the park and from different age groups and backgrounds all contributed by expressing their wishes about the proposal and what could be adjusted to increase their willingness to engage in cross-group interactions. The results show that the temporary and unexpected interventions sparked many new meetings. From observation, these meetings seemed to unite the park visitors as they started asking each other what was happening in the park and so on. Based on this result, a continued work with prototyping on site is proposed in order to increase the chance for cross-group interactions and socio-spatial integration in Ögårdsparken.

When transforming phase 1, it would be interesting to start with prototypes of the café and the lookout point to see how well these unexpected and new types of places may work in the park. If successful, plans can be made to make them permanent. Similarly,

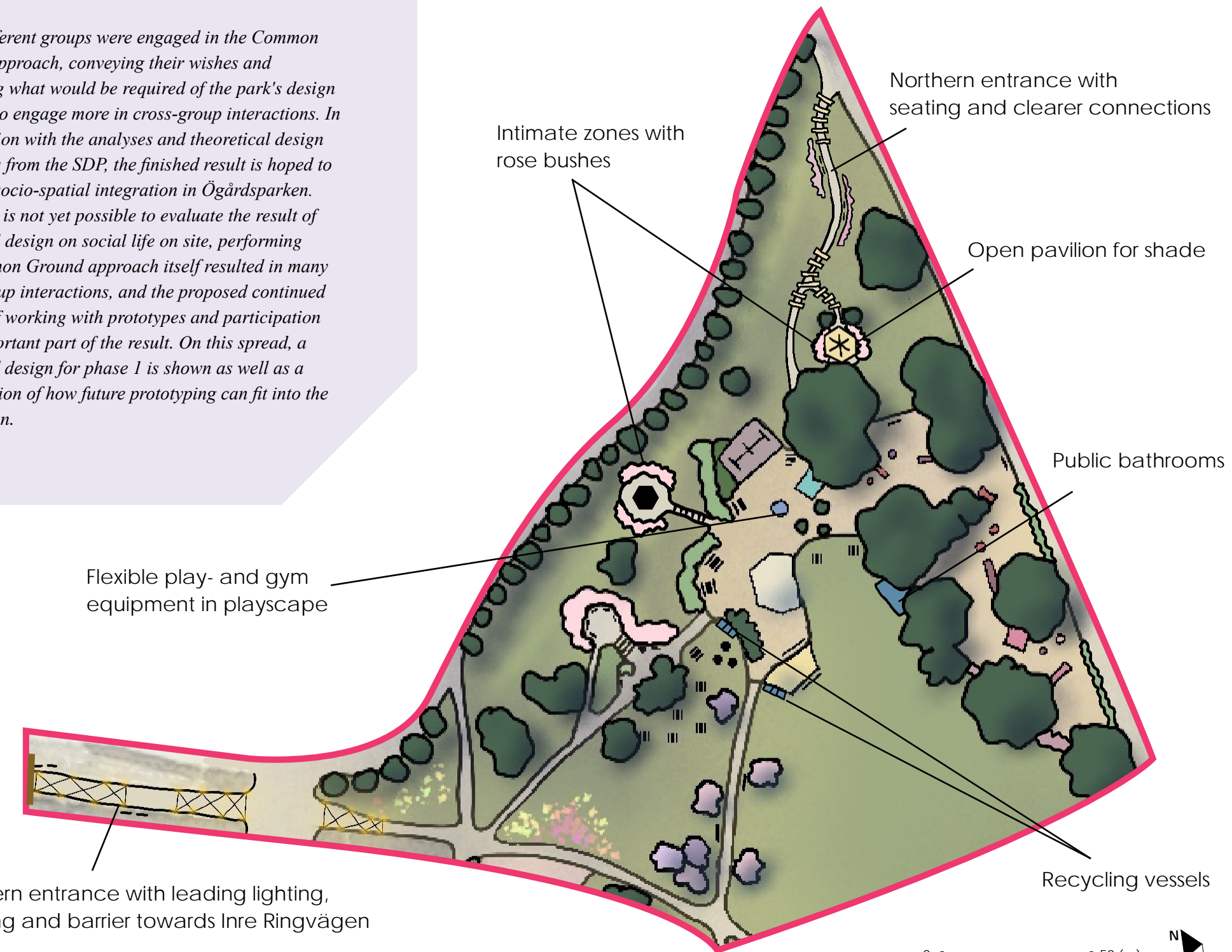
the pavilion could first be tried as a prototype. By collaborating with local community groups, the prototype structures could possibly make use of public participation in the construction phase as well. This could be done by providing supervised building workshops. Such a process could strengthen the sense of pride, giving site visitors a chance to physically create new places to socialize.

The proposed new paths, entrances and more detailed elements such as toilets and waste managements could be constructed while the other parts of the design are tested through prototypes. This is proposed since the wish for these parts have been clearly expressed already through the use of the Common Ground-approach, and could be a good way of showing site visitors that things are happening both fast and slow in the park. Furthermore, seeing some parts of the design being finished while others are being tested might motivate the park visitors' engagement and belief that participating matters.





Many different groups were engaged in the Common Ground approach, conveying their wishes and discussing what would be required of the park's design for them to engage more in cross-group interactions. In combination with the analyses and theoretical design principles from the SDP, the finished result is hoped to increase socio-spatial integration in Ögårdsparken. Though it is not yet possible to evaluate the result of the actual design on social life on site, performing the Common Ground approach itself resulted in many cross-group interactions, and the proposed continued method of working with prototypes and participation is an important part of the result. On this spread, a suggested design for phase I is shown as well as a visualization of how future prototyping can fit into the new design.





# PART THREE

## Discussing results and evaluating the Common Ground approach

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### 3.1 Discussion

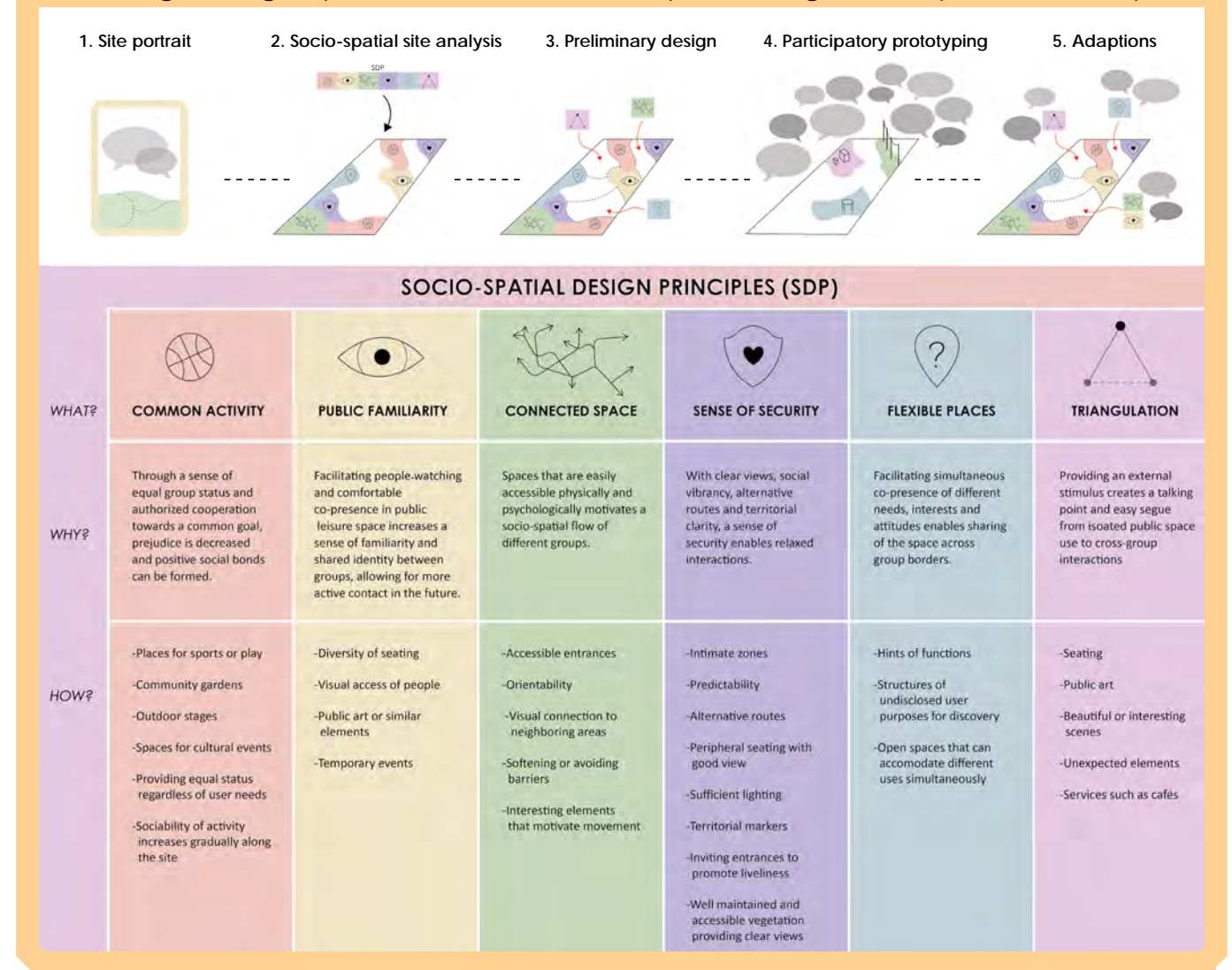
#### Producing a site approach for socio-spatial integration

As mentioned in part one of this project, social segregation is generally viewed as a complex and increasing problem in Swedish society today. Furthermore, the literature review conducted within this project revealed that several sources call for more practical applications of working with spatial configuration for decreasing social segregation. In order to explore this topic, the project sought to answer how public leisure space can be read, engaged and designed for socio-spatial integration.

To answer the research question, a site approach was proposed, combining theory, analysis and public participation. The site approach was created by conducting a literature review which revealed six design principles for promoting socio-spatial integration in public leisure space. The literature review also pointed to a process-oriented way of working towards this goal, namely through public participation. A practical application of the found knowledge resulted in a theoretical framework as well as five proposed steps for reading, engaging and designing public leisure space for socio-spatial integration.

## The Common Ground approach

*Promoting cross-group interactions and socio-spatial integration in public leisure space*



*The Common Ground approach.*



## Theoretical framework

The theoretical framework used as a base for constructing the Common Ground approach was found through a literature review and summarized in the SDP (see page 35). The material for the literature review was selected for its relevance to the topic, and a variety of perspectives were sought in order to gain a broad understanding of the subject. However, it must be mentioned that the scope of this project limits the amount of knowledge found through the literature review. Upon searching for sources, many interesting works had to be disregarded because of time and workload aspects. This means that with a larger scope, more - and perhaps contradictory - theories could have been found on the topic of designing public leisure space for cross-group interactions. Furthermore, even with the current selection of literature, the SDP is a product of synthesizing and interpreting trends within the material. Looking through a different lens may have altered, merged or split the meanings of the six design principles. Similarly, involving more people in the literature review could have given more nuanced results, as the biases of one person with regards to literature relevance and interpretation undoubtedly affects the outcome. These reflections are important to note, as the SDP constitutes the theoretical framework of the Common Ground approach. A different set of design principles found through the literature review could have impacted not only the structure of the approach, but also the outcome of analyses and designs that can be produced.

