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Urban planning for car-free housing and ideas of future desired states

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Abstract
Planning for car-free housing has emerged as a solution for accomplishing sustainable urban development. There has been a tendency among researchers and policy makers to understand car-free housing in terms of "lifestyle politics", where change is advanced by fostering morally or socially inspired lifestyle choices. The aim of this article is to situate lifestyle politics in a context of broader urban development by analysing ideas of future desired states that underpin planning for car-free housing, so as to allow for a critical discussion around what long-term urban futures urban planning wants to accomplish through such housing. By drawing from Mukhtar-Landgren's conceptual pair of planning object and subject, and examining documents and formal correspondence relating to four examples of planning car-free housing in Sweden, the study shows three different ideas of the future that underpin the planning which includes different assumptions of sustainable mobility, individuals and urban planning: Planning for (1) "an optimized system", which includes assumptions of rational objects which travel efficiently; (2) "individual freedom", which includes assumptions of independent consumers which travel rightly; and (3) "community and togetherness", which includes assumptions of individuals being part of a community which travels less.

Keywords
car-free housing, sustainability, future, urban planning

Introduction
Urban planning, despite more than two decades of critique (cf. Newman & Kenworthy, 1999), is still heavily car-centred and structured through a "system of automobility" (Urry, 2004). For example, cars structure the development of housing, leisure, and consumption patterns, as well as labour regions (Urry, 2004; Sheller, 2018), making people dependent on cars in the pursuit of everyday activities. Against the background of wanting to decrease CO_2 emissions and urban congestion, this "system" is challenged by urban planners and politicians with ambitions of working towards more sustainable urban development and forms of mobility. Part of this movement, although still in the margins, is a new form of development that is emerging in some cities in Western Europe: car-free housing. Car-free housing are new developments with no allocated car-parking spaces, and which often include a facilitation of more sustainable forms of mobility such as cycling or walking – often through the promotion of new forms of digital mobility services (e.g., Mobility as a Service

(MaaS), which emphasises a shift away from personally-owned modes of transportation and towards mobility provided as a service) (Sprei et al., 2020). Central to car-free housing is the attempt to challenge the dominant 20th century urban planning norm of "minimum parking requirements" for new urban developments. This norm seeks to cater for "the expected future car ownership" and is intended to reduce the number of street-parked cars in urban areas (Johansson et al., 2019). These car-free developments tend to be realised as municipal pilot projects with a parking norm of zero and include an exclusive acceptance to deviate from the municipal parking norm (Gunnarsson-Östling, 2021, Sprei et al., 2020). As such, the housing is part of broader processes of testbed planning in which pilot projects and urban experiments constitute an integral part of urban planning and development (Berglund-Snodgrass & Mukhtar-Landgren, 2020; Berglund-Snodgrass, 2021; cf. Kronsell & Mukhtar-Landgren, 2018).

Previous research has indicated that these houses are often occupied by individuals with high levels of education and political awareness, as well as a self-image of holding high ethical values, including ecological motivations (Baehler, 2019; Baehler & Rérat, 2020). Furthermore, it is brought forward that the challenge for the potential success of these developments is about attracting this right group of individuals (e.g., "the car-free chooser") who are willing to "give up" potential ownership of cars and commit to pursuing a sustainable lifestyle (Thomsen & Löfström, 2011; Melia et al, 2012) and fostering social change by leading by example. As such, there has been a tendency among researchers and policy makers to understand car-free housing in terms of "lifestyle politics", where political change is advanced by fostering morally or socially inspired lifestyle choices (de Moor, 2017; Spaargaren & Oosterveerer, 2010). Lifestyle politics refers to the politicisation of everyday life choices, including "ethically, morally or politically inspired decisions about, for example, consumption, transportation or modes of living" (de Moor, 2017). The term may refer to individuals" private lifestyles and their moral sense of responsibility for the allocation of common resources but also to collectives who "consciously and actively promote a lifestyle" to foster social change (Haenfler et al., 2012).

By emphasising car-free housing as an example of lifestyle politics and notions of the politics of choice, they are reduced to represent and serve a "neo-liberal" ideology of individualization which reduces citizens to consumers (cf. de Moor & Verhaegen, 2020). Through such emphasis, the overarching long-term urban development that the housing is part of is not a key concern. Long-term urban development is concerned with, for example, fair distribution of communal resources. Lifestyle politics seldom acknowledges inequalities in terms of ability and access to pursue lifestyle choices governed by morality and altruism. All citizens are not able to, nor interested in, engaging in these forms of individualised processes as many still are shaped or constrained by their everyday material circumstances (Vromen et al., 2015). The travel choices pursued by the socio-economically disadvantaged groups are not necessarily governed by moral values but by financial and material constraints. They simply have to travel using the most affordable mode of transport, but also using whatever transport is available within their everyday life context (Sheller, 2018; Morris et al., 2009). As urban planning is legitimised through the public interest, e.g., "a collective moral imperative that transcends particular or private interests" (Alexander, 2002: 230), it has an overarching purpose to enable fair (re)distribution of, and access to, public goods in cities, including access to sustainable mobility. Gunnarsson-Östling (2021) stresses that car-free housing postulates the possibility of another future. One question that thus arises is precisely *what* futures it postulates – and if it is the urban future of individualism that is envisaged: an urban future with potentially segregated bubbles of different lifestyle housing targeting different

