

Malmö (Sweden), a City in Transition: Challenges We Face as the City Expands

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Key words: Real estate development; Spatial planning; Urban renewal;

SUMMARY

This paper focuses on the development of the city of Malmö during the last twenty years and what major challenges the city faces today. Malmö is the third largest city in Sweden, with just over 300 000 inhabitants. It is located in the southern part of the country not far from Copenhagen. As a former industrial city, Malmö used to have e.g. strong shipbuilding and cement industries. The heavy industries reached their peak in the 1960s. The following decades saw a steady decline in the industrial sector and several companies shut down or moved. The population decreased and unemployment grew. During Sweden's domestic banking crisis in the early 90s, the city reached its all-time low. Since then several strategic decisions and large investments have been made and the negative trend has been reversed. The infrastructure investments resulted in e.g. the Malmö - Copenhagen bridge in 2000 and a rail link under Malmö city centre in 2010. A university was established. The 2001 housing exhibition "Bo01" started the transformation of the old shipyard and industrial areas into a new residential and commercial district. As a consequence the city started to expand again and it now attracts new investments and new business. Malmö's population is now increasing, but despite the progress there are still major challenges. The average income is far below normal in Sweden, and there is a housing shortage. Malmö is being developed in a sustainable way. The city will grow within its present boundaries by building a more dense city with mixed residential, commercial and recreational areas and public services. Transforming industrial sites and redeveloping the city presents many challenges, e.g. soil contamination, noise pollution and project financing. Furthermore there are suburb areas with high-rise residential buildings from the 60s and 70s in need of urban renewal.