## Evaluating the Common Ground approach as a method

After performing the Common Ground approach in Ögårdsparken, it is considered to work well as a method for reading, engaging and designing public leisure space with a focus on socio-spatial integration. By working iteratively with a combination of theoretical, analytical and practical techniques throughout the five steps, synergistic effects were achieved. An example of this can be seen in the proposed playscape in the northern part. During the Participatory prototyping, site visitors commented that they would like to see more play areas with something to do for adults, in order to increase the chance for interactions in the park. Thus, the playscape was adapted to also fit some outdoor gym equipment in step 5. What was initially thought to mainly serve the purpose of ‘Common activity’ could now also be considered a ‘Flexible place’, accommodating several uses simultaneously. In this instance as in many others, the SDP, socio-spatial site analyses and insights from Participatory prototyping worked together to inform the results.

Performing the Common Ground approach also revealed some development potentials which would be interesting to explore further. In the case of Ögårdsparken, the site portrait focused mainly on the internal social and spatial structures of the park and its direct influences. However, knowledge regarding how people travel to and from the site, what other similar places are nearby and what qualities the surrounding areas hold was not incorporated in step 1. It would be interesting for future studies using the Common Ground approach to look at a wider geographical area and try to put the site more in perspective with regards to its

surroundings, thereby generating more insights into the context of the site. The second developmental aspect that can be proposed is regarding the analyses, preliminary design and adaptations steps. As experience of space is subjective, it would be interesting to work with several people in these parts of the approach. A plurality of perspectives could strengthen the results of socio-spatial site analyses and transform the designing and adaptation steps to more argumentative processes, garnering more nuanced results. Lastly, a wide variety of ethnicities, age groups and different needs were represented in the Participatory prototyping, from both sides of the park. However, teenagers seemed generally disinterested in engaging on site. It would therefore be interesting for future research to explore how temporary architecture or Participatory prototyping can be directed more towards teenagers and youths.

Although the social effects of the proposed design and development plan cannot be evaluated today, the high level of participation is hoped to generate a space representative of different needs for cross-group interactions. Furthermore, the recurring findings in theory, analysis and participatory comments indicate that the SDP contains useful principles which relate to real-world examples of how people would like space to be configured to interact with new people. It can be noted that even if the theoretical and empirical findings would have been disparate, the Common Ground approach was a functional method for finding site specific knowledge, engaging site users and working with more general design principles for promoting socio-spatial integration. As such, it is considered a powerful tool for promoting public participation and working site specifically in landscape architecture processes, whilst still leaning on research findings and theoretical design principles.

## Reading and designing with the SDP

The SDP consists of six design principles and is used throughout the Common Ground approach to provide a theoretical framework for reading and designing a site with a focus on socio-spatial integration. Using the SDP to read Ögårdsparken by performing socio-spatial site analyses revealed that some of the design principles were largely overlapping, such as Triangulation and Common activity. Furthermore, the subjective nature of analyzing the site socio-spatially made it clear that the SDP works more as guidelines than exact rules. This can be illustrated with an example: two areas which could be mapped similarly according to the analyses actually felt very different, namely the Open lawn and the Northern entrance lawn. Both places could be described as flexible, and both are in view of seating with the possibility of strengthened public familiarity. Still, other factors affect how the lawns relate to their surroundings, which results in two places that are perceived very differently. The Northern entrance lawn feels empty and a bit unsafe due to confused programming and possible uses. This type of flexibility may not be an ideal design strategy for entrances, as it neither directs any flow nor feels like an invite to enter the park. However, the same flexibility of open space works well on the Open lawn, which is more centrally located in the park. Another reason which seems to make the openness of this space work as an inviting and flexible area is that the lawn is surrounded by more clear functions such as paths, the playground, dog park etc. There are also nice things to look at around the lawn, such as the pond and some beautiful vegetation. The Public familiarity made possible by many different benches overlooking the lawn also increases the Sense of security on the Open lawn, and strengthens its general attractiveness.



The reflections that this example illustrates is firstly that no place fits perfectly into the design principles of the SDP, and secondly that different design principles seem to have the potential of enhancing each other, rather than being mutually exclusive. The example of the two lawns shows that subjectivity is an important part of socio-spatial analyzing within the Common Ground approach. In future research, asking several observers to apply the SDP in socio-spatial site analysis on the same site would be an interesting way to study how subjective the analyses are, and how much this informs final designs.

The SDP proved to be very helpful when reading and designing Ögårdsparken. The socio-spatial site analysis revealed patterns and zones that were unclear at first glance, but which seemed obvious when looking at the analyses together. The social gradient which was found through the analyses also seemed to fit perfectly with the expressed knowledge about Ögårdsparken, both from professionals and park visitors. This speaks to the validity of using the SDP for socio-spatial site analysis. In addition, mapping not only the elements that were already on site, but also trying to identify potentials for new social designs of the park was a very important use of the SDP. Through this process, new areas could be discovered and conceptualized with the help of the constructed site portrait. When producing the preliminary design, this analysis of possible developments was a useful starting point. The identified potentials created different zones which seemed to have their own needs and strengths waiting to be explored. By carefully studying each identified area and considering which elements from the SDP could benefit cross-group interactions there, a rough outline of the design started to take place. It is important to note that the knowledge found through constructing the site portrait was also imperative to the design proposal. Without the site-specific needs and qualities found through interviews and document analysis, the

proposal would not have been anchored in its physical reality, but rather a theoretical proposal based on the SDP. This is an important factor to note - when using the SDP for designing, it was valuable to use as inspiration rather than a detailed key to the site's needs and potentials.

In summary, the SDP is considered a fair summation of many relevant theories on the topic of landscape architecture for socio-spatial integration. When used for socio-spatial site analysis, it appeared to generate results which resembled the testimonies of both professionals and site users. The produced analyses also proved to be a helpful tool when outlining the design. It is important however to note that the SDP should be complemented with site specific knowledge when producing a more thorough design. It is hoped that the SDP can be used for future research by performing the Common Ground approach in its entirety, or in more stand-alone ways, such as performing socio-spatial site analyses. It would be interesting to learn more about the development potentials of the SDP, should more researchers wish to explore the topic of landscape architecture for socio-spatial integration. Adding, removing or challenging the design principles of the SDP could be part of an interesting way forward within the field.

#### Social engagement through Participatory prototyping

Within found results from the literature review, most theories on how to achieve cross-group interactions through public space design were tangible enough to fit into the design principles of the SDP. However, theories on the importance of public participation differ, as they don't pertain to physical configuration of space but rather the process of designing. Thus, the Participatory prototyping was proposed as a way of complementing the design principles of the SDP with a process-oriented

step focusing on public participation and engaged action. Furthermore, it is through Participatory prototyping that the design principles have been tested and the proposal adjusted. It also helped to create engagement, illustrate the design to site visitors and start the sought after process of cross-group interactions.

A surprising result discovered during the Participatory prototyping was the emotional effect of being on site and receiving feedback on the proposal as well as seeing people interact with the prototypes. The sense of responsibility was heightened after personally getting to know the site users and hearing their stories. As such, the method worked well not only for participation, but also for increasing the quality of work and sense of responsibility of the designer. In addition to the increased sense of responsibility, Participatory prototyping proved important for learning about the site's social life, what design elements participants would use for cross-group interactions, and engaging the community. Around 100 people came up and started talking, leaving remarks about the prototypes and the proposal. Many people were also observed starting conversations around the sign, meeting each other for the first time and finding out they were neighbors. In many cases, children would play with the prototypes or be curious enough to ask their parents about them, who got curious enough to ask me - and suddenly we were talking to each other. This phenomenon which I have been yearning to explore, namely how physical space can be designed to make us interact with strangers - suddenly happened all around me. I became the subject of my own research, and somewhere in this realization, I found a very important part of my result: The triangulation effect of unexpected prototypes together with public participation has been an extremely efficient way to spark new conversations in Ögårdsparken. By the end of the week, I could see several people greeting each other

who I knew had met during the spectacle of the Participatory prototyping. The Participatory prototyping became something like a socio-spatial field study as well as a sketch in scale 1:1. I better understood my own design, learned collaboratively about the new space my prototypes created with participants and gained a deep understanding of the social intricacies, habits, uses and knowledge of the site. As I felt my sense of responsibility for the site and its users grow, I was captivated by the thought of how different development of public spaces would be if all landscape architects took this journey of exploring not only the spatial, but the social elements of the site at hand.

In summation, the Participatory prototyping showed that triangulation through temporary installations can be an efficient way to get people to talk. This may be especially true in conjunction with public participation, as talking about the present space is much like talking about the present weather - we are all in it currently, tangibly, and it is as much yours as it is mine. Furthermore, the power shift of standing on site for several days and letting site visitors come up without having to travel, plan their day around participating or preparing seemed like an important factor. The casual and open nature of the conversations was strengthened by the fact that the participatory activity took place in a public leisure place. The visitors were in their leisure time, and came up on their own accord. In this relaxed state, the conversations flowed freely and sparked many laughs among the participants. Such a factor should not be overlooked, as this is believed to have strengthened the sense of power among the participants, cross-group interactions and triangulation effect that the prototypes induced. The relationship between participation, temporary architecture and the triangulation effect was a fascinating result and further exploration of the interplay between these concepts would be interesting to explore.



Furthermore, Participatory prototyping contributed to making the Common Ground approach not only a means to an end, but an active part of producing socio-spatial integration. By supplementing theoretical knowledge through the SDP with Participatory prototyping, a site is not only read and designed from a socio-spatial perspective, but also actively engaged. Interacting with prototypes in scale 1:1, discussing the site and meeting each other can influence the perception of what a space can be, even before a finished design is proposed. As such, the approach is considered to alter the role of the landscape architect from an outside designer to an integrated participant, learning together with others about the site and using theory and analyses to translate new knowledge into a proposal for increased socio-spatial integration.

*Possible variations and abstraction levels of prototyping*

The Common Ground approach is meant to be used in site-specific contexts, wherefore a certain degree of flexibility is inherent to all steps as they must be able to accommodate the attributes of the site at hand. The case of Ögårdsparken had several site-specific attributes which directly influenced how the Participatory prototyping was carried out. Firstly, a segment of the park had to be chosen as the site was too large for one person to have good view of the prototypes. This was done by reviewing the socio-spatial site analyses and finding the most social area of the park today, hoping that this would be a part which attracted many people. Furthermore, Ögårdsparken is a green landscape with soft ground, exposed to wind. This impacted the structure of possible prototypes; for example tent pegs were used to fix ribbons to the ground, and heavy chairs were used to prohibit them from flying off. Considering how the prototypes relate to the ground is another way that affects their outcome.