groups" particular desires and wishes – ranging from safety and elderly to sustainable mobility – where the role of urban planning is to facilitate such processes of individualisation? Or is the idea of lifestyle obsolete and what urban planners aim to accomplish through car-free housing is rather an inclusive car-free urban future where all citizens are envisaged as being provided with equal access to sustainable mobility and other public goods? Questions such as these point to the urgency of moving away from conceptualising car-free housing solely as an example of lifestyle politics to emphasizing them as part of broader urban development policy. The aim of this article is twofold: first, to introduce the phenomenon of car-free housing as part and in the context of broader urban planning ideals, and second, to empirically examine urban planning ideals that underpin planning for car-free housing. The following research question organizes the study: What ideas of future-desired states underpin planning car-free housing and with what conceptions of individuals, sustainable mobility, and urban planning?

Urban planning has, in turn, endured major transformations during the last decades, moving from what could be conceptualized as "planning-led" to a notion of "development-led"" (Sherif & Metzger, 2018), or perhaps better expressed as "entrepreneurial-led", characterized by public and private collaborations/interactions between a diverse set of actors (Taşan-Kok et al., 2020). Here, it has been argued that such a development has generated spaces for property developers to take a lead in pushing the sustainability agenda forward in accordance with their own objectives (e.g., business models) (Storbjörk et al., 2018). Car-free housing constitutes perhaps one such example, as they often comprise joint ventures between developers and mobility service providers. This is where municipalities are in turn expected to adopt a comprehensive perspective and steer developments according to overarching goals. Critical voices have reported that, in these collaborative planning processes, municipalities have a tendency to steer very little and tend to comply with market objectives and their business models rather than with public goals (Root, van der Krabben, & Spit, 2015 in Storbjörk et al., 2018). One important policy instrument in this context is negotiated agreements where the private actor and the municipality outline agreed-upon obligations towards one another (Storbjörk et al., 2018), which can take the form of contracts (Taşan-Kok et al., 2019a). These could include agreements of their different sets of responsibilities but also entail specific demands that the municipality makes, but where the demands are broken down to "deliverable units" in the specific urban development project (Raco, 2014 in Taşan-Kok et al., 2019b). In pilot projects with car-free housing, the municipality makes specific demands for the developers to comply with so as to allow for making deviations from existing regulations and norms. This could include demands for specific communications to be issued or for providing contracts with mobility service providers (car-sharing pools) or even rain jackets for future residents in the building. Such agreements of deliverables are approached in this article to include assumptions of (perhaps conflicting) ideas of future-desired states.

This article is organised in five sections. Following this introduction (1), the post-structural theoretical point of departure for analysing underpinning ideas of future desired states in planning car-free housing will be introduced, but also a brief historical vignette of broader urban planning ideals that can be discerned in the urban planning literature from which ideas underpinning planning car-free housing potentially are inscribed in or depart from (2). Thereafter, the method for analysis and empirical material will be outlined (3), to be followed by an empirical analysis which presents three ideas of future desired states that underpin planning car-free housing: "an optimized system", "individual freedom", and "community and togetherness" to which different relations between individuals, space, and mobility are outlined (4), and finishes with a concluding section [5].

Urban planning and assumptions of delivering better futures

This study takes its point of departure in post-structural theories which emphasize how governmental practices such as urban planning produce particular kinds of problems, which include assumptions of the current state of things, ascribed meanings, and particular interpretations of phenomena (Bacchi, 2009). Bacchi highlights how ideas represented in policy produce lived effects (2009). For example, policies for car-free housing include assumptions of desired futures comprising norms and values of individuals, space, and mobility, but they also produce certain desired relations between the same (cf. Berglund-Snodgrass, 2016). These assumptions produce lived effects as they contribute to shaping the ways in which we develop cities, which conditions individuals" ability to act. Ideas in planning policy comprise power relations, representing temporal and contestable social products (Bacchi, 2009). Power constitutes the process that defines a social world, gives it meaning and "cannot be viewed as a casual effect of either structure or agency, since these are constructed in and through power" (Torfing, 1999, p 162).

Urban planning can in turn be approached as an activity that both conceptualizes and envisages ideas of perceived better futures but also carry out a range of activities for achieving or delivering those ends (Mukhtar-Landgren, 2012). One central goal of urban planning is to deliver an urban future that is perceived as better than would result from there being no planning (Campbell & Marshall 1999 in Mukhtar-Landgren, 2012). Underpinning ideas of better futures by planning car-free housing is understood here to produce temporal relationships between individuals, space, and mobility. Ideas of a better future that underpin planning car-free housing may be "togetherness and increased sense of community", which, in turn, may include assumptions of people nurturing their social lives in the local housing district, which, in turn, may be connected to an assumption of sustainable mobility of travelling less. The role of urban planning here may be to facilitate social relations for achieving such communities. Analyzing both ideas of better futures and interrelated roles of urban planning, this study draws from, and analytically makes use of, Mukhtar-Landgren's conceptual pair of planning object and subject (2012). The concept of planning object concerns ideas of *what* is being planned for. For example, are ideas of economic growth what is planned for or individual freedom? Using the concept of planning object directs focus towards norms and values of "what better future" in the policy. Ideas of desired future states ultimately comprise the ideas of individuals, space, and mobility that underpin the planning. In this study, the focus will be directed to assumptions of individuals and sustainable mobility in ideas of desired future states.

