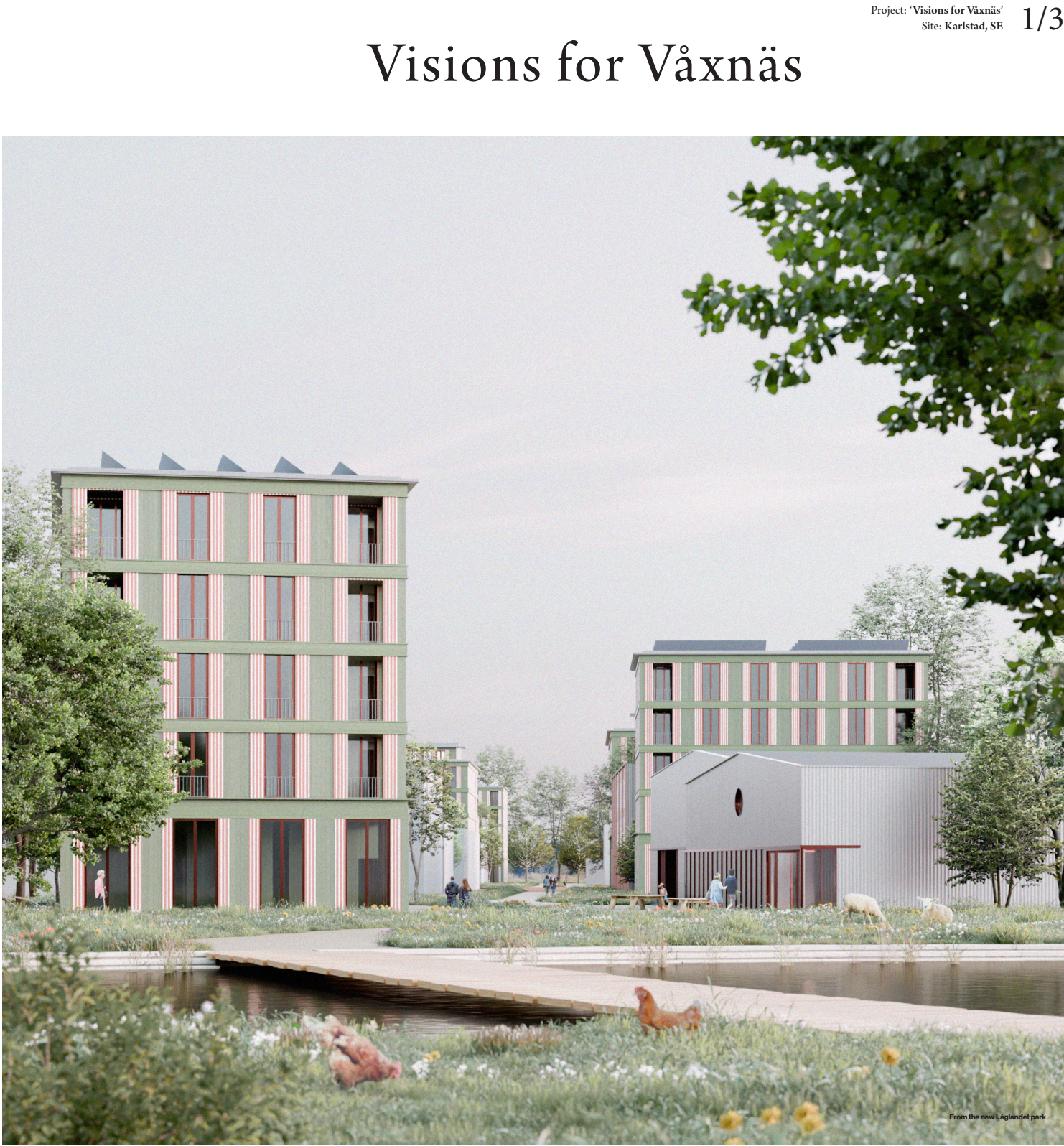




From Brownfield to Bluegreen Neighbourhoods

Situated between dense forests and the vast expanse of Lake Vänern, Karlstad occupies a unique geological zone where land and water converge. Located on the lake's northern shore – with the Klarälv River flowing through its center – the city experiences a high number of sunny days and a mild inland climate. As a result, it boasts a naturally rich and flourishing landscape. About 3 km outside of the city center of the city center, Våxnäs is an area characterized by the urban planning ideas around the 1950s and 60s. Functionally segregated areas, vast open green spaces, and a high focus on automobile accessibility between different parts of the city.

Regardless of the rigid street network that was established from the beginning – over time and out of necessity – new buildings have been added and the result is somewhat unorganized in between large asphalted parking lots. Many of the existing buildings on the site have a fun and colorful expression, creating an atmosphere that gives a particularity to Våxnäs.