Another interesting aspect of the Participatory prototyping is the level of abstraction presented to site visitors. In the case of Ögårdsparken, the abstraction of the prototypes varied from almost entirely conceptual to

very clearly programed. The more abstract prototypes were in my opinion more efficient in sparking creativity and ideas amongst the participants. It appeared that open-ended designs left visitors filling in the gaps themselves, thus coming up with ideas regarding the proposed concepts. This illuminates how configuration of prototypes can guide the type of comments received. For future projects wishing to spark new ideas and conceptual discussions with the use of Participatory prototyping, it would be recommended to use more abstract prototypes.

The printed material showing the design proposal had also consciously been made quite abstract. By presenting the participants with only hand-drawn examples of the design, the conversations revolved around the proposed ideas and concepts rather than details. In the figure on the opposite page, the design idea of a floating deck with seating by the lake is shown in two ways. To the left, the hand drawn and more abstract illustration that was presented on the sign shows the concept. The conversations sparked from this image were mostly on the idea itself, regarding topics such as whether a floating deck would be a nice experience, or if such a place would increase the participants' willingness to partake in cross-group interactions. To the right, the more realistic rendering of the concept is shown, which was placed on site as a prototype, working as a sort of "window" to a possible future redesign. This image sparked much more detailed conversations regarding railing, color and design of the seating, rather than conceptual discussions.

By having only more abstract illustrations on the sign, the conversations veered towards the conceptual rather than being detail-oriented. This was seen as a strength for this project, however should the site have been much smaller or more detailed comments sought after, more realistic visualizations would perhaps have been more helpful.



*This example illuminates a general reflection of how presenting ideas with a higher level of abstraction to participants during step 4 resulted in greater levels of creativity and conceptual thinking in the discussions. This knowledge can be valuable for future use of Participatory prototyping and similar processes involving citizen dialogue.*



Understanding the approach from a wider perspective

As mentioned, the Common Ground approach combines theory, analysis and public participation to read, engage and design public leisure spaces. The purpose of using the approach is to promote cross-group interactions and socio-spatial integration in such places.

	Inductive	Reflexive	Deductive
Objective	Description	Modelling	Experimentation
Constructive	Classification	Interpretation	Evaluation & Diagnosis
Subjective	Engaged Action	Design Projection	Logical Systems

Swaffield & Deming, 2011, p 37.

Following Swaffield & Deming’s (2011) classification of research methodologies, methods used within the approach can be described both as Inductive/subjective (Engaged action through Participatory prototyping) and Reflexive/constructive (Interpretation through using the SDP). Furthermore, the Common Ground approach as a whole can be described as a Reflexive/subjective method whereby a design experiment is performed on a fixed site, but with variable design, purposefully changing along the process. According to the authors, “*reflexive design generates new possibilities through creative process, and subjects the outcomes to critical scrutiny and analysis [...] In both cases the role of design is to reveal new ‘possibility spaces’ in the world.*” (Swaffield & Deming 2011, p. 40). The authors go on to describe how the subjective end of the matrix indicates a dependency on individual insight and creativity. By looking at how these different aspects come together in the Common Ground approach, it is clear that it is not a tool appropriate to use for objective measurements or data. Instead, the approach could be seen as a road map to follow when a creative method is already assumed, and the main goal of the outcome is increased socio-spatial integration, rather than a particular design or physical result.

Comparing results of performing the Common Ground approach in Ögårdsparken to theories from the SDP

Using the Common Ground approach in Ögårdsparken resulted in a proposed phasing of the park’s development over time as well as a more detailed plan for phase 1. It is hoped that the results can indicate a way forward for Malmö Stad both with regards to design and implementation, when continuing to develop Ögårdsparken. The point of developing the park over time and continuing the use of prototypes is emphasized, as the effect of Participatory prototyping seemed to clearly enhance the chance for cross-group interactions while allowing park visitors to share their wishes for its future design and functions.

When creating the site portrait, the consulted sources proposed many development potentials for the park which resembled theoretical design principles and elements from the SDP. Examples of this include recommendations for stronger connections and entrances, better lighting, more seating with good views, barbeque grills, a café, themed playground, temporary event space, designing along an activity gradient, places for sports, cultural and social activities, and a communal garden. Amongst the recommendations, the most frequently recognizable design principle from the SDP was Common activity. This is interesting to compare with my own findings when interacting with park visitors during the Participatory prototyping. From this experience, it became clear that the prototypes contributed to triangulation effects between the participants. Having seen the effect a third element around which two people interact can have, I feel most convinced of the powers of Triangulation for increasing cross-group interactions. Interestingly, the socio-spatial site analyses pointed to potentials for Triangulation and Common activity largely overlapping. This relationship could be applied not only to spatial configuration, but to Participatory prototyping as well. The common activity which took place for example through children playing with the markers in the ground,

adults sitting on the chairs or the interactive map seemed to increase the triangulation process. For future use of Participatory prototyping, promoting Common activity amongst participants could be considered a way to further strengthen the desired effects of this engaged action.

In addition to the observed triangulation effect, expressed wishes and adjustments to promote participants’ willingness to engage in cross-group interactions in the park was an interesting part of the result. Compared to the site knowledge collected from reports and professionals, the opinions expressed by site visitors were more mixed. As seen in the figure below, the named examples of how the park could increase their willingness to engage in cross-group interactions relate strongly to examples of design elements found in the SDP. This overlap is a very interesting result, indicating that practical application of the SDP may be in line with real-world examples of people’s wishes regarding the design of public leisure space for cross-group interactions. It would be interesting for future research to build on these findings by conducting more theoretical-empirical comparisons between theories from the SDP and empirical studies of people’s wishes for increased cross-group interactions in public leisure space.

- More play areas with room for adults - Common activity
- Communal garden - Common activity
- Places for events - Common activity, Public familiarity
- More social seating groups - Public familiarity
- More intimate zones or rooms - Sense of Security
- Better lighting - Sense of security
- Café - Triangulation
- More barbeque grills - Triangulation

The principles from the SDP which were least mentioned during the Participatory prototyping were Connected space and Flexible places. The reason for this could be the limited scope of the project - however, around 100 interactions were recorded and elements that pertain to these principles were rarely mentioned. Another reason that may be more likely is that exact use of such designs is not always clear, and therefore not what you think about when considering the development of public leisure spaces as a layman. Still, it would be interesting to look more closely at the benefits of the Connected space and Flexible places principles of the SDP for socio-spatial integration and explore whether they increase cross-group interactions even if it’s not the kind of places people ask for.

Knowledge found through constructing the site portrait were also in line with many of the expressed wishes from participants. Examples of this include more seating, better lighting, places for events, barbeque grills, more play areas, and a café. Furthermore, already proposed elements such as a communal garden, multi-sport arena for sports activities, nature play and dog agility were encouraged by the participants of step 4. This could be a result of the park having very clear needs and potentials. It could also be in part due to the sources used to collect site knowledge having well-based arguments, built on previous citizen dialogue. If this is the case, it still suggests that the potentials and needs of the site are quite clear, as they are repeated independently of each other. Regardless, the knowledge found through Participatory prototyping seems to be supported by the collected site knowledge as well as by theories found in the SDP. This strengthens the proposal and can be seen as a well-grounded start for Malmö Stad’s future work with the park.



### 3.2 Conclusions and final comments

In conclusion, this project sought answers to how public leisure space can be read, engaged and designed for socio-spatial integration. This was done by exploring theories and practical applications on the subject - synthesizing a literature review into a theoretical framework (the SDP) and creating a practically applicable site approach.

The proposed Common Ground approach combines theory, analysis and public participation to promote cross group interactions and socio-spatial integration. Performing the Common Ground approach in Ögårdsparken revealed the SDP to be a powerful tool for reading and designing the site. Furthermore, using the created method for public participation (Participatory prototyping) promoted cross-group interactions, knowledge about the site's socio-spatial qualities as well as participatory and social engagement from wide range of user groups. As such, the Common Ground approach is considered a productive tool for reading, engaging and designing public leisure space for socio-spatial integration.

I would like to end this project with some personal reflections and thoughts on the future role of the landscape architect. When I first started wondering about the potentials of public leisure space for promoting socio-spatial integration, theoretical knowledge was all I envisioned to explore. Although I found many different sources discussing how participatory processes and configuration of space can be used for this goal, an in-depth synthesis of public participation methods and theoretical design principles for socio-spatial integration was difficult to find. As I pondered such an intersection, I also started envisioning which synergistic effects this could produce, in addition to design proposals for socio-spatial integration. What could a combination of theoretical design principles and public participation create together, in the hands of a landscape architect?

Exploring the concept of a site approach and how to relate theoretical knowledge to site, visitors and operating as a landscape architect was a transformative journey. Within this project, a deeper significance of theories on promoting socio-spatial integration were uncovered by finding a practical application. The task of designing my own approach forced the theoretical framework to be vastly challenged, re-worked and evolved. In addition to developing my understanding of practical knowledge, performing the Common Ground approach produced results I could never have anticipated. By placing myself within not only the physical space under investigation, but also the social matrix of the site, the approach seemed to produce results extending beyond classic landscape architecture. The social aspects of the approach generated knowledge and emotional commitment to the social life of the site, in addition to spatial insights and results.

This made me reflect on the role of Landscape architects as not only objective designers, but as a persons with emotional ties to sites, projects and processes as well. Continuing to develop subjective approaches that play on the interpretative and personal strengths of the Landscape architect as well as technical and theoretical ones could be a powerful tool for future social dimensions of Landscape architecture.

Furthermore, this project has strengthened my belief that social aspects in general and socio-spatial integration in particular cannot be considered secondary topics for the field of landscape architecture. The social divide in society poses great threats to the welfare of our world today, as described in the initial pages of this project. Although bridging social gaps requires much more than the efforts of landscape architects, not making use of the many ways to work towards socio-spatial integration explored within this project means that an important potential of the landscape architect is neglected. Hopefully these potentials can be recognized, and more ways of working towards socio-spatial integration within the field of landscape architecture can be developed in the future.



# THE END



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# EPILOGUE

## Lindens torg in Kungsbacka

This epilogue has been added as a complement to the Master's project "Common Ground" to shed some light on a few dimensions of the proposed Common Ground approach which were impossible to explore in the original case. In Ögårdsparken, the approach was used to determine possible future transformations for a large, green area located outside of the city centre and by a clear border, dividing two areas both geographically and socio-demographically. All these aspects play part in the constructed site portrait and the way the approach was used. By applying the approach to a site with different attributes, some interesting insights into the adaptability of the Common Ground approach have been explored within this chapter.