The concept of "planning subject" comprises ideas of urban planning and concerns what urban planning is supposed to do for delivering the planning object. Is urban planning conceptualized as a facilitator, modeller or as a regulator? Using the concept of planning subject directs the focus towards "what ideas of planning" in the policy.

Ideas about the desired future state in planning car-free housing consequently include aspirations for desired future relations between individuals, space, and mobility, but they also elucidate urban planning tasks. As ideas rarely are invented from scratch and often comprise the repackaging and coupling familiar elements in new ways (Olesen, 2017; cf. Berglund-Snodgrass & Mukhtar-Landgren, 2021), the following section provides a vignette of different urban planning ideals as represented in planning history, from which ideas underpinning planning car-free housing potentially are either inscribed in or depart from. The vignette operates as a horizon of possibilities. The concepts of planning object and subject will structure the empirical analysis as well as serve as a lens for analyzing historical urban planning ideals.

Planning for social reform through physical restructuring

Modernist urban planning has been governed by powerful ideas of the future city – but also powerful critiques of existing cities by depicting them as "swollen" and entailing a "dangerous concentration of wealth and power" (Howard, in Fishman, 2012). Here, a radical reconstruction of cities would not only solve a perceived notion of an urban crisis but also that of a social crisis (Fishman, 2012). Rejecting the idea of gradual improvement, modernist visions proclaim that the cities would need to be radically transformed to allow a redistribution of wealth and power. What was subject to planning (i.e.., the planning object) was the social order of society, but it was to be accomplished through top-down rational master planning and physical restructuring (i.e.., the planning subject). One example is the British new towns (e.g., Stevenage, Harlow, or Basildon), which included ideas of ideal organisation of neighbourhood planning, portraying specific relations between residential housing, leisure spaces, services and transport configured to suit ideals of the healthy modern citizen (Fishman, 2012 – drawing at large from the work of Ebenezer Howard, 1909). In the Swedish context, the notion of the ABC-city [Work, Live and Services-city] represents a similar ideal (Rudberg, 1992; Söderström, 2003) that resulted in urban developments such as Vällingby and Hässelbystrand outside Stockholm. The planning objective of social reform proclaims that everyday life activities (e.g., decent housing, day-care, schools, food shopping and other day-to-day necessary services) should be accessible within the realm of the housing district (i.e., the neighbourhood) – yet, as a resident, one should be connected to an urban core by public transport. In both examples, public transport comprised one foundational leg and core of the envisaged future desired states (metro lines in the Swedish example and overground rail to London in the British example). Another leg was the idea of dividing land use by function, i.e., separating living from working – resulting in zoning as a key urban planning tool.

These ideas were later accompanied by belief in the car as a powerful solution to the problem of access in "growing" cities – but the car also became a signifier of individual freedom (Urry, 2004). Access by private car to destinations in the city was considered a public good, making car-parking land-use policies significant for achieving the desired end states (Taylor & van Bemmel-Misrachi, 2017), resulting in, among other things, so called suburban "sprawl" developments of single-family housing areas. Private cars became a symbol of the good life (Culver, 2017). These modernist visions included, consequently, not only an *idea* of the desired social life in cities, but they also provided a rather detailed account of the desired end states and the ways they would be achieved through physical means (Albrechts, 2006). These modernist ideals have, in turn, been extensively criticized for representing "top-down" elitist ideas that don"t recognize the multiplicity and diversity of urban experiences (Sandercock, 2003; Young, 1990), calling for a more cosmopolitan future and social order in cities (Sandercock, 2003).

Planning for economic progress through "attractive urban development"

More recently, ideas underpinning urban planning at large have been claimed by critics to do nothing more than serve and promote neo-liberal principles of "attractivity", "growth" and "place-competition" (See for example Loit, 2014; Listerborn, 2017; Olesen, 2020; Andersén, 2020). What is being planned for (i.e., the planning object) is economic development, and the role of urban planning is to make the city "attractive" for private actors to invest in it (i.e., the planning subject). By using neoclassical economic thinking as a point of departure, public-governed urban planning is considered a threat to individual freedom, and the focus should instead be on enabling the function of the free market (Beauregard, 2020). Such

principles are criticized in that they primarily concern the rather well-off citizens" housing and consumption needs and lifestyle preferences rather than the socio-economically weaker segments of the population (Loit, 2014; Dovey, 2005; Listerborn, 2017).