The buildings primarily house low height storage- and logistical buildings, commercial buildings and some offices. This brings a lot of activity to the area, in the form of consumers and workers. The spaces between buildings consist mainly of paved surfaces for streets and parking.

The main challenge of Våxnäs is that there is very little consistency in the urban situation, making it a confusing space to navigate for anyone not driving a car. The green surfaces of the area are almost non-existing, apart from Låglandet park and the alleys spanning across. To solve these challenges we have created 4 visions for the future of Våxnäs.

4 Visions

Our proposal is focused around four main visions:

1. Våxnäs should be a flourishing neighbourhood where the blue and green structures help frame and enhance the activity going on within and strengthen the connection with surrounding areas.

2. By enhancing paths and green corridors between neighbouring areas and adding small scale urban interventions, Våxnäs will become more closely connected to the rest of Karlstad

3. Re sourcing of the site's existing buildings, materials, vegetation and land – through adaptive reuse, reconfiguration, densification and adding new layers – Våxnäs will become more resilient holding a strong local identity.

Ecological Corridors

Dry Zone & Wet Zone

4. By introducing public, cultural, and residential programs, Våxnäs will transform into a vibrant, inclusive neighborhood buzzing with life, diversity, and activity.

Stages of Implementation

To achieve these visions for Våxnäs, one of the first steps is to activate key sites, by transforming and establishing multiple reuse spaces in existing buildings across the site for the storage, categorization and repurposing of dismantled building parts.

By activating the bus depot and connecting it to the larger network of green spaces, schools, and sports facilities, the project encourages movement through the area from south to north, helping regenerate the entire industrial zone as a vibrant, mixed-use district.

Through different micro interventions, or 'conflits' planning, aimed at a variety of different goals such as strengthening green spaces, enhancing community or delaying rain water, changes can start happening quickly. This way, the local stakeholders and residents will become more engaged in the process from an early point.

By creating two main green corridors that span from Klarälv River to the L2 forest we extend the forest edge, and create an ecological corridor that enriches biological diversity. After removing and reusing pavement, natural soil remediation is used to allow the main corridors to extend into the streets of Våxnäs and the surrounding areas, creating a blue-green grid on top of the existing street network. By connecting across to the smaller ecosystems the project aims to strengthen the main- and create new ecological corridors in the area. The strategy is rooted in the existing structure of the rest of Karlstad.

New housing typologies are added to repair and rebuild an underlying urban structure indicated by the street network, forming semi-open courtyards. In the northern part of the site, we propose mainly lower density row houses intertwined with some smaller urban villas. Going further south there is a larger mix of programs, as well as existing buildings. Urban villas with a height of 4-5 floors, with commercial programs in the ground floor.

The visions for Våxnäs outline a practical and future-oriented strategy for turning today's fragmented area into a well-connected, resilient and welcoming part of the city.

Project: 'Visions for Våxnäs'
Site: Karlstad, SE 2/3

1. Blue and Green Neighbourhood

Two primary floodways, Låglandet and Höglandet parks, are designed to manage stormwater while offering diverse recreational experiences. A gradient of vegetation is established from the L2 Forest toward the river, forming an expanded ecological edge that enhances biodiversity and habitat connectivity. Integrated water management strategies – including wetlands, bioswales, and retention areas – support both ecological health and the creation of attractive public spaces.

2. Mobility and Connection to Karlstad

By linking existing green spaces and creating corridors between forest, river, and city, Våxnäs can support active travel and a stronger urban ecosystem. Reclaimed voids can become part of this network, while mixed-use streets reduce car dependency and promote walkability. Mobility hubs are introduced at important junctions to encourage sustainable and active transportation.

3. Use of Existing Resources

Våxnäs can grow sustainably by reusing existing buildings, materials, and land. Repurposed asphalt and concrete can form new public, while preserved industrial structures can be reutilized for new uses. Densifying the area reduces sprawl and supports greener transport. A playful 'conflits' structure of public spaces—made from reclaimed materials—adds identity, creativity, and community to the neighborhood.

4. Recreation, Sports and Culture

Våxnäs will build on its current recreational and commercial strengths, adding cultural and residential spaces to create a lively, mixed-use area. Public space like plazas, parks, and venues will host daily activities and larger events. Green corridors and walkways will connect sports facilities, schools, and nature, promoting social ties, health, and environmental harmony. The result is a neighborhood where culture, sport, and nature come together to enrich urban life.

Project: 'Visions for Våxnäs'
Site: Karlstad, SE 3/3



Row houses

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Apartment building I

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Apartment building II

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