Due to scope, availability and planning issues, this chapter could not be incorporated in the original project as a fair comparison to the original case. These pages can therefore be seen as an epilogue to the project "Common Ground". In that capacity, this chapter may illuminate the way the Common Ground approach can be adjusted to fit different scenarios. A short reflection on this aspect of the approach is added at the end of the epilogue.

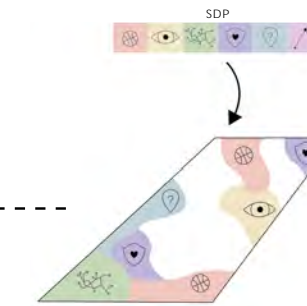
The site Lindens torg was selected in collaboration with Kungsbacka municipality. On the following pages, the steps of the Common Ground approach are presented as well as a reflection on the adaptability of the approach to different site specific qualities.

### The Common Ground approach: *Promoting cross-group interactions and socio-spatial integration in public leisure space*

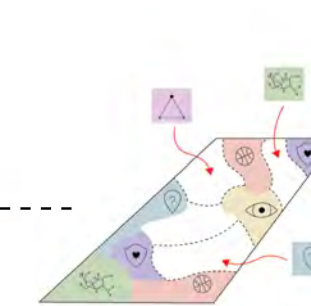
#### 1. Site portrait



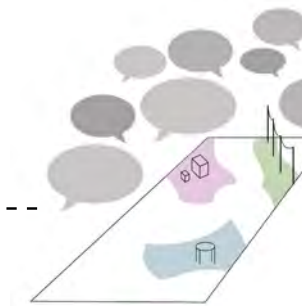
#### 2. Socio-spatial site analysis



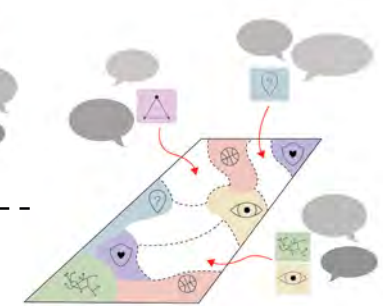
#### 3. Preliminary design



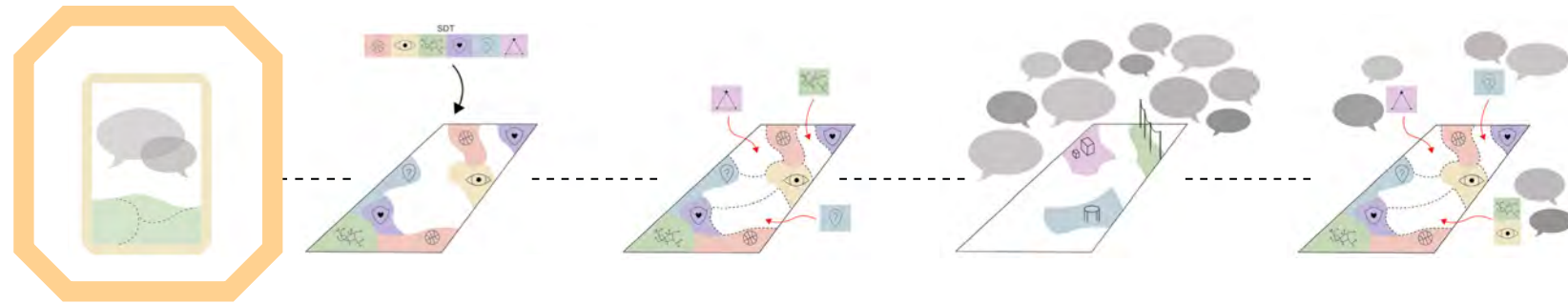
#### 4. Participatory prototyping



#### 5. Adaptions





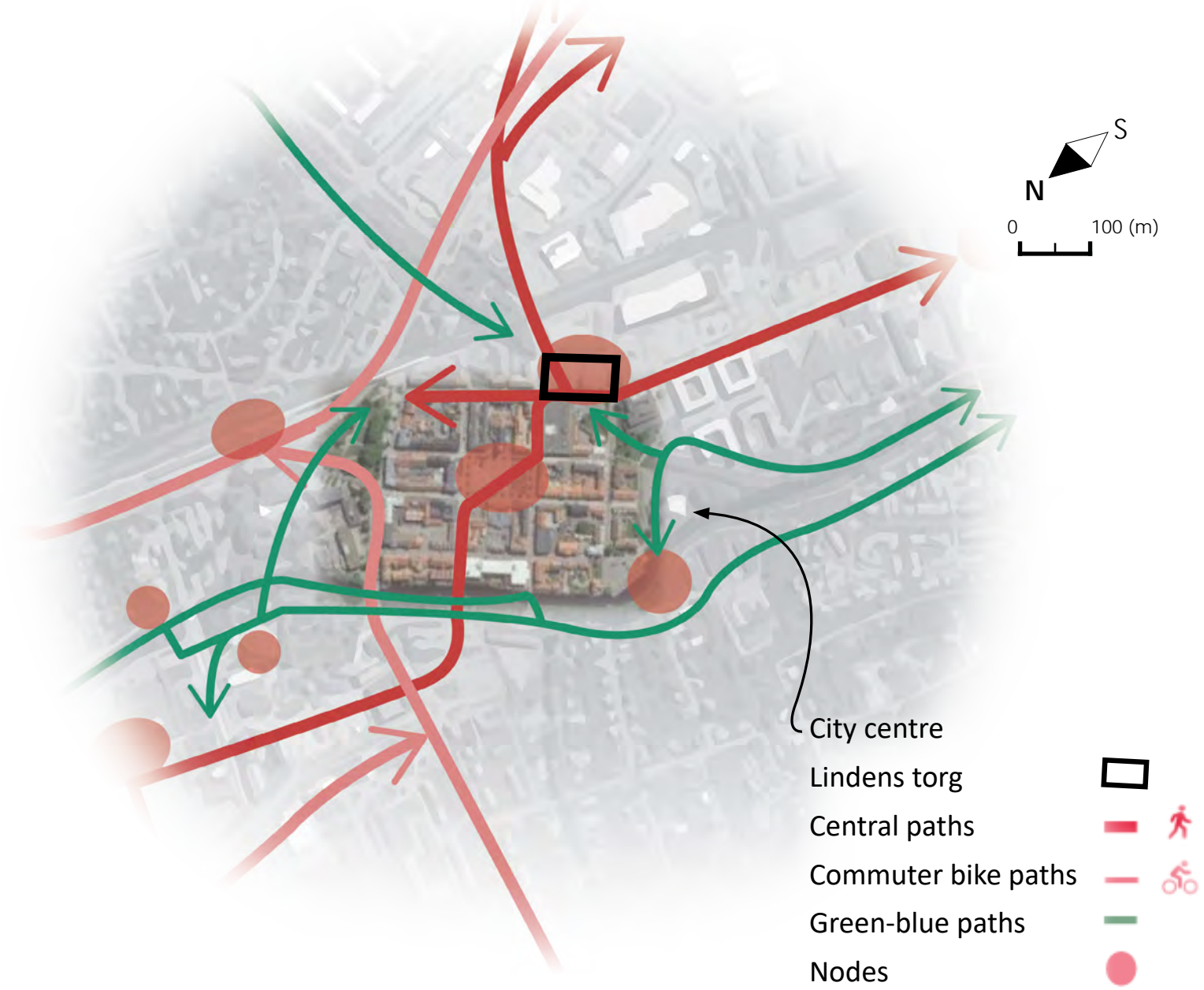


# STEP 1: SITE PORTRAIT

The site "Lindens torg" is a public square in the city of Kungsbacca. In consultations with landscape architects from Kungsbacca municipality, the future goals and challenges of the square have been mapped. The municipality itself is described as largely suburban or rural, with large stretches of green nature and coastal landscapes. Situated about 20 minutes from Gothenburg, the city of Kungsbacca offers a small-town feeling with water canals, a cobblestone streets and green areas throughout much of the small city center. As is visible in the figure to the right, the square is located at an important intersection, at what could be considered the cusp of the central city. Furthermore, landscape architects at Kungsbacca municipality mention that a large parking house has recently been built around the corner, which could affect the future design of - and movement around - Lindens torg.

Interviews with landscape architects from the municipality depict the square today as messy with uneven and broken ground covering, dying trees and a low range of activities. From a social perspective, a large flow of young people has been mapped in the municipality's internal analyses. The square is also described as a place with both cheap and expensive stores, which is thought to strengthen the socio-economic diversity of visitors. Furthermore, important paths for pedestrians and bicycles characterize the square's immediate connections, according to the interviewees. When it comes to services, the square offers a varied range, including a gym, Systembolaget\*, fruit vendor, bakery, candy shop, cafe and more. According to the municipal landscape architects, the areas around the square will be built for new housing in the near future, thus increasing the importance of the square accommodating more people's need for spending leisure time in public spaces.

\* Systembolaget is a government-owned chain of liquor stores in Sweden.



*This image depicts a structural analysis of Kungsbacca as described by the interviewees. Lindens torg is interestingly situated on the cusp of the city centre, and at the conjunction of many important paths. The upcoming residential areas that are described to be built around the square further strengthen the sense of Lindens torg being an important public leisure space in future Kungsbacca.*



Spatially, the square is described as an open area, which without today's large amount of parking spaces is well suited for events. A vision that the municipal employees mention for Lindens torg contains keywords such as "The beautiful square", "organized", "high profile" and "strong identity". The interviewees also mention a request for a more intimate design with water and greenery. The square should be designed for a wide variety of people, be permissive of different needs and promote diversity, according to the interviewees. A mix of cheap and expensive businesses around the square are also mentioned as a way to achieve this goal. The landscape architects describe public areas as increasingly important for Kungsbacka as the city grows. Other suggested elements are some type of water feature, more greenery, space for events and playful designs or areas on the square. Smaller spatial divisions and planning for all seasons, as well as an overall approach to the square's path system are also mentioned as important aspects to consider when redesigning.

Creating a more safe and active experience on the square with less 'dead space' where nothing happens is described as a goal that the square's future design should strive for. Furthermore, the

interviewees mention that partly removing the parking spaces should be a goal, as well as creating new places for restaurant patios. Furthermore, the nearby square 'Kungsbacka torg' is described as providing large open areas for events, something which Lindens torg could complement with smaller spatial zones. In summary, the municipality's goal for the square can be described as a pleasant and permissive meeting place that provides more space for living and socializing on the square, and less unused space.

The site visits to the square were consistent with the descriptions from Kungsbacka municipality. The square consists to a large portion of parking spaces, with only one end usable for square visitors. Some benches, trees and a couple of food trucks are placed here. The square seems to be well connected to the city center and located close to nodes such as grocery shops and Systembolaget, as well as main roads into the central restaurants.

The general feeling when visiting the square today is not that it is a space for leisure, but rather a bit of public space that was "left over" when new buildings, shops and parking appeared.