One organization of the built environment that is often utilized in the promotion of attractivity is "the compact city". The compact city is accompanied by an urban renaissance ideal of providing citizens, e.g., "the cappuccino loving middle class" (Zukin, 1995), notions of "what is the good life" (Tunström, 2007; 2009). The compact city comes with an ideal of how to lead an authentically "good" urban life (e.g., shopping, visiting cafés, visiting food-halls). Suburbia is represented as suffering from "a weak identity, or, alternatively, that it has an identity crisis, sitting somewhat uncomfortably between urban and rural" (Tunström, 2007). Yet – and perhaps a little bit uncomfortable for urban planners – suburban living remains a strong ideal among citizens at large who highlight that they experience it as quieter and safer than living in the urban cores (Couch & Karecha, 2006). In addition, suburban living does not represent one way of living; it represents a rather diverse set of experiences and interrelated socio-spatial dynamics. Considered from a European perspective, as a consequence of inner-city gentrification, suburbanization of poverty toward the urban peripheries and surrounding regions is a trend where low-to-middle income and unemployed households are increasingly moving to the urban regions surrounding cities, particularly to higher density satellite towns (Hochstenbach & Musterd, 2018).

Planning for sustainable efficiency by optimizing the city as a system

The compact city is not only promoted as an attractive and "authentic" city, but also advocated as an ideal in the sustainability literature (cf. Newman & Kenworthy, 1999) as well as among policy makers (European Commission 2007; Boverket, 2016) for its ability to efficiently make use of infrastructural and environmental resources. This ideal portrays contemporary cities as sprawling and inefficiently using land and natural resources as well as over-relying on private cars as primary modes of transport – all presented as counterproductive to diminishing CO_2 emissions (Dieleman & Wegener, 2004; Couch & Karecha, 2006). This critique is very similar to the early 20th century depiction of cities in that they are perceived as irrational and having uncontrollable growth – and that the growth is not to the benefit of economic development nor to the quality of life for the people residing there. Instead, the attractive, yet compact, city is based upon energy efficient, albeit "authentic", urban ideals of walking, biking, and the use of public transport. Here, large-scale infrastructure projects such as light railways are constructed as an important part in realizing these desired futures – not only in such infrastructures" ability to provide access but also a perception of them as "paramount to competitiveness and economic development" (Olesen, 2020; see also Portinson-Hylander, 2022). The compact city, in combination with smart technologies and services, is furthermore envisaged as a *controllable* system that can be optimized and made to run efficiently (Karvonen et al., 2019), thus also being promoted as enabling long-term cost savings for the city authorities. Here, the city is approached as comprising a complex set of connected parts which are in constant flux where change at one end of the system leads to impacts at another end (Allmendinger, 2009). What is being planned here is an optimal and efficient system in which the population can be arranged, and the role of urban planning is to anticipate the dynamics of the system and "minimize effects and promote better performance" (McLoughlin in Allmendinger, 2009).

However, during the Covid-19 pandemic, the compact city ideal has been challenged for its inability to provide enough open green spaces to accommodate the number of people residing in the city – e.g., the compact city is experienced as too dense by its residents (Len-

non, 2020; Hanzl, 2020). If we recall what was mentioned previously about suburban preferences when it comes to dwelling, the compact city doesn"t seem to always represent the best organization of the built environment when it comes to how people want to live – as individuals in this vision are approached as objects that are arranged in a system rather than listened to. At the same time, in the European context the compact city, combined with securing necessary services locally, has experienced a renaissance by local politicians and planners under the banner of "the 15 minute city", where it is envisaged as providing citizens with the ability to fulfil their daily needs and activities within a 15 minute distance of walking or cycling (Pozoukidou & Chatziyiannaki, 2021), making people less reliant on public transport (e.g., avoiding health hazards in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic), as well as cars, for pursuing daily activities. This ideal rendering is in many senses very similar to the modernist vision of the "New Towns".

There are consequently different ideas of desired urban futures that are competing in contemporary planning discussions, and it is evident that ideas are recycled and repackaged and unfolded as new persuasive desired future states. These ideas represent a range of different planning objects such as "social order", "economic progress" and "efficiency", as well as the roles of urban planning shifting from master planning to facilitating private actors in addition to increasing performance rates. How does planning for car-free housing relate to these broader ideals? Do they represent fundamentally and radically different ideas of organising social lives in cities, or do they perhaps represent ideas inherent to and in continuation of any of these ideals? These questions will be embarked upon after a brief account of the method and outline of the empirical material.

Method and outline of empirical material

This article draws from a qualitative document analysis (cf. Denscombe, 2014) of ideas underpinning planning car-free housing in Sweden. Four examples of planning car-free housing in four different Swedish municipalities are included in the study. This allows for investigating ideas of better urban futures across different municipal settings and examples. "Car-free housing" is defined as an urban residential development in which the municipality has – in a pilot project – granted the developer the right to deviate from the existing parking regulations and provide almost zero parking spaces. When writing this article, only six or seven examples of car-free housing exist in Sweden, although the concept is spreading between developers as well as between municipalities, and numbers are likely to increase. The four examples included here are considered typical examples of planning car-free housing in Sweden and yet are inscribed in different planning contexts ranging from densification to greenfield developments (see table 1 below). The examples are from four Swedish medium to large cities. The developments are all initiated by a developer, where some liaise with a mobility service provider and approach the municipality to pursue the endeavour with the municipality in turn making specific demands for granting the right to deviate from current parking regulations. Depending on the type of process, these demands are either formulated informally through email correspondence (building permission in brown-field development), in formal agreements that set out the direction for how decisions will be made (green field developments), or in detailed development plans (densification developments). The developments are in turn situated in a context of different policy documents such as green travel plans and sustainability programs. The examples provided also comprise the first developments of this kind in Sweden. In the different examples, planning documents have been collected relevant to the different processes (see table 1 for an overview.). Swedish

