

LÄNKKA

The city of Vaxjo, situated in Sweden's picturesque Smaland region, stands as an epitome of the harmonious coexistence of ecology and innovation. Renowned as the commercial and cultural center of Smaland, Vaxjo reflects the region's rich entrepreneurial tradition. However, it is not merely a city driven by commerce; rather, it is a place where the essence of regional spirit translates into a profound commitment to both entrepreneurship and the reconciliation of ecology and innovation.

At the heart of Vaxjo's environmental journey lies its close relationship with water. The city's identity as a lake city has prompted it to adapt to various ways of living with water over the years. Notably, starting in the 1970s, Vaxjo initiated the restoration of polluted lakes, a pioneering step in environmental conservation. This restoration effort marked the beginning of the city's transformative journey toward sustainability.

In the subsequent decade, Vaxjo took another bold step by becoming a fossil-fuel-free city in the 1990s. This visionary decision by local politicians set a precedent for climate adaptation strategies that have earned the city global recognition. As an early adopter of various climate adaptation measures, Vaxjo has paved the way for cities worldwide to address the urgent challenges of climate change.

Central to Vaxjo's sustainable vision is the ambitious Sustainable Vaxjo 2030 initiative. This comprehensive plan entails specific action points, such as carbon-neutral construction, as well as more holistic approaches that seek to transcend the traditional divide between nature and culture. Emphasizing care-based development, this vision envisions a future where ecological and cultural elements blend harmoniously, shaping a more resilient and sustainable urban environment.

Amidst this vision of sustainable growth and development, the Central Hospital of Vaxjo occupies a unique space that requires careful consideration. Originally established as part of the city's southward expansion, the hospital has seen dynamic changes throughout its history. Today, it stands as a large assemblage of diverse structures nestled at the edge of the city, at the intersection of the serene lake and lush woodlands. However, this introverted character, coupled with its separation from the city by the railway, raises questions about its success as a contemporary care environment.

Recent global events, including the COVID-19 outbreak and the escalating climate adaptation agenda, have catapulted care to the forefront of urban planning discussions. The hospital's future, therefore, assumes immense significance in the city's long-term vision, urging a radical rethinking of the qualities that define a contemporary care environment.