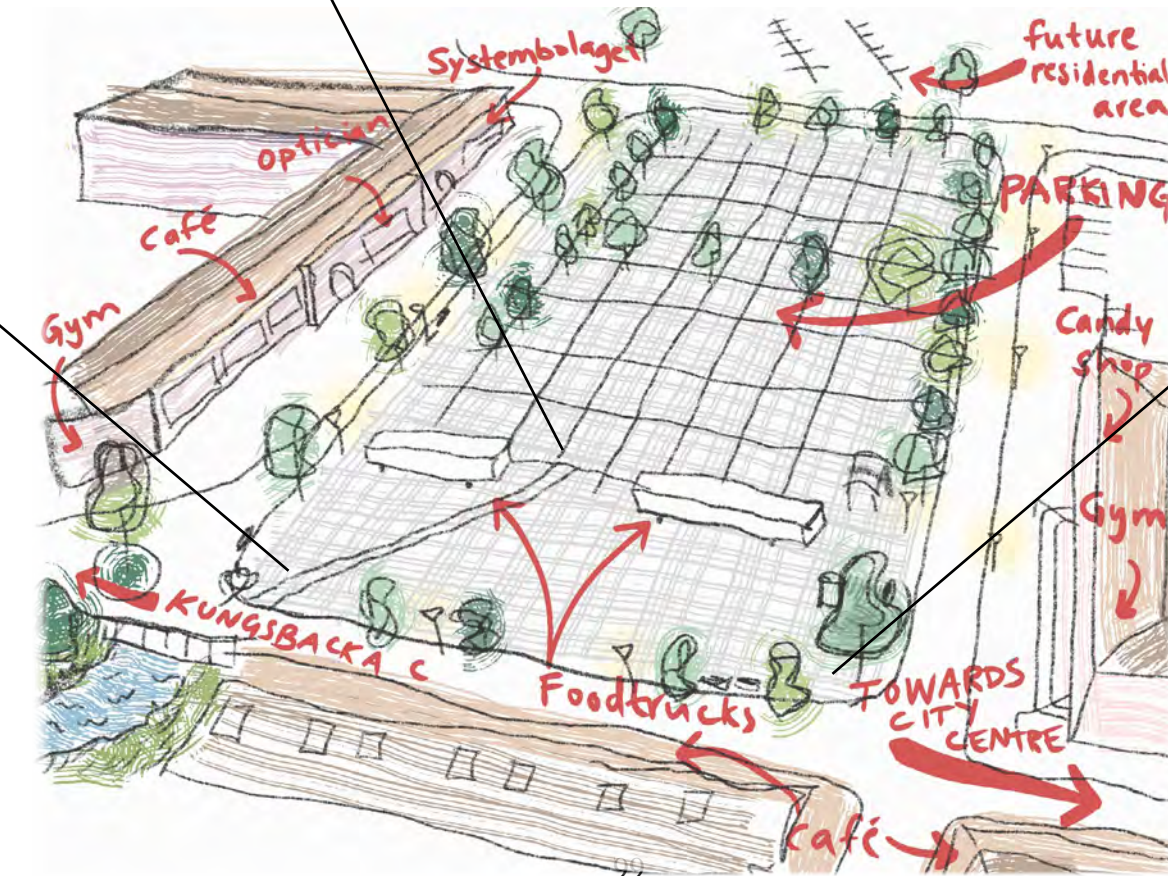
*Seating under some shading canopy creates a nice place for resting and people-watching*



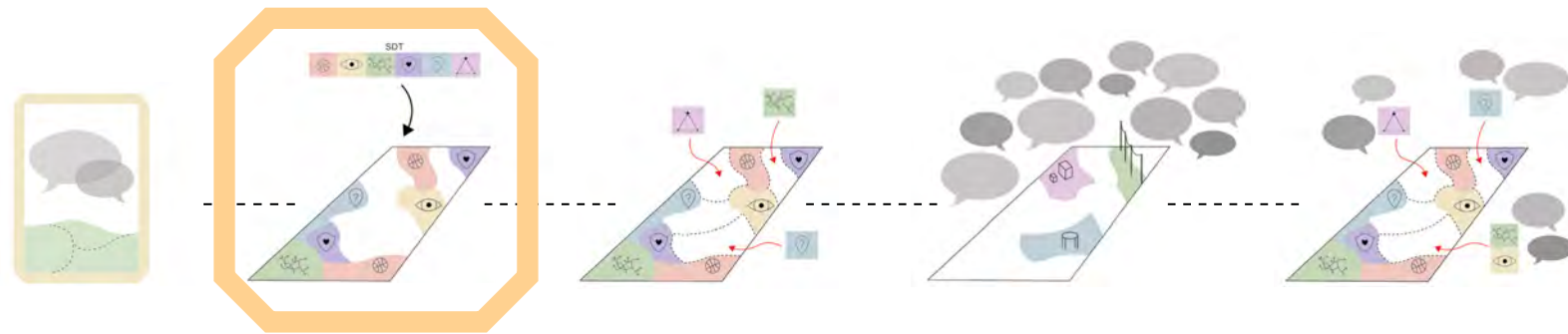
*Confused patterns in the ground lead on to the large parking lot*









*Uneven ground didn't stop bikers from coming onto the square - a testament to its important location for traveling through the city.*








## STEP 2: SOCIO-SPATIAL SITE ANALYSIS

SOCIO-SPATIAL DESIGN PRINCIPLES (SDP)						
WHAT?	 <b>COMMON ACTIVITY</b>	 <b>PUBLIC FAMILIARITY</b>	 <b>CONNECTED SPACE</b>	 <b>SENSE OF SECURITY</b>	 <b>FLEXIBLE PLACES</b>	 <b>TRIANGULATION</b>
WHY?	Through a sense of equal group status and authorized cooperation towards a common goal, prejudice is decreased and positive social bonds can be formed.	Facilitating people watching and comfortable co-presence in public leisure space increases a sense of familiarity and shared identity between groups, allowing for more active contact in the future.	Spaces that are easily accessible physically and psychologically motivates a socio-spatial flow of different groups.	With clear views, social vibrancy, alternative routes and territorial clarity, a sense of security enables relaxed interactions.	Facilitating simultaneous co-presence of different needs, interests and attitudes enables sharing of the space across group borders.	Providing an external stimulus creates a talking point and easy segue from isolated public space use to cross-group interactions
HOW?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Places for sports or play</li> <li>-Community gardens</li> <li>-Outdoor stages</li> <li>-Spaces for cultural events</li> <li>-Providing equal status regardless of user needs</li> <li>-Sociability of activity increases gradually along the site</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Diversity of seating</li> <li>-Visual access of people</li> <li>-Public art or similar elements</li> <li>-Temporary events</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Accessible entrances</li> <li>-Orientability</li> <li>-Visual connection to neighboring areas</li> <li>-Softening or avoiding barriers</li> <li>-Interesting elements that motivate movement</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Intimate zones</li> <li>-Predictability</li> <li>-Alternative routes</li> <li>-Peripheral seating with good view</li> <li>-Sufficient lighting</li> <li>-Territorial markers</li> <li>-Inviting entrances to promote liveliness</li> <li>-Well maintained and accessible vegetation providing clear views</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Hints of functions</li> <li>-Structures of undisclosed user purposes for discovery</li> <li>-Open spaces that can accommodate different uses simultaneously</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Seating</li> <li>-Public art</li> <li>-Beautiful or interesting scenes</li> <li>-Unexpected elements</li> <li>-Services such as cafés</li> </ul>

LEGEND FOR ALL SOCIO-SPATIAL SITE ANALYSES:

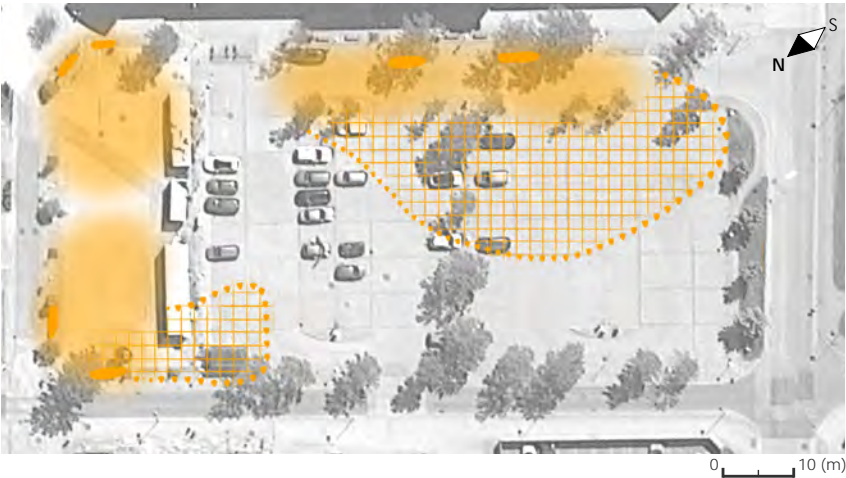
 EXISTING SDP-ELEMENTS

 DEVELOPMENT POTENTIALS

In this step, the theoretical framework or SDP (left) have been used to map the socio-spatial elements of the square, how they relate to each other and make up the space as a whole. Furthermore, the potentials of designing the square for socio-spatial integration is also presented within the analysis. Weighed together, the result will inform the following design proposal.



No current spaces for common activity were found on the square. When considering potentials, the north-west side of the square seemed like it would be a nice place to add some activities, as this is where the sun lingers the longest. Furthermore, by preserving the trees, some interesting spatial divisions could be achieved.

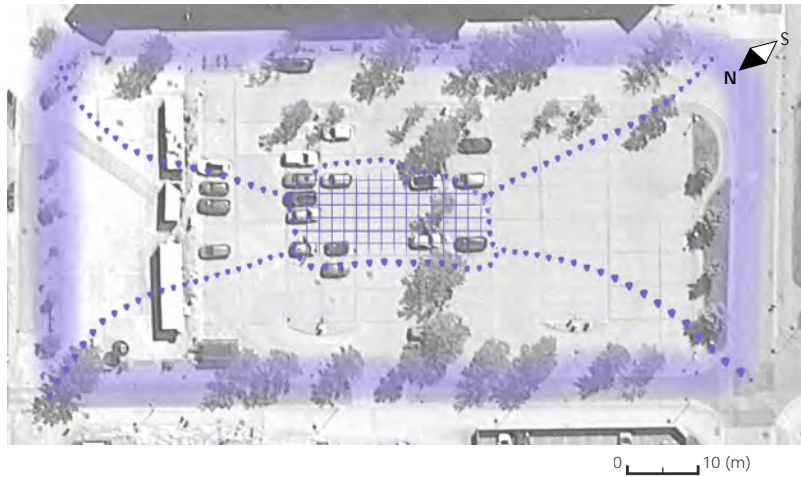


The benches mainly overlook the area in front of the present food trucks and part of the western edge of the square. Adding completely new opportunities for public familiarity in more central parts of the square and building on the existing areas by adding more seating, art or the potential for public events are seen as potential developments.