urban planning is, furthermore, a decentralized, municipal affair and primarily regulated by the Swedish Planning and Building Act (PBL). Since the study is focused on ideas that gain a foothold in planning policy and not in the professional community of urban planners at large, the empirical material comprises documents such as accepted building permission applications, direction for decision-making and formal correspondence of various sorts where the urban planners have acted as part of local government.

Table 1. Overview of examples and empirical material.

Planning car-free housing	Context	Documents collected
Example 1	The car-free housing was pursued as a building permission endeavour in a brown field development in close proximity to a major transport node.	Building permission application, email correspondence between developer and municipality
Example 2	The car-free housing was pursued as a suggestion in a competition for land allocation in a comprehensive greenfield development with an integrated public transport solution.	Formal agreement and direction for decision-making, Comprehensive plans, District development program, Sustainability PM
Example 3	The car-free housing was pursued as a prerequisite for detailed development in processes of densification and R & D project in close proximity to a science park setting.	Parking and mobility assessment, Detailed development plan, green travel plan
Example 4	The car-free housing was pursued as a prerequisite for detailed development and R & D project in processes of densification in close proximity to a major transport mode.	Developer's R& D project report, Detailed development plan

The analytical aim has been to analyze, in an ideal typical sense, different ideas of future desired states that underpin the planning, i.e., (1) ideas of what it is that is being planned for in these processes (i.e., planning object), as well as (2) ideas of urban planning in delivering these objects (i.e., planning subjects) (cf. Mukhtar-Landgren, 2012). The empirical material is approached from a post-structural and social constructivist point of departure in the sense that everything is treated as text and as part of the discourse (Howarth, 2000). There is no context that the empirical material should be reflected in or understood or made sense from. The analytical focus is directed to the ideas that underpin the planning. The analytical procedure was a two-step inductive process (Widén, 2015; Bolander & Fejes, 2015). This means that different planning objects have first been delineated by having coded, re-coded, sorted, grouped, and categorized the empirical material in several cycles until the categories were exhausted and perceived as saturated. An example of a planning object is efficiency or community. Here, three different planning objects were identified in the empirical material. As a second step, and for deepening the empirical exploration, three analytical questions were posed to the three identified planning objects: (1) what assumptions of individuals prevail (e.g., are individuals considered, for example, independent, part of a community, rational, etc. in this idea of desired urban future); (2) what assumptions of sustainable mobility prevail (e.g., how is sustainable mobility represented in this idea of the future); and (3) what ideas of urban planning prevail in realising these planning objects. By using a two-step analytical procedure such as this, it becomes possible to make visible the underlying ideas that the desired future states in planning

car-free housing rest upon. This also means that sustainable mobility is treated here as an empirical question, representing different ideas of how to travel.

Three different ideas of future desired states have been delineated in the empirical material, categorized here as "an optimized system", "individual freedom" and "community and togetherness" and are presented in the following section. These ideas should be appreciated as ideal types and analytical constructs. They are not exhaustive nor mutually exclusive, e.g., they can exist simultaneously and in parallel. They function to elevate the different ideas of future desired states that underpin planning decisions concerning car-free housing with the aim of initiating a critical discussion around what futures are sought to be accomplished through the housing. To allow for transparency for the reader, excerpts from the empirical material are provided throughout the section.

Ideas of future desired states in planning car-free housing

Planning for an optimized system: Making rational objects travel efficiently

> The background to the desire for densification in existing areas is above all the overall goal that the city should be developed in a sustainable and solidary way. New housing must be planned where there is well-developed public transport and other existing infrastructure can be utilized and nature and recreational values are not damaged. (Car-free housing example 3, detailed development plan).

One idea of a future desired state that prevails in the empirical material is here entitled "an optimized system". As stated in the quotation above, this future takes a foothold in the assumption that the city must be densified to meet sustainability objectives. By this, the planning authorities refer to the importance of making space for new housing adjacent to existing infrastructures, such as public transport, so as to allow for sustainable and more resource-efficient use of land. This means that already built-up areas in cities can be organized more efficiently, where new housing can be erected where there is a perceived inefficient use of existing land, such as parking lots or green areas. Here, car-parking is presented as a particularly cost inefficient use of land. In a parking assessment connected to assessing the possibility for reduced parking norm in car-free housing example 3, it is argued that fees for parking don"t match the potential land value:

> The parking fees do not correspond to the potential market value of the land. Large land car parks in central Gothenburg also constitute a low land use in relation to the potential value of the land. (Car-free housing example 3, Parking assessment).

