



Agenda 21

Council order
2009-02-09, § 6



Agenda 21

a vision for 2040

“We, the citizens of Östersund, have created a sustainable community characterized by proximity and diversity, which we can, in all good conscience, leave for our children and grandchildren to inherit”.



Introduction

As early as 1993 the Municipal Council in Östersund decided to produce a local Agenda 21. Visions spanning the years up until the year 2025 were conceived, with the help of local inhabitants. These visions, now focusing on 2040, have been revised in consultation with local residents and are a manifestation of what the citizens of Östersund want for their city in the future. The important thing is that all of Östersund's citizens are aware of and support the visions and that we all do everything in our power to achieve them. The local Agenda is intended to act as an instigator and means of assistance in the long-term process, which the development of a sustainable community entails.

We will most certainly be influenced by what is happening in the world around us – the threat to the climate, e.g., is global. In Östersund the traffic causes the most of our fossil carbon dioxide emissions. There is a challenge to be met to become exempt from fossil fuel and consequently, in the long-term to become neutral to climate changes. Another considerable challenge concerns our attitude to consumption and life style. Knowledge is imperative for being able to make the correct environmental choices and involvement and participation are important issues in the work being carried out to achieve a sustainable community.

The Municipality shall use the Agenda as follows

It is important for local government employees to have clear objectives to follow and to spread information related to environmental issues. The Municipality must set a good example. Key plans and other forms of municipal planning and programmes must stipulate in which way and with what means the visions in the Agenda will be realised. All decisions taken by the Municipal Council must have the Agenda as a guiding principle. For the Agenda to be long-standing and up-to-date it must be upgraded during every term of office.

Local Government has introduced environmental management systems, the purpose of which is to reduce the strain on work with environmental and quality assurance issues. An environmental investigation has been conducted to identify how municipal activities influence the environment. This knowledge is important and we must be aware of it so that we can learn to work in the proper areas and ensure that resources are used where they have the best effects.

The Municipal Council makes decisions every year, which focus on specific objectives of an environmental nature and policy. Each municipal committee makes decisions regarding impact objectives for their specific operational areas and fields of responsibility. These objectives are later affected by the Municipal Council and when they have been accomplished they are followed up in budget monitoring and annual reports. An annual environmental audit, which describes the outcome of municipal environmental work, is carried out and acts as input to the continuing work in environmental issues. The environmental audit also checks that the environmental work being carried out follows the visions stipulated in the Agenda.

Vision 2040

Östersund is a well-balanced and vibrant municipality. The town centre, which is free from traffic, offers everything from art to climatic-smart shopping and in summertime is a veritable green oasis filled with playgrounds and pleasant outdoor cafés/restaurants. You can hold a conversation over a cup of coffee here without having to struggle to make yourself heard over the sound of traffic, and in winter the city and Badhusparken (a park central to the city, situated by the lake) buzz with all kinds of activities. All the housing estates/neighbourhoods have parks, gardens and allotments where people can enjoy themselves, grow vegetables or just relax. The large green spaces and abundance of trees comprise green oases suitable for picnics, playing/exercising and generally just enjoying oneself. The entire city planning is perfect for participating in all sorts of activities, irrespective of capability. The fantastic prospects for enjoyment and activities provided by the city are all within cycling distance.

The vibrant rural communities in the municipality bustle with life and are fondly known as the municipality's "gold mine"! The rural population is roughly 100 000 and include many who have moved from various parts of Europe to escape the climate changes in their own regions. From other parts of the world "climate refugees" have fled drought and hunger to find that they have become worthy citizens in this municipality of manifold opportunities. The fantastically high quality of life that the municipality provides is the incentive, which attracts people from far and wide to come and live here.

Most of the building material used when we build houses comes from our own county and is guaranteed harmless to people, as well as being strictly environmental friendly. It is also easy to recycle and when buildings are demolished all useful material is collected and sold for reuse. Public buildings are built and renovated in order that they can be used for many various activities during all hours and are of course accessible to everyone, irrespective of capability. Environmentally aware tenants and landlords set high demands for the indoors environment and energy consumption. All buildings must now follow standards based on energy, ecological and health aspects. They also have their own energy systems, which provide an excellent supplement to daily energy consumption.





Heating and electricity. Renewable energy sources largely stand for the Municipality's heating and electricity supply. Wind power has been developed, hydropower has become more efficient and nuclear power has been phased out. Technology is now so highly developed that solar power can be used and stored for future use in a satisfactory way. In urban areas heating and electricity is provided through communal and effective systems, while the rural areas get their energy from solar-, wind- and hydropower. Energy consumption is currently effective and it may be noted that compared to the years at the beginning of the 21st century we consume half as much energy as we did then.

The business sector is efficient in economizing with resources and energy. Manufacturing processes in industry have also improved. The use of chemicals has been drastically minimised. It is really quite obvious which companies invested early in environmental work and sustainable products - these are the companies that have advanced remarkably well and are currently found to be among the most successful. The service sector especially has grown since 2000. Östersund and Mid-Sweden has the Mid Sweden University to thank for many of the successful companies concerned with the development of climate-smart technology and research. These companies have customers all over the world. "Green growth" became a well known concept during the early years of the 21st century and there are several companies belonging to this sector in the municipality.