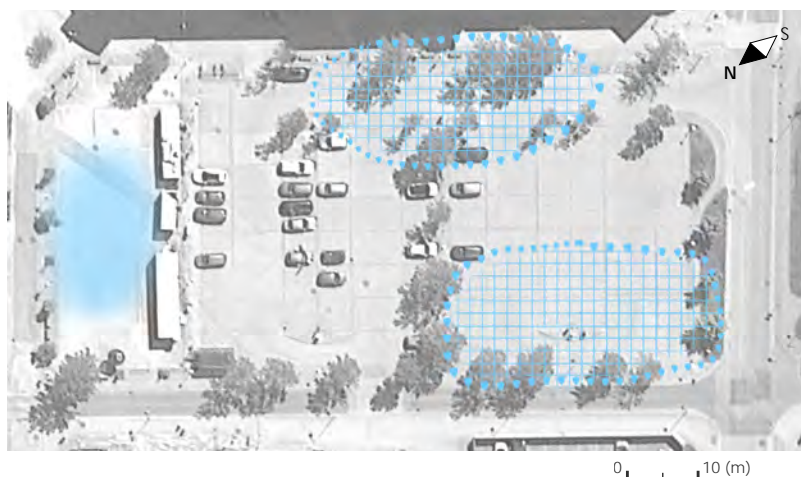


Today, the square contains many confusing markers in the ground, indicating only short parts of paths. Mainly, people seem to cut through the area in front of the food trucks to travel across the square. By providing paths connecting all four corners of the square, it may become better integrated with its surroundings. Focusing on four main inviting entrances could hopefully attract more people.





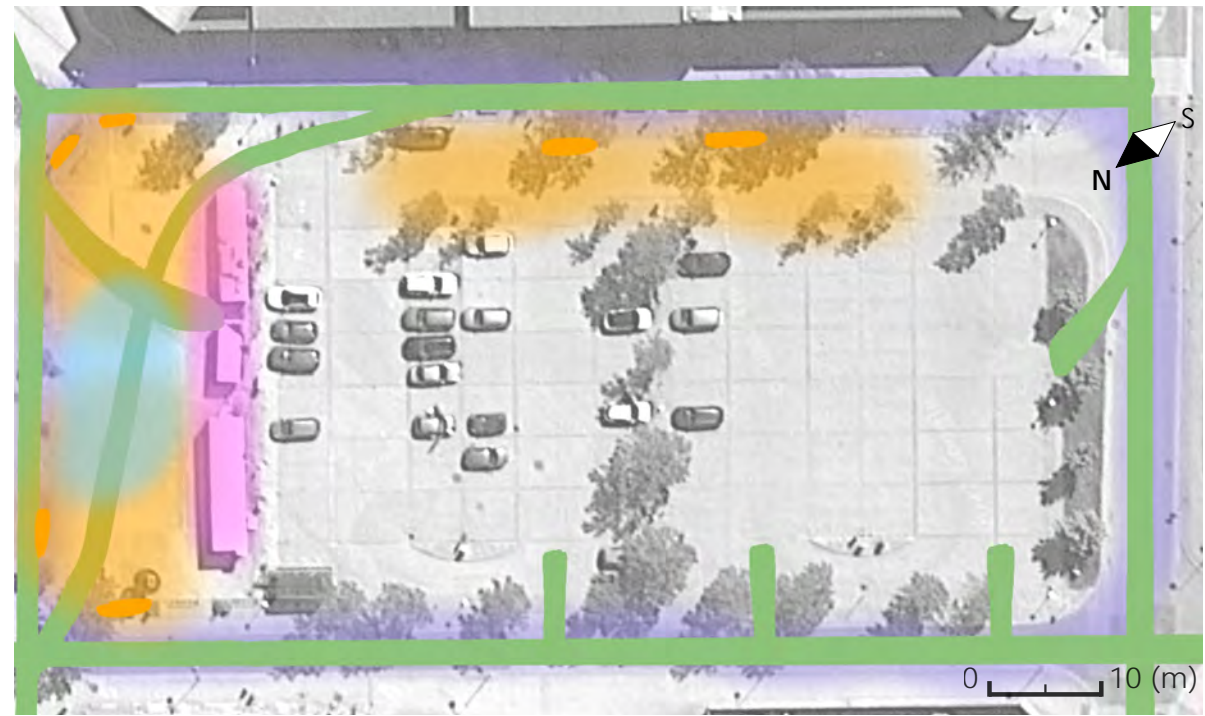
The square is rather small and centrally located in Kungsbacka, which is perhaps why lighting around the edges seem sufficient and provides a sense of security. However, should the parking spaces be removed to provide a more social design of the square, the central parts should be provided with lighting as well. Furthermore, vegetation should be kept low to provide clear views on the square.



Due to the large, inflexible parking space, the only flexible place on the square is in front of the food trucks. When considering potentials for new flexible places both the merits of a more shaded area for relaxing and a more sunny part of the square for active engagement is considered. The square could benefit both from loosely programed open areas where the parking spaces are today, and multi-use structures, perhaps providing seating or a view across the square.

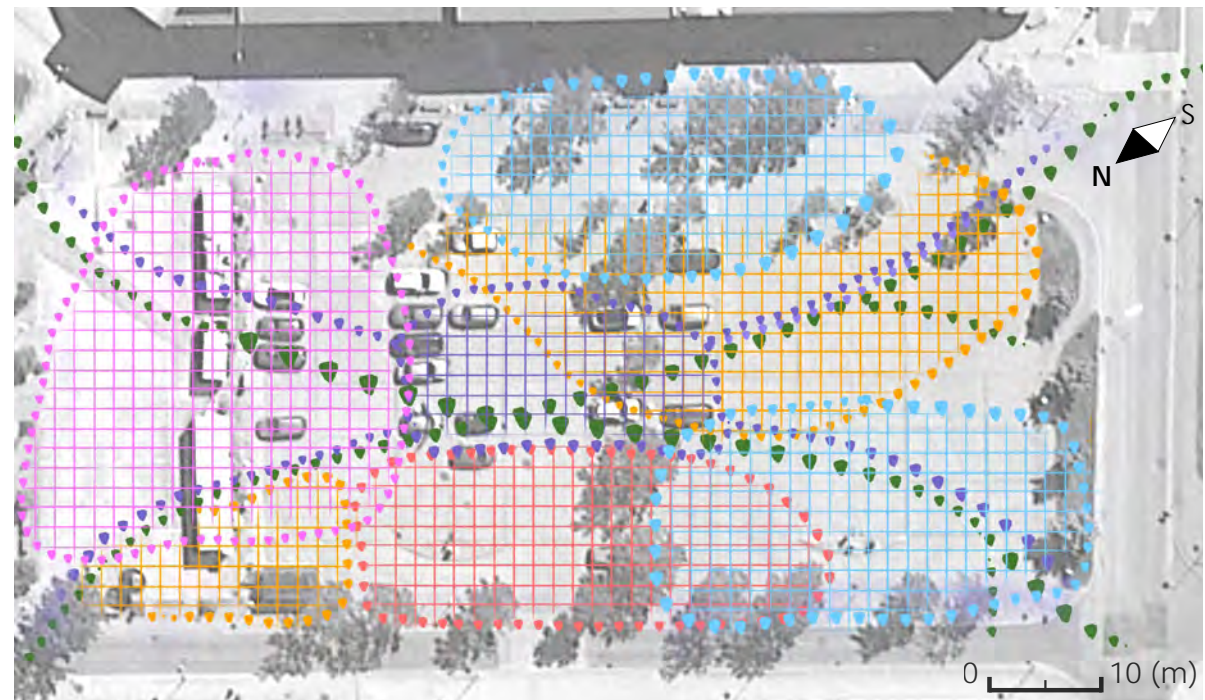


The services provided by the food trucks could generate some triangulation, for example whilst waiting for food. This seems to be the only interactive function of the square today. Therefore, future attempts at sparking triangulation could be built in close geographical proximity, to build on existing behavioral patterns and make sure the square doesn't loose too much of its identity.



## EXISTING SDP-ELEMENTS

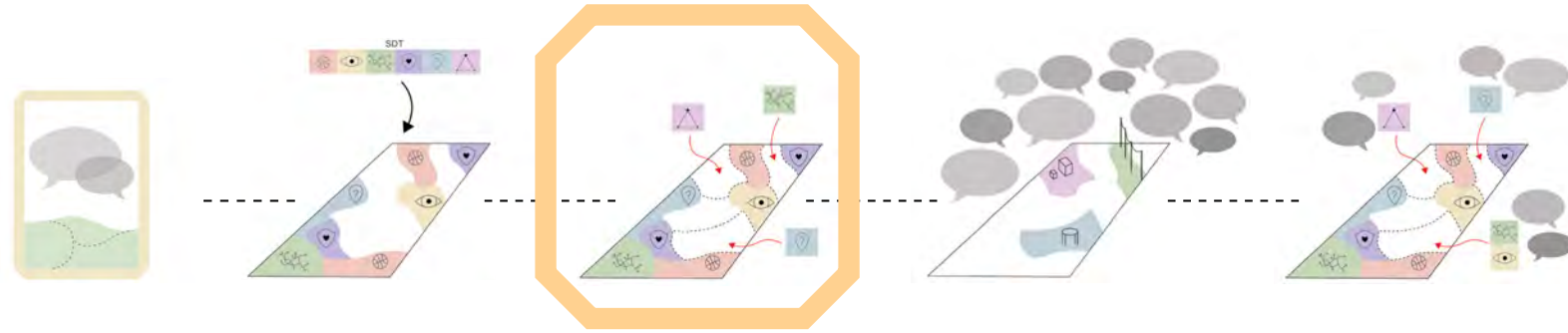
Currently, most of the square does not contain design elements indicative of a design that would promote social behavior as it is covered in parking spaces. However, there seems to be a desire to cross the square - although currently that would mean crossing the parking lot, which doesn't feel very safe. It seems central to a future redesign when looking at the current analysis to focus on movement patterns and connections of the square to its surroundings.



## DEVELOPMENT POTENTIALS

The found potentials all seem to circulate around creating a new flow through the square. By removing the current parking spaces, the square has the potential to become a holistic space connecting four corners of its surroundings to an area for social city life. Diagonal paths also provide the square with a spatial structure which can be made even more interesting by preserving the trees on the square.