One significant dimension to the success of densification processes that is presented in the empirical material concerns ensuring that the total travel by car doesn"t increase, as the dimensions of existing roads and other infrastructures such as parking is presented as not allowing for additional ones:

> A prerequisite for expansion of the area is, however, that the total travel by car to the area does not increase with the current level, which means that the change in plan becomes dependent on the traffic to the area not increasing. … However, the traffic situation on surrounding streets does not allow for more car traffic, which means that a crucial question is whether the expansion of the area can be done without increasing car traffic to the area. (Car-free housing example 3, Green travel plan).

The objective of car-free housing is to realize processes of densification without increasing the number of cars. The focus is thus on optimizing the performance of the built environment so that more people can make use of existing infrastructures and services. Here, the city is perceived as a system that can be organized and arranged in an efficient manner. Individuals are considered as mere objects that are arranged within the system and who are transported between different destinations. Here, the new forms of app-based mobility services that are tested in car-free housing are also expected to contribute to such efficiency: "Mobility services enable more people and goods to be transported by fewer vehicles, which means smarter use of resources and surfaces" (Car-free housing example 4, Developer R &D project report).

In this idea of the future, the mobility in the city is not presented as radically different from today's city: Cars must exist, be used and be possible to park, but they should be utilised more efficiently – and there should definitely not be *more cars*:

> As there is already a deficit of parking spaces according to the guidance figures, it is required that the vision of this project turns out well and that the calculations that the residents do not have a car are incorporated. … Calculation of parking numbers and occupancy survey show that there is no available capacity in the area that can be utilized. Therefore, the detailed development plan should provide the opportunity to build parking spaces within neighborhood land as a replacement for the parking facility. (Car-free housing example 3, parking assessment).

The future city as an optimized system thus allows for localizing car-free housing on existing parking areas while organising the possibility to arrange for parking possibilities on adjacent land – as a form of compensational measure to adjacent property owners whose parking spaces are "taken away" (car-free housing example 3). The car-free housing allows for maintaining the existing number of parking spaces within the larger block of housing while not putting any additional pressure on the system, e.g., the overarching neighbourhood parking situation. The notion of efficient parking also includes the idea of allocating spaces for parking garages – as a more resource efficient parking strategy – rather than providing street-based parking (Car-free housing examples 1 & 2).

What is being planned for in this vision (i.e., planning object) is an optimized system in which citizens are considered as being able to be arranged. Assumptions of sustainable mobility includes efficient travel. What urban planning is envisaged to do to accomplish the objective is to increase the performance of the built environment by modelling and predicting impact.

Planning for individual freedom: Making independent consumers travel rightly

> A plan for marketing car-free housing needs to be developed. It is important that the project is marketed as a lifestyle home that distinguishes other projects in the Western Harbour.
>
> – *Car-free housing example 1, e-mail correspondence between the municipality and developer*

> [The property] will be a house for cyclists. It is a lifestyle home for those who love cycling, walking and public transport. Simply a bicycle home.
>
> – *Car-free housing example 1, application for building permission*

Another idea of future desired state that is represented in the empirical material is here labelled as "individual freedom". In the quotation above, it is stated that the municipality makes specific demands for advertising campaigns to be carried out before residents move in. The marketing should highlight that the car-free housing is not residential housing in any traditional sense. They should instead be promoted as lifestyle housing that is different from surrounding properties. In marketing the housing, the objective is to "match" the right type of tenant suited to the lifestyle concept. In a formal agreement between the municipality, developer and (mobility) service provider, the matching of tenants is highlighted by the developer like this:

> [The developer] will market [the car-free housing] as car-free. It is important for [the developer] that it is clear to the tenants the conditions for the apartment they rent. … It is expected to attract tenants who fit the concept. Parking spaces will not be offered. In addition, a package of transport services is offered, which requires extensive information and marketing. The concept includes initial information and training already in connection with registration of interest. It also includes ongoing personal support for the residents, a kind of "personal trainer" in sustainable transport. (Car-free housing example 2, direction for decision-making).

Citizens in this future are considered free, independent and have different preferences and needs and can use their power as consumers to *choose* how and where they want to dwell. The buildings should in turn be configured to suit these particular desires and lifestyles. Car-free housing is, for example, envisaged as a housing for cyclists – in comparison to, for example, motorists – and is stated to include "everything a cyclist has hardly dared to dream of" (Car-free housing example 1, application for building permission*)*. But, as highlighted in the quotation above, the housing will not only be configured to suit different preferences and needs, but individuals will also get personal support for making sustainable travel choices. Mobility in this vision is primarily an individual lifestyle choice where individuals can choose to be responsible environmentalists – or not: "Here, the tenant will be able to influence both the environment and their own finances in a completely new way" (Car-free housing example 2, direction for decision-making). The housing will consequently provide individuals the freedom to choose both environmentally and economically viable lifestyles. Individuals are expected to be independent and free to make choices based on "will".

In this future desired state, in which individual freedom is set centre stage, individuals are approached as consumers and urban planning is expected to facilitate individuals in making what are perceived as right sustainable choices through means of communication. As individuals who exercise freedom are considered as able to make choices in their capacity as consumers, the housing and accompanying mobility services should be perceived as attractive to individuals so that they will make sustainable and *right* choices, i.e., they should be perceived of as simple, comfortable, and easy:

> Who is the mobility provider in your houses? What does your community app look like? These are questions that future housing will surely ask. What is expected of an attractive living environment will be expanded and include more services close to housing. … The economy, as well as the degree of simplicity and comfort in everyday life, are of course decisive factors when choosing a home, regardless of whether it is rental housing or ownership. (Car-free housing example 4, Developer R&D project report).