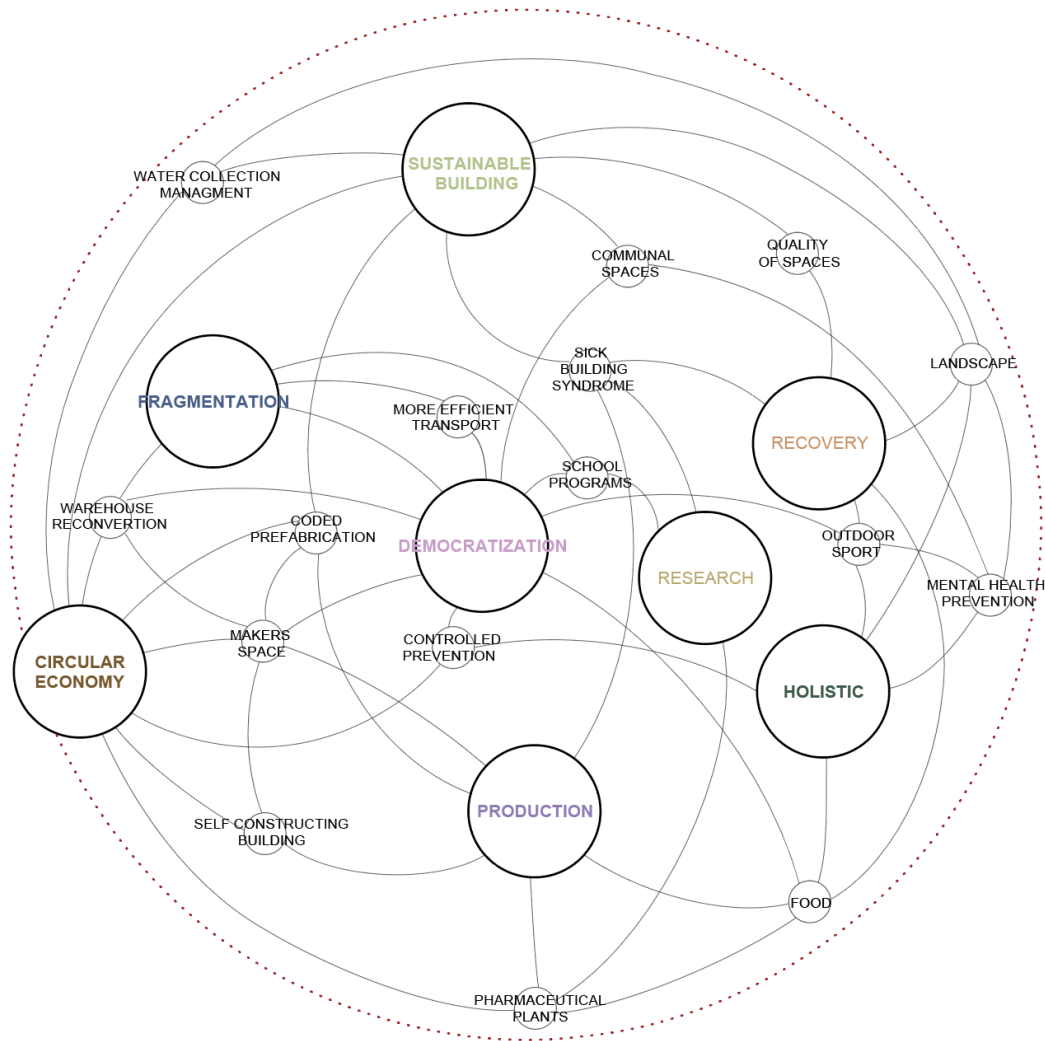


Holistic Care

In this evolving vision of care, the focus shifts from mere responses to sickness or anomalies to a proactive integration of care and well-being into everyday life. Relationships and interconnectedness become the cornerstones of this new paradigm, where buildings harmonize with landscapes, individuals with societies, and caregivers with receivers.

The redesign of the Central Hospital of Vaxjo serves as a canvas to explore the architectural and urban implications of this reimagined care environment. Three pivotal aspects guide this transformation: connecting the hospital site with the rest of the city, the adaptive reuse of existing structures, and envisioning a programmatic content that aligns with the care-oriented, ecological vision of the city.

Adopting a multiscalar lens, the hospital metamorphoses into a hybrid space that bridges the divide between stereotypically urban functions and care-oriented spaces. The conventional notion of a hospital as a singular, detached entity gives way to a more integrated and interconnected concept. Care-oriented functions seamlessly blend with everyday spaces within the city, fostering a sense of community and shared well-being.



Fragmentation

The holistic approach to sustainable healthcare extends beyond the hospital walls, embracing decentralization to ensure easy access to healthcare services for all residents. This approach fosters the integration of wellness facilities into the community, offering amenities like fitness centers, community gardens, and meditation spaces. By actively engaging in preventive health programs and education, the hospital strives to improve the overall well-being of the community.

The hospital's site strategies focus on connectivity, wellness, and placemaking within the city. Hybrid links connect lakes and green corridors to facilitate the movement of flora and fauna throughout the region, embracing the lake's presence. Green areas and pedestrian zones enhance accessibility and promote a healthier lifestyle.

The hospital's architectural interventions prioritize patient well-being and nature integration. The hospital's volume extends into the water with the introduction of a pool, promoting patient recovery and enhancing the waterfront experience. Green spaces, ponds, and wildlife habitats are carefully integrated into the hospital's design, creating therapeutic environments and supporting biodiversity within the city.

Decentralization of healthcare services complements the hospital's commitment to sustainability and environmental stewardship. By incorporating recycled and treated water for cooling, sanitation, and landscaping, the hospital efficiently manages its resources, contributing to a circular economy model. Rooftop solar panels generate clean energy, and waste management practices adhere to eco-friendly principles.

Moreover, the hospital takes a pioneering stance on pharmaceutical plants, nurturing them in greenhouses to integrate nature's healing properties into treatments. Nature, indeed, plays a vital role in the recovery of patients, with green spaces, large windows, and proximity to the picturesque Lake Vaxjosjon enhancing wind flow and providing natural ventilation.

Beyond physical health, the hospital focuses on mental well-being, with awareness programs that address mental health challenges and promote overall wellness. It introduces AI-driven systems to enhance diagnostics, virtual consultations, and patient engagement, empowering individuals to take charge of their health actively.

Furthermore, the hospital embraces the concept of temporary leasing of residential spaces in collaboration with the municipality. This mixed-use development approach activates underutilized spaces, generating revenue for the city while providing affordable housing options. Residents' presence creates a strong sense of community, fostering a dynamic and inclusive urban environment.

Research and innovation take center stage at Vaxjo City Hospital. The hospital acts as a living laboratory, actively engaging in studies that influence urban planning, building practices, and sustainability initiatives.

The hospital's transformation involves collaboration between diverse disciplines to serve both the hospital and the city. Research becomes an integral part of sustainable healthcare.

Through extensive experimentation, eco-friendly materials, green building practices, and optimal indoor air quality are identified, fostering a therapeutic environment that supports patients' healing and well-being.

In conclusion, the transformation of Vaxjo's Central Hospital exemplifies the city's holistic and innovative vision of care, where sustainability, well-being, and ecological harmony converge. By embracing the interconnectedness of all stakeholders—humans, nature, animals, and technology—the hospital emerges as a beacon of sustainable healthcare. Its initiatives in preventive care, green building practices, and integrated community spaces inspire the entire city toward a thriving, eco-conscious, and inclusive future.