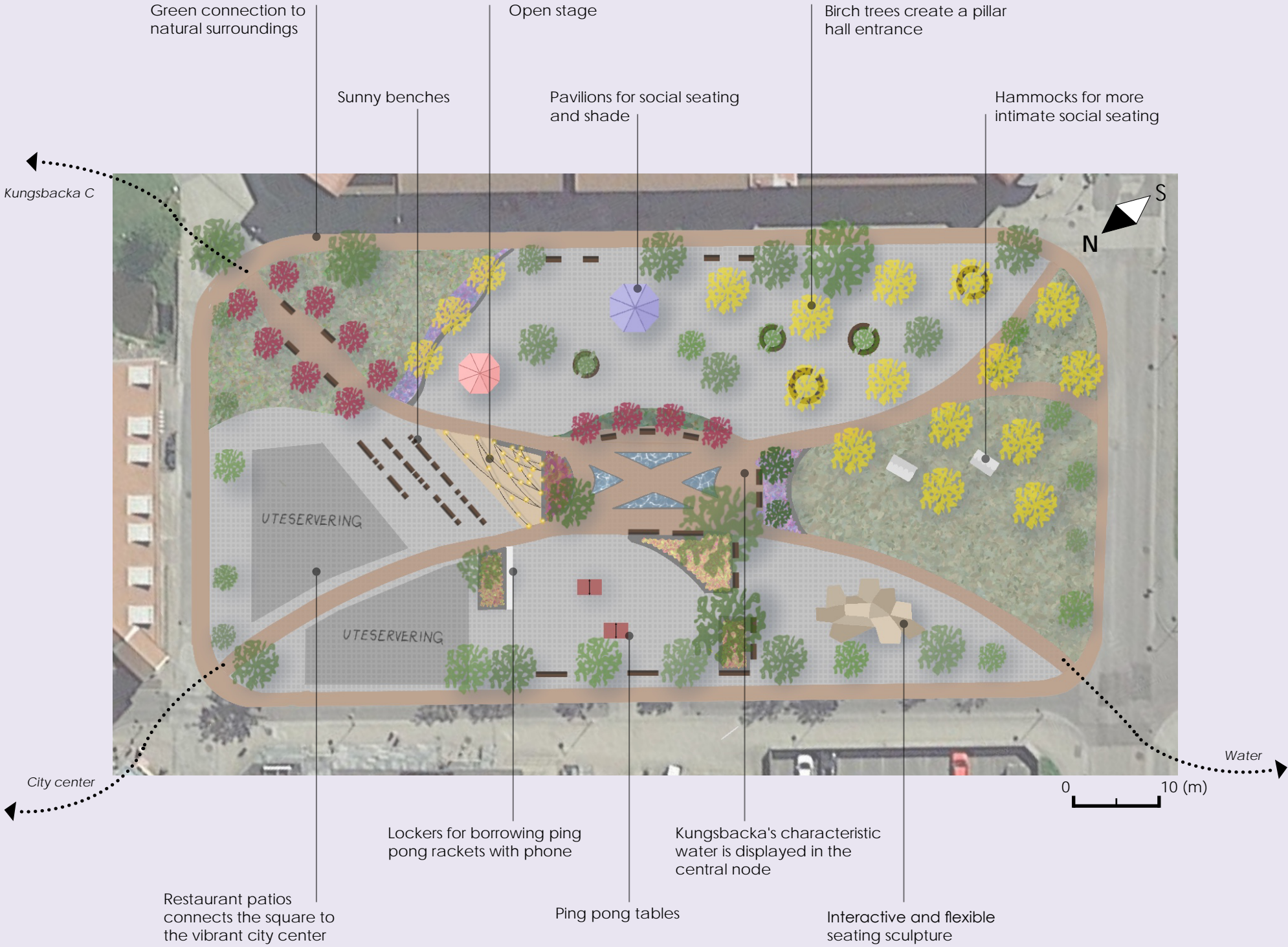




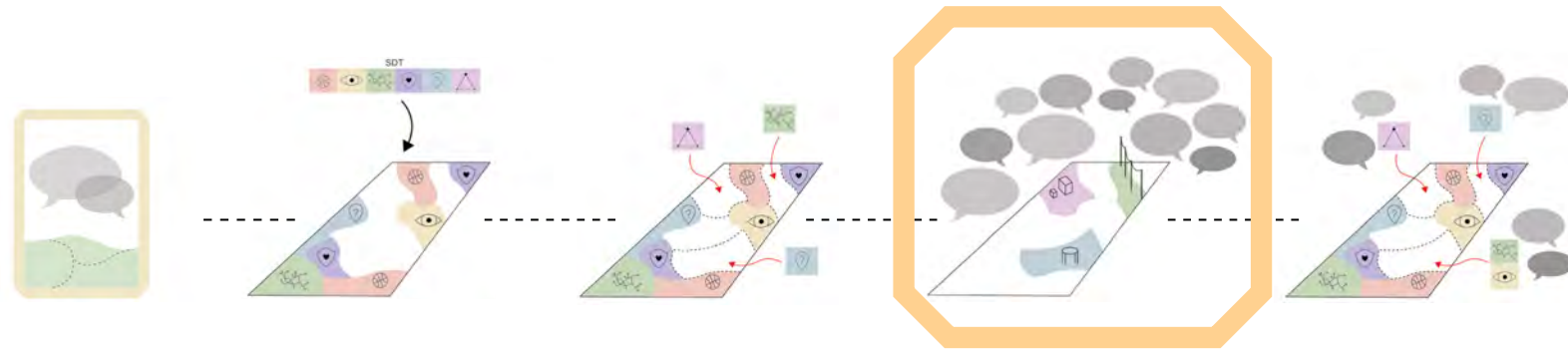
### STEP 3: PRELIMINARY DESIGN

The preliminary design proposal is produced by bringing together insights from the site portrait, SDP and socio-spatial analyses. The movement patterns included on a larger scale was essential knowledge offered by the municipality. In combination with the more site-specific analyses, a design proposal could begin to take shape. Aspects such as the needs of surrounding businesses (like restaurant patios), ecosystem services (such as shade from the trees and runoff through green areas) and the orientation of the square in its context (through the natural intersecting footpaths leading to important nodes) have complemented the more theoretical goals of social opportunities in the square. Furthermore, a central water feature is added to provide some connection with the nearby water in central Kungsbäck, which lends a lot of character to the city. Providing the square with ping pong tables and a locker for paddles and other activity utensils could be a way to add a bit of clearly programmed common activity on the square. This type of activity locker which provides a sharing experience through a mobile app and Bank ID has been spotted in Vesterbro in Copenhagen, where it seemed very popular.

Clarifying the entrances and facilitating natural movement across the square naturally creates a structure with four larger areas containing smaller spatial divisions, as well as a central spot with a water feature. As the square is perceived to link the central city to its surroundings, designing along a nature-urban gradient could be a nice way to highlight both the natural qualities of the city and the potentials for social life as one enters the more central parts. This gradient could be seen as starting at the southern entrance - which provides shaded seating under existing tree canopies as well as new planted birch trees (yellow). As one continues the walk and enters the central place, clear views provides visual contact with the ping pong area, a flexible sitting structure, an open stage, pavilions and rows of benches directed at the sun, doubling as bleachers for the stage. Continuing north, the path cuts between restaurant patios which can create a sense of life and activity as one exits the square and moves into the central parts of Kungsbäck.







## STEP 4: PARTICIPATORY PROTOTYPING

The Participatory prototyping was conducted on Lindens square to promote engagement on site, productive discussions around the proposal and cross-group interactions. Due to the fact that the square is largely made up of parking space, the prototypes were somewhat limited and consisted of beach chairs indicating the intended sunny benches and markers for new entrances. In addition to the prototypes, a sign with the proposal was used as a basis for discussion and an interactive map of the square was used to examine the participants' movement patterns around the square. This chapter presents the compiled results from mapped movement patterns as well as recorded results from on-site discussions.



Similarly to the experience in Ögårdsparken, children were often the conduits for both participation and interactions between adult visitors. Below are seen two examples of children interacting with the prototypes. Other than this observation, the demographic makeup of participants was very mixed. Some visitors came over to practice Swedish and ended up discussing urban space design for half an hour. Other visitors sat down and started explaining that they spend time every day on the square, while others still just stopped by to have a look or leave a quick comment. The responses to the proposal were generally very positive, with some proposed adjustments presented on page 109.



1 Eastern entrance. The future row of cherry trees is presented in the form of colorful tulle on rope, taped to the ground.

This prototype was scarcely used, as the entrance today didn't seem to fall within people's preferred movement patterns

2 Sunny benches. This prototype was meant to portray some of the potential the square has for sunbathing. Therefore, a display of two beach chairs together with sunny yellow carpet and pillows were put together.

The prototype seemed to draw attention and a couple of children tried sitting in the chairs, enjoying the sun.

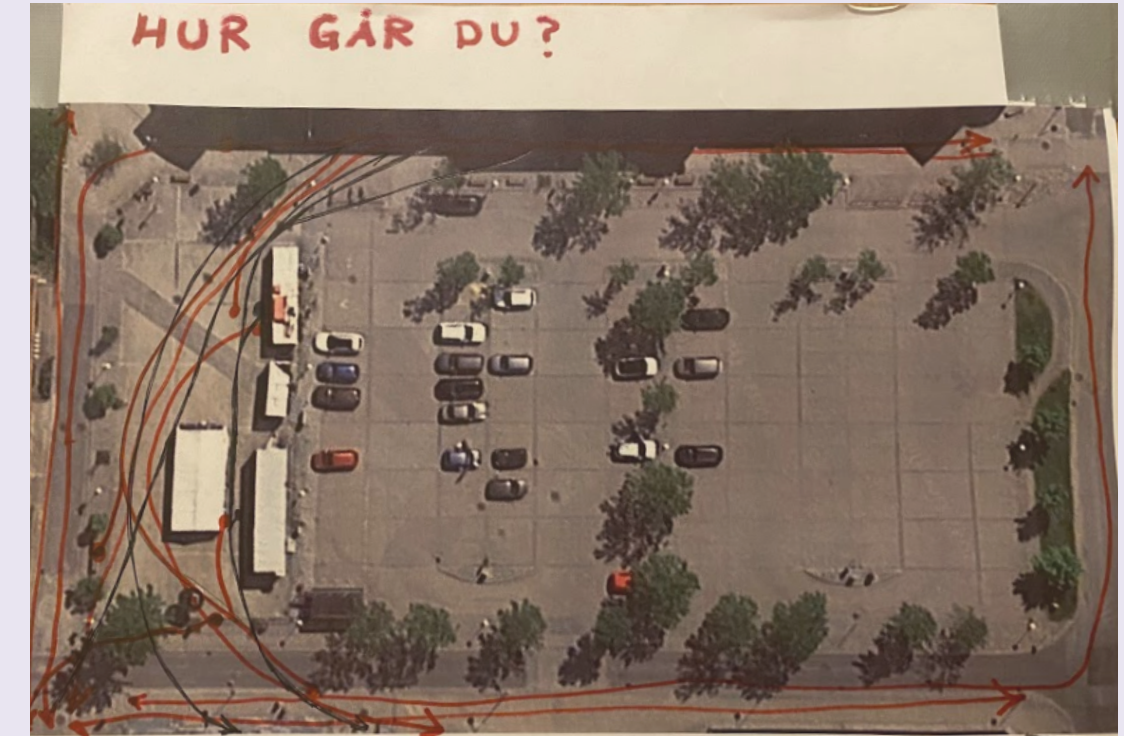
3 Northern entrance. The same simple prototype was displayed here as at the eastern entrance. However, this entrance had much traffic. This prototype started conversations and seemed to invite more people on to the square, being pulled from the street by their curiosity.