What is planned for in this future (i.e., planning object) is individual freedom – where assumptions of sustainable mobility primarily include travelling (what is perceived as) rightly. Citizens are approached as consumers with different lifestyles and desires. The role of urban planning (i.e., planning subject) is to facilitate individuals making what is perceived as the right environmental choices through means of communication. Through promoting and preventing consumption, sustainable mobility of travelling rightly is believed to be achieved. This, however, includes an inherent contradiction, since an urban planning oriented to facilitate individual consumption choices predominantly through new technological services may opt out of the possibility for consumers to organize their own community/visions of sustainable living (see for example Castán-Broto, 2015).

Planning for togetherness: Creating communities that travel less

> Good urban planning frees up people's time and energy. If you are close to most things, it will be easier to have a sustainable lifestyle and a social life in your immediate environment.
>
> *Car-free housing example 2, district comprehensive plan (fördjupad översiktsplan)*

A third future desired state that is represented in the empirical material is "community and togetherness". This future takes its foothold in the idea of a local community where all necessary everyday life amenities should be in close distance to where one lives and that those amenities can be accessed on foot or by bike. In one case it is referred to as the "modern small town" (Case 4, detailed development plan). As is suggested in the quotation above, by having access to such amenities in the local community, it is considered easy to lead a sustainable life. In this vision, one should not have to leave the housing district to pursue everyday matters, including one's social life, as they should be provided for in the local community. Hence, one should *travel less*. Here, car-free housing is expected to instil the idea of travelling less by including facilities such as chilled food-delivery boxes in entrance hallways, so one should not need to travel for grocery shopping, as well desktop workplaces allowing for distance working (Car-free housing example 1, and 4), or spaces for internet deliveries and returns, as all shopping can be pursued online (Car-free housing example 2). Furthermore, access to public transport, services and "good living environments" comprise key components for making the local district appear attractive for residents not to leave the district for unnecessary travel (Car-free housing example 2, district comprehensive plan (*fördjupad översiktsplan*)) – or as is stated in car-free housing example 4: "The goal was to activate the neighborhood more times a day and to contribute to a "user-dense" district with shorter distances and reduced need for transport" (Car-free housing example 4, Developer's R& D project report).

The vision of the local community where everything is "near" is also organized around principles of sharing, not only sharing vehicles and services but sharing spaces, tools, and knowledge for repairing and making (Car-free housing example 1, and 4). Practices of sharing objects and services are brought forward to also include the sharing of spaces. For example, car-free housing should comprise communal spaces for everything ranging from parties, DIY workshops to meetings and "change of clothes days" (Car-free housing example 4, Developer's R& D project report), or communal spaces for "washing, pumping, lubricating, raising and lowering" (Car-free housing example 1, application for building permission). The car-free housing should in other words also instil a sense of togetherness among the residents, but it also draws on the assumption that individuals are expected to partake

in communal activities outside their homes as well as in practices of sharing their resources and knowledge.

What is being planned for in this future (i.e., planning object) is community and togetherness. Assumptions of sustainable mobility is to *travel less.* Individuals are part of a community and are expected to participate in communal activities outside their homes. The role of urban planning (i.e., planning subject) is to organize the socio-spatial environment for sharing and community building.

Summary of results

To quickly summarize the results (also in table 2 below), three different underpinning ideas of future desired states have been empirically delineated in the empirical material of planning car-free housing: (1) the optimized system, (2) individual freedom and (3) community and togetherness. In these different futures, there are different assumptions about individuals and sustainable mobility, but also urban planning. In the first idea of a better urban future, individuals are approached as mere objects that are arranged in an efficient system where sustainable mobility concerns efficient transportation of these objects between different destinations. Ideas of urban planning includes the optimization of the city as a system by modelling and predicting impact. In the second future, individuals are approached as independent and free consumers, where sustainable mobility is a matter of making the right individual choice. Ideas of urban planning includes facilitating people in making what is perceived as the right sustainable choices. In the third future, individuals are expected to be part of a local community where assumptions of sustainable mobility are to travel less. The role of urban planning is to organise the socio-spatial environment for community building.

Table 2. Summary of results. Ideas of future desired states in planning car-free housing.

Planning for: **Assumptions of:**	**Optimized system**	**Individual freedom**	**Community and togetherness**
Individuals	Mere objects	Independent consumers	Part of a community
Sustainable mobility	Travel efficient	Travel right	Travel less
Urban planning	Optimization of the performance of the system	Facilitation and communication	Organising the socio-spatial environment for community-building

Concluding remarks

Car-free housing has primarily been studied from the perspective of lifestyle politics, where the success of these developments primarily concerns attracting the right group of individuals (i.e., "the car-free chooser") who are willing to "give up" potential ownership of cars and commit to pursue a sustainable lifestyle (Thomsen & Löfström, 2011; Melia et al., 2012). This article broadens this perspective by situating the perspective of lifestyle politics within broader urban development and aims to analyze ideas of future desired states that underpin planning for car-free housing. The analysis shows that, in addition to the lifestyle dwelling and interrelated notions of individual freedom, it includes two alternative ideas of future desired states that of the optimized system and community and togetherness.