Companies have realized that by co-ordinating their transports with each other they can gain both financially and environmentally. The ever increasing number of employees with roots in other parts of the world has helped develop the business sector and resulted in many new business opportunities. Tourism currently works with changing conditions, compared with the beginning of the 21st century – the greenhouse effect has led to a shorter winter season and the tree line has moved higher up in our mountains.

Hazardous substances such as naturally foreign substances and heavy metals are no longer found in any products and dangerous chemicals are almost never used. Natural raw materials and environmental friendly cleaning products dominate the market. The amount of hazardous waste needing to be dealt with has decreased significantly. Considerable development in medicines has resulted in the fact that only very small amounts of medicinal residues now seep into sewage

treatment works. The sludge from our sewage treatment works and private drains can now be used, quite safely, as a fertiliser in our fields and forests. The dusty spring days we remember, when the city was being cleaned from winter's grit and sand, is a thing of the past. Currently dust-free methods are used to clean streets and roads. A decrease in the use of studded tyres has also contributed to the fact that the dust now contains less hazardous particles.

Consumption has taken on a new image. We buy fewer products than we used to but we do consume more services, e.g. the arts, music, theatre and activities that increase our wellbeing have all found new markets. We choose organic, locally and fairly produced products. Explicit environmental declarations on products, services, restaurants and hotels make it easier for us to choose wisely. Financial instruments have also contributed to making sure those products that are worse for the environment and our health also cost more. One thing that all gadgets we now buy have in common is that they are all adjusted to suit the environment, last longer and are recyclable or reusable. We reuse and make new items from old objects. Organic material becomes bio-gas. Wear and discard is a thing of the past. Östersund is currently eminent in design when it comes to reusable products and climate smart objects. The idea of sustainability is here to stay!

Food – We have always excelled in food here in Jämtland and now that we have shouldered the role as gastronomic centre of Scandinavia our food culture has become even more important. Locally produced food is mainly organic and of very high quality. No hazardous chemicals are used in the growing of food and the products we do buy in from other places are free from synthetic pesticides and cultivated in a resource-saving way by people working under fair conditions. We are no longer able to buy foods and products that are genetically manipulated, or produced with antibiotics, growth hormones or other unnatural substances. We adjust our eating habits more to which food is in season, consequently reducing the necessity of long distance transports. Vegetarian food has become a natural and common place element in our menu.

Green industries are thriving thanks to the ever increasing demands for organic food and raw material energy. The forests are developing faster and more deciduous trees are growing. This more environmentally friendly way of utilising land and forest benefits the biodiversity in farming and forestry. Far sighted social planning creates a good balance between forestry, farming, housing and other exploitation. The value of farmland is extremely high and should not be compared with new building in housing, public buildings etc. New parts of the Storsjö





farming countryside are being cultivated. The fantastically beautiful open countryside, with its panoramic view of lakes and mountains is attractive for recreation and many people are enticed to make their home here.

Drinking water in the municipality is of an exceptionally high quality and comes, to a large extent from some of the county's fantastic lakes, Storsjön, Locknesjön and Näkten. The uranium mining that was recently discussed as an enterprise in the district around the Storsjön, and which would have contaminated and polluted the water, did not come about. Contaminated surface water from built up areas is treated locally in water steps and dams so that it no longer runs out into Storsjön. Self-sustaining populations of grayling, char and salmon thrive in the fresh, clean waters of the lakes and attract zealous anglers.

Trafiken disturbances and emissions have decreased dramatically. This is mainly due to far-sighted social planning and a good co-ordination of transports with well set-out, safe bicycle and walking routes. Both freight and passenger transports are environmentally friendly and efficient, and public transport has been substantially expanded, tailored for the most common needs and is very popular.

Technical developments in modes of operation, fuel and vehicles have been made use of. It has also become more common for private persons, companies and employees in local government to share environmentally friendly cars instead of each using her/his own car. People in the rural areas are also now able to use cars less thanks to public transport, which has been adjusted according to requirements. Thanks to IT-development video-conferences and other technical aids make it possible for people to work more from home, subsequently work travel is minimised. It is also possible to receive training/education now where one lives, cutting out the need to travel. The number of cars and trucks on our main roads has decreased. Railway communications are frequent and the trains are fast and comfortable.

All vehicles, boats and machines are environmental friendly. They are run on renewable fuels such as bio-gas and hydrogen and are extremely fuel efficient. Electric cars have become more and more popular since the system with charging stations has been fully developed. Electric bicycles, mopeds and walkers are highly coveted by young and old alike. We have changed our way of travelling so that we now choose to travel by train instead of by air, whenever we can. Due to technical development airplanes that lift from Åre-Östersund airport are quieter and more fuel efficient than before and are run only on renewable fuel.

For those who wish to find out more

Have you any questions regarding Agenda 21?

Then please contact Irén Karlsson-Berglund, Community Planning

Telephone +46 (0)63-14 32 72.

You will find more information pertaining to our work with Östersund Municipality's Agenda 21 on our website www.ostersund.se/agenda21

Östersunds kommun

Östersunds kommun, 831 82 Östersund, Tel 063-14 30 00. www.ostersund.se