*An interactive map was brought on site and used during the Participatory prototyping. Here, the participants were asked to show their most frequent movement patterns when visiting the square. The results clearly showed that one path in particular, stretching from the northern entrance and across towards the shops on the other side (including Systembolaget, a bakery etc), was predominantly used. This pattern was also observed during the time spent on the square. It was interesting to note this result, as such knowledge would never have been found without inquiring and talking to people as well as spending several days on site, observing movement and behavioral patterns.*

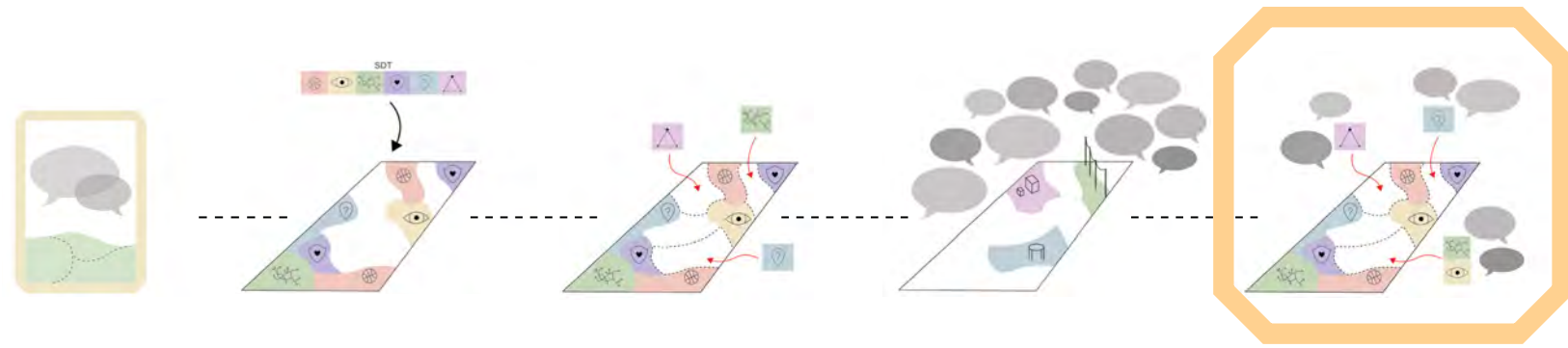


Many people noted the importance of retaining the food trucks present on site today. A typical insight which I was oblivious to when designing the preliminary proposal, it became clear that these specific vendors are important to the social fabric of the square. I noticed many people buy their lunch here and stop to have a chat with the owners of the trucks. The importance of the trucks for meeting new people or bringing acquaintances were also described by several respondents. Furthermore, the idea of completely removing parking on the square got some very positive remarks, but also some negative ones. However, many of those opposed were still unaware of the newly built parking house around the corner. Some elements which received particularly positive comments were the water feature, the restaurant patios and the pavilions and

new trees for shade. Regarding how cross-group interactions could be promoted on site, the ping pong table and stage were mainly brought up as positive future developments.

Lastly, several people mentioned that they hoped a future redesign of the square would not displace certain communities from the square. According to a few respondents, the mixture and allowance for all groups to come together here is part of the social significance of the square. This seems like an important result to note, as this intangible yet vital factor of the square's social fabric could be seen as the perfect starting place for promoting cross-group interactions through a design of the square informed by theories from the SDP.





## STEP 5: ADJUSTMENTS

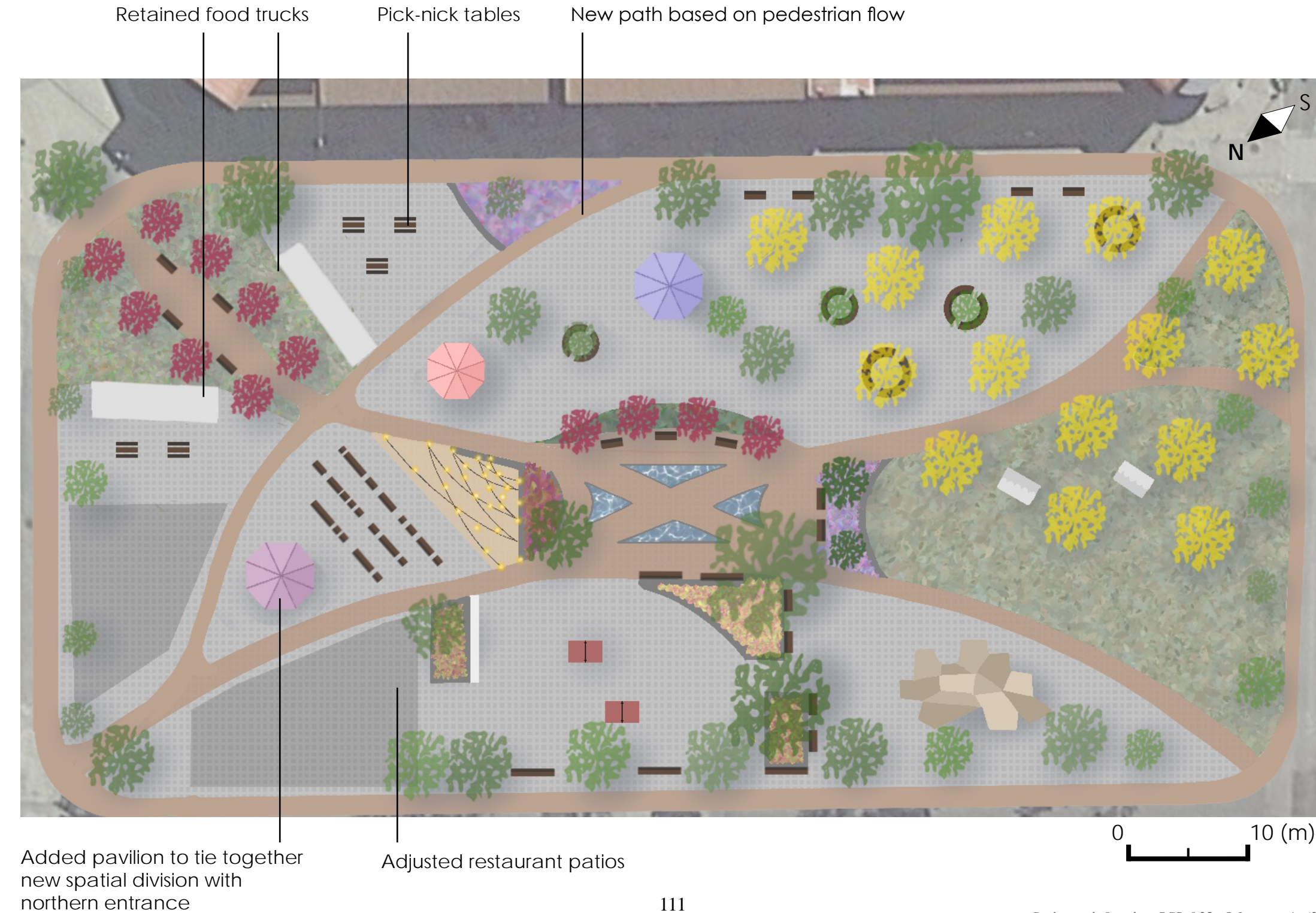
It is not surprising that most of the comments on the proposal were regarding the northern part, as this is both the only place the prototypes could be displayed, and also the only part of the square that visitors have any kind of leisurely relationship with today. Therefore, further adjustments may well be needed for the rest of the design as well when moving forward. However, this chapter will present some adjustments made to the parts of the square which were included in of the Participatory prototyping, as many important comments were still recorded.

Upon revisiting the design, certain adjustments seemed appropriate to make. The interactive map, together with observations and discussions all pointed to a certain path being used most frequently across the square today. Although this is partly due to the parking spaces removing many other options, there are two main reasons for adding another path that accommodates the present movement patterns. Firstly, the square is not a tabula rasa, but already has life and behaviors tied to it. The people of Kungsbacka has a relationship with the square, and it seems important to build on this relationship rather than removing familiar places, if site visitors are to feel comfortable here.

Secondly, the path which revealed itself during the Participatory prototyping as most frequently used goes directly from the city center to shops like Systembolaget, a bakery, fruit vendor and other services. It seems like an important aspect to pick up on, and therefore the proposal is adjusted by adding the new path cutting across the square.

Furthermore, many people noted the importance of retaining the food trucks present on site today. As the food trucks seem important to the social fabric of the site, the adjusted proposal has made space for them by shifting their location and adding seating in front of both trucks.

Other smaller adjustments such as the adding of a new pavilion and adjusting the spaces slightly were made to make sure the design of the square still feels holistic. In addition to the adjusted design proposal, Kungsbacka municipality is recommended to continue with participatory and public dialogue processes. This recommendation comes from the many positive reactions which were received and the expressed wishes from participants for continued chances to make their voices heard with regards to the future of their shared spaces.



Added pavilion to tie together new spatial division with northern entrance

Adjusted restaurant patios



Reflections on adapting the Common Ground approach to different site specifics and scopes

After performing the Common Ground approach again on a second site, some reflections on its adaptability and future uses were noted. Some insights from testing the approach in Ögårdsparken could be used in the case of Lindens torg. For example, the site approach included a look at the site's surroundings,

an adjustment proposed in part three of the main project. This increased the knowledge and allowed the design to focus on movement to and through the site - a result which proved very useful on this smaller, urban site. Furthermore, it was interesting to perform the approach within a limited time frame, and on a geographically smaller site. This transformed the approach from a lengthy, exploratory and iterative process spanning months to a more concise way of learning about and designing for the site. In its more limited capacity, the

Common Ground approach still worked well. The socio-spatial site analyses were still very useful at such a different scale, providing a good structure for the following steps. The Participatory prototyping produced both engagement on site, knowledge about the current use and insight from frequent site visitors regarding what could be changed about the design. It was easier to present more concrete adaptations in step 5, due to the smaller geographical area. Similarly to the case of Ögårdsparken, the SDP was useful

throughout the project, both by revealing patterns of use through the socio-spatial site analyses and for inspiration when designing and discussing the site with visitors. In summary, I believe the Common Ground approach has the potential to be adapted for different projects and scopes. I also believe the SDP could be used for other applications or by freestanding socio-spatial site analyses.

The Common Ground approach

Promoting cross-group interactions and socio-spatial integration in public leisure space