By situating the result in the context of historical urban planning ideals that was outlined in section two, it becomes visible that the planning represents a continuation of modern-

ist planning ideals in two different ways. First, the planning is part of the modernist discourse of efficiency, where the city remains being depicted as in need of rationalization and optimization and in which car-free housing is seen as contributing to such optimization by maximizing land-value and to densify without increasing the number of cars (which would risk making the system less efficient). The desired state of an optimized system also includes ideas of fairness, suggesting that valuable resources and land that could benefit the population as a whole can be utilized for other purposes, if built up structure and associated infrastructures are more efficiently utilized. The planning is also interdependent on the availability of public transport since it is considered the most efficient mode of transport. This idea of the future is not radically different from today, and car-free housing instead represents an incremental continuation of the modernist ideal of efficiency. Second, the planning is part of a discourse of community which seeks to produce radical change through socio-spatial restructuring – here, through a new socio-economical model of sharing. Planning for community and togetherness represents a retake of the post-war town planning ideal of neighbourhood planning. Post-war planning aimed to accomplish radical restructuring of cities and achieve social reform through installing public spaces, services and work opportunities and included additional communal functions such as laundry rooms and community facilities. The planning for community, as represented in planning car-free housing, is also centred on quite radical social transformation but now through means of sharing (knowledge, resources, and spaces). People are considered as being able to stay put and contribute to sustainability if everything (work, social life, services) is accessible in the vicinity of the home. This idea of the future can be appreciated as promoting bottom-up collaborative initiatives where individuals develop meaning in the local context, which draws from the ideas of a "sharing economy" and ways of forming active citizenship and sense of togetherness in local communities (cf. Oldbury & Mukhtar-Landgren, 2020; Vith et al., 2019). The sharing economy has "been broadly and commonly envisaged as a new socio-economic model based on collaboration, access to, and the socialization of, value production, facilitated by digital technologies" (Arcidiacono et al., 2018). These ideas represent an incremental approach and one that can be situated in a social reformist/transformational tradition for bringing about change. Both forms of planning challenges the focus on facilitating the so-called free market and interrelated forms of consumption, which the concept of life-style housing can be considered an example of. Highlighting planning for car-free housing in the context of these two ideals in turn introduces new sets of questions for the research community to pursue, for example, what values are these communities organized around, and how do we ensure that they are organized fairly? The post-war planning ideal has been extensively criticized for representing homogenous identities and one "top-down" prescription of the good life. How does urban planning make sure that the new planned for communities recognize a diversity of social experiences and consequent notions of the "good life"? Several of the car-free housing examples included in this study are located in new urban development areas which are organized around and tend to attract predominantly the middle class (compared with the previously mentioned suburbanization of poverty). Previous case studies of car-free housing in Europe have shown that about half of the households in most car-free housing are families with (young) children, hardly any foreign nationalities, and people with university degrees are highly overrepresented (Baehler, 2019). But some of the housing is tenured as rental, which opens up the possibility of accommodating residents from a broad socio-economic base. But if the values that the communities are organized around operate to separate and maintain the status and identity of "travelling rightly", accommodating residents from other social strata of society might be difficult to

attain. How does urban planning ensure that the striving for efficiency (where individuals are considered mere objects) is balanced with other values such as equality and democracy (where individuals are considered citizens foremost)? What consequences do the different sustainable mobility goals of *less* or *efficient* travel have for urban planning? If integrated public transport and urban development planning comprise a key parameter for delivering efficient travel through car-free housing, but new public transport infrastructure investments are funded through a logic of land value financing (Olsson, 2019), we have a significant problem for where such investments are made, and which segments of society draw benefit. Which communities get the opportunity to travel less through such initiatives, and which communities get the opportunity to travel efficiently? In other words, who gets to have mobile social lives and who does not (cf. Urry, 2010)?

And on another note, and in the context of pursuing planning for car-free housing through pilot-projects in urban planning (cf. Berglund-Snodgrass & Mukhtar-Landgren, 2020; Kronsell & Mukhtar-Landgren, 2018): One underlying point of departure in using pilot projects as a form of planning is to make the learnings scale up and travel and therein "... create an impact on a broader scale, i.e., how solutions and experiences developed in one place will diffuse more widely" (von Wirth et al., 2019). One central question is *what car-free housing is a solution for,* and *experience of* that can create an impact on a broader scale. It is tempting here to consider car-free housing as individual examples of "living without cars" that can be shared, consumed and showcased, and seen as an "easy to grasp story of what the problem is and how to solve it" (cf. Mukhtar-Landgren & Fred, 2021) and as a consequence seen as separate from the broader urban planning processes they are intrinsically part of. If pilot projects with car-free housing are a mechanism in the processes of social transformation through means of optimization and community building, this is an important perspective from which the housing should be studied and approached but also evaluated and diffused from